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Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, October 16, 2017

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayer

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1105)

[*English*]

CONTRIBUTION OF FARMERS AND RANCHERS

The House resumed from May 29 consideration of the motion.

Mr. Mike Bossio (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me start by saying how much I enjoyed working with the member for Bow River on the environment committee. Today's motion was derived from a trip that we took out west where we visited an 11,000 acre ranch in Alberta that had 900 head of cattle. It was the epitome of sustainability and conservation in farming today. I commend my colleague for his motion, and I am happy to speak in support of it. I thank him for all of his hard work on this issue, and also for his friendship.

I have a lot of farmers in my rural riding, and along with indigenous peoples, there is no one closer to the land than farmers. Their hard work, 365 days a year, not only provides for their own families, but provides for every family living in cities as well. When one is as close to the land as they are, and when one depends on its bounty as much as they do, it only makes sense to take care of it. Farmers are some of the original environmentalists, in many ways.

Take, for example, Chris Kennedy of Topsy Farms, on Amherst Island in my riding of Hastings-Lennox and Addington. This co-operative family farm has a flock of over 1,100 breeding sheep on the island in Lake Ontario. The family has a deep respect for the environment. They raise their sheep in as natural a way as possible, with no growth hormones, and with no pesticides on their land. They have also helped to create a network of gardeners on Amherst Island to contribute fresh food to shelters and food programs in the area.

Their lands provide habitat for the countless birds and butterflies that use Amherst Island as a stop on their migratory path. They have planted hedgerows and yards that attract these species, and they even have a certificate as a monarch butterfly way station.

Chris also tells me that he has put up about half a mile of fencing to keep the sheep out of Lake Ontario in order to protect the water,

and he has received funding under the species at risk program to help him do it.

It is great to see that Frank Derue, a beef farmer in Odessa, is also taking part in a species-at-risk fencing project on his farm through the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association. He let me know that his fencing will limit livestock from accessing Millhaven Creek, which has an abundance of wildlife, including many species of waterfowl and other birds, as well as turtles, snakes, and fish.

Many farming practices are passed down from generation to generation. Topsy Farms tries to follow the lead of those who farmed before it by maintaining wide hedgerows and using selective cutting practices in its woodlot.

I have also spoken to a lot of people in the local woodlot association in my riding. They care about using the most sustainable practices, because they want to pass down the land to the next generation in as good a shape or better than they received it. That is indicative of all farmers today.

Farmers know their land down to the smallest detail. Chris will tell us that the growing abundance of field mushrooms on his land during wet years is showing how the land is slowly increasing in organic matter. That is very good stewardship, since the soil on Amherst Island is very thin.

I am also grateful, when I speak to the farming community, to hear how willing and eager farmers are to do outreach and teach people about the work they do. Topsy Farms is often participating in activities that foster an understanding of the relationship between animals, people, and the land, whether it is hosting schools, 4-H members, or workshops for professors and students from the environmental studies program at Queen's University, which is near my riding. The farm has also contributed produce for traditional medicines made at Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory.

These are the kinds of activities that so many of our farmers do because they love the land and they want to teach others about a love of the land as well.

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A very good friend of mine, Terry Gervais, has a farm and a large sugar bush operation in the northern part of my riding. He bought the farm in the early eighties. He worked the bush and grazed cattle on the land, which he then brought to his restaurant that he owned in Toronto. His beef became famous throughout the city of Toronto because it was grass fed, naturally fed, and it was very sustainably farmed. He would also bring in a number of school groups, indigenous communities, and 4-H clubs, and have pancake breakfasts. That was purely for the opportunity of educating people on the importance of conservation and modern-day farming practices, which can be developed anywhere in farming communities.

By the way, Topsy Farms will be on the *Tougher Than It Looks?* show on the Discovery channel later this fall.

I tried my hand at shearing a sheep once at the O'Hara Mill Homestead and Conservation Area in Madoc. It is tougher than it looks, and I was only operating the hand crank on the old-fashioned shears. I can tell members that by the end of about 45 minutes, one is pretty much cooked. I do not know how one does it sheep after sheep. It is remarkable.

Another great example of farmers taking an active role in conservation and stewardship in my riding is Cam Mather. He is an organic farmer at Sunflower Farm in Tamworth. He and his wife have taken things one step further and live completely off the grid. Cam said that he and his wife Michelle used to say that they own 150 acres, but now like to suggest that they are temporary custodians of 150 acres of land. This is the kind of intergenerational point of view that farmers have that fosters their sense of stewardship for the land in passing it on to the next generation.

There is active work being done across my riding by the farming community on conservation and stewardship of the land. In fact, up in Madoc next month, there will be a symposium on caring for the land, organized by The Land Between in partnership with the Hastings Stewardship Council and the Curve Lake First Nation. The non-partisan gathering is meant to share observations of the natural landscape and to give voice to the people and their life on the land. It will bring together farmers, hunters, anglers, beekeepers, gardeners, nature lovers, indigenous peoples, just name it. All stakeholders will be represented at this conference.

These are just a few examples of the countless farmers who are working hard as stewards of the land and conservationists, and there are many more.

I also want to thank Resi Walt. She is the Ontario Federation of Agriculture representative in my region, and she has shared a lot of information with me about the Canada-Ontario environmental farm plan. This plan is an assessment that is voluntarily prepared by family farms to increase their environmental awareness on their farm. It has a workshop process where farmers highlight their farm's environmental strengths, identify areas of concern, and set realistic action plans with timetables to improve environmental conditions. It is important to point out that the idea for environmental farm plans originated from the Ontario farm community itself. Farmers were involved in every stage of developing the plan, through the Ontario Farm Environmental Coalition. This program continues to be delivered to the farm community by the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association through funding provided by the growing

forward 2 program, which, as we know, is a federal-provincial-territorial initiative.

I am looking forward to seeing the great work that our Minister of Agriculture is doing on the next agricultural policy framework, which the government is supporting in budget 2017. It will help the sector grow sustainably, mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, and adapt to climate change. I appreciate the hard work he is doing for farmers across the country.

Madam Speaker, if you will indulge me, I was at the Hastings County Plowing Match and Farm Show again this summer to speak with farmers. It is the biggest and greatest plowing show in eastern Ontario. I want to thank all of the volunteers who launched Farm 911, the Emily project, there. It is a project in memory of Emily Trudeau, which encourages farmers to put 911 signs at all entrances to their farms. I encourage everyone to visit the Farm 911 website for more information, and to get involved in this life-saving project.

• (1110)

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am happy to speak today on Motion No. 108, which would recognize the contributions of ranchers as stewards of natural landscapes, and would ask the government to establish policies that support and encourage the development of private ranch conservation projects.

I thank the member for Bow River for bringing this forward. It is a subject that is close to my heart, as I worked in conservation biology before entering politics. Much of that work involved ranchlands. I know it is obviously also close to the member for Bow River. His daughter has a hop farm in my riding, in Penticton, so farming runs in their family.

Canada is a big country, with some of the wildest landscapes on earth, vast forests and tundras. As I fly across the country every week or two, I often think of the great song by the Arrogant Worms. Do not worry, as I will not try to sing it. Its chorus is this:

Our mountains are very pointy
Our prairies are not
The rest is kinda bumpy
But, man, do we have a lot!

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Yes, we have vast forests and tundras. What we do not have a lot of are native grasslands. It is grasslands that I would like to focus on today. Almost all the native grasslands of the Prairies have vanished under the plow and are now wheat, canola, and other valuable crops. The intermontane grasslands of British Columbia, where I live, are even smaller in area, confined to the valley bottoms of the interior. These have also been impacted by development, as grasslands are easily converted to orchards, vineyards, and urban development.

Grasslands are among the most endangered of Canada's ecosystems. They have always been a relatively small part of Canada. Canada's land mass has played an important part in our country's biodiversity. The prairie ecozone only comprises 5% of Canada's area, and only about a quarter of it remains in its natural state. Only about 3.5% of that is under some conservation status. That compares with 10% or so of Canada as a whole that can be considered to be in conservation.

In 2010, most of the world's nations, including Canada, signed on to a strategic plan for biodiversity as part of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity. That plan includes 20 targets for 2020, known as the Aichi targets. One of these calls for 17% of terrestrial areas to be conserved through protected areas and other conservation measures. We need to get to 17%. We have 10 or 12% overall, and only 3.5% of grasslands. We have a ways to go to meet those targets.

Grasslands are home to more than their share of endangered wildlife in Canada. We all know the story of the bison, hunted to near extinction in a few short years in the last half of the 19th century. Other animals have vanished as well, including the black-footed ferret. Birds that are tied to our grasslands are also disappearing. Every species of grassland bird in Canada has declined significantly in population over the past 40 years, every one of them. Even the iconic western meadowlark, which is literally the soundtrack of the western grasslands, has lost over half of its population.

Along with the rarity and endangerment of Canada's grasslands, the other big difference between grasslands and other ecozones in Canada is that grasslands are mostly privately owned. Our forests, rivers, lakes, and tundras are almost all publicly owned. Grasslands are mostly in ranches, because ranchers need large areas to graze their cattle to turn grass into beef and historically have bought large tracts of land to do this. Ranchers need that control over their grass because it is an annual resource that must be stewarded wisely to provide continuing forage for their livestock.

To meet those conservation targets for grasslands, or even come close to them, we will have to work in partnership with ranchers. I think we will find good conservation partners in ranchers. Indeed, there is quite a history of ranchland conservation in Canada. Many ranches have been in the hands of the same families for generations. Ranchers know their land. They know how to keep the land healthy and, in doing so, are conserving hundreds of species at risk across this country.

I have worked with a number of ranchers on conservation projects, from the Douglas Lake Ranch, the biggest spread in Canada, with more than 20,000 head of cattle on 150,000 acres of deeded land and 500,000 acres of grazing leases, down to the smaller

operations. One of my roles was as a board member of the Nature Conservancy of Canada, or NCC, the largest land conservancy in the country, and one that is always partnering with ranchers to preserve our natural heritage.

● (1115)

NCC has conserved more than a million acres of land across the country. Most of those conservation lands, the biggest area, are in western Canada, where the need to conserve grasslands coincides with that opportunity to work with ranchers. The NCC works with ranchers in several ways. Some ranchers are looking for a way to retire, to recoup the value of their land, while ensuring that the land they have stewarded for years, or even generations, is maintained in its natural state. Ranchers have a very close relationship to their land, and many do not want to see their property divided up into hobby farms or denser housing developments.

Others want to continue ranching while knowing that their land cannot be developed in the future. Lease-back arrangements or covenant sales can cover these options, while providing capital necessary for equipment purchases or other capital improvements.

Many ranchers are looking for ways to pass their operations on to their children to continue the family ranching tradition. We have heard a lot recently about how the government is making it harder for ranchers and farmers to do that.

This motion specifically asks the government to find ways to support ranchers in conservation projects. I am happy to say that the federal government has been doing that for a number of years, and I hope it continues to do so.

I do not often get the opportunity to say good things about the previous Conservative government, but I think this is one time where I have to say they had the right approach in creating the natural areas conservation program. This program partners the federal government with the Nature Conservancy of Canada and landowners across the country, including many ranchers. NCC administers the program, with the participation of Ducks Unlimited Canada and other land trusts.

More than \$277 million has been invested by the federal Ministry of Environment over the past six years, a figure that has been matched two to one, with more than \$500 million in funds from private donors, landowners, and other non-federal sources. More than one million acres have been conserved by this program. It needs continued long-term funding and ongoing support to make sure it succeeds in its goal to preserve environmentally priceless lands across Canada.

We know what we can accomplish when we set our minds to it. When science told us that DDT was disrupting the food chains of the world and killing off the top predators, we banned it. In the 40 years since we did that, the populations of our falcons, hawks, and eagles have rebounded in spectacular fashion.

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When we realized that ducks, geese, and swans were declining dramatically in the 1900s, we tightened up hunting regulations and began to aggressively preserve wetland habitats. Many of those ponds and marshes were on ranches and farms, and were enhanced by the landowners in co-operation with Ducks Unlimited Canada and other agencies. Since then, their populations have essentially completely recovered.

We can really make a difference if we choose to work with farmers and ranchers, but we also have to preserve valuable habitats on crown lands as well. We cannot rely on ranchers to do all that work. The federal government once owned 780,000 acres of PFRA community pastures in Saskatchewan, land that had been protected from development for decades. These are grasslands that were too dry to farm, and almost all were important for grassland conservation while being leased to ranchers for grazing.

The previous government eliminated the PFRA in an omnibus bill in 2012, and those pastures are now being transferred to the Province of Saskatchewan and sold to private interests. To give an idea of the impact on conservation targets, this transfer reduces Saskatchewan's overall percentage of conservation lands from 8.7% to 6.3%, clearly going in the wrong direction to meet the 17% target. There is still time and opportunity for the federal government to take a role in conserving some of these lands, and I would urge it to do so.

I will close now by simply saying that we must support ranchers and farmers in their important role as stewards of the land, conserving some of our most valuable natural landscapes. I am also happy to say that I will obviously be supporting this motion.

• (1120)

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Madam Speaker, before I begin my remarks, I would like to thank my colleague from Bow River for bringing forward this motion. Far too often, governments at all levels forget that farmers are conservationists in everything they do. I can also say that I do, because that was my background. They work to protect biological life and ecosystems. Without the soil and water to grow their crops and graze their livestock, nothing would be possible. Whether drafting legislation or regulations on environmental policy, we must always include Canadian farmers as part of that conversation. They understand the land and water better than anyone else, and that is why I applaud the member for Bow River and believe this motion is long overdue.

As my father used to say, "If you take care of the land, it will take care of you." Those are the words that every farmer lives by. Across this great country of ours, there are thousands of ranchers and farmers. From P.E.I. to British Columbia, the agricultural industry is at the very core of Canada's economy. Beef producers in Manitoba, grain producers in Alberta, and apple growers in Ontario all understand that caring for their land is the key to long-term success.

It is imperative to point out that farming is not just an occupation to pay the bills. It is a way of life as well. Unlike many other jobs, there is no such thing as a nine-to-five or Monday-to-Friday job while on the farm. Most of all, farming, in almost every circumstance, is a family affair. During seeding and harvest, calving or haying, everyone has their tasks. They work long hours. They work in whatever conditions that Mother Nature throws at them.

There are many reasons why I am supporting this motion, but, first and foremost, I believe the voices of farmers need to be heard on conservation and environmental policy. I would argue that the current Liberal government has let down farm families in some of those areas. It has stopped listening to the constituents who make a living from working the land. There are many examples of how it has let farmers down, such as its proposed tax hikes that will make it harder to transfer the farm from one generation to another. In fact, it has scheduled its so-called consultations right in the middle of harvest. If the Liberal government thought it was going to quietly hike taxes without anyone noticing, it was obviously wrong.

The Liberals also announced in their budget that they want to completely eliminate cash grain ticket deferrals. The current cash purchase ticket system helps farmers to stabilize income from year to year to ensure the long-term sustainability of their operations. Running a farm is no easy task. It means taking serious financial risks, while dealing with conditions outside of their control, such as weather, market prices, and transportation bottlenecks. Now the Liberals are about to impose a massive carbon tax that will cost farm families thousands of dollars. We know that their national carbon tax will cost over \$5.8 billion—just to emphasize, \$5.8 billion—per year and the taxes collected will rise to \$30 billion by 2022.

The Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food has also put out a memo and predicted farmers will see fuel prices rise by 10% to 20%. That tax will cost farmers up to \$3,705 more per year, on average. It is disappointing the government did not stop to think how it could work with Canadian farmers to reduce greenhouse gases. Instead, its knee-jerk reaction was to slap a new tax on them. I think we can all agree that we are starting to see a trend, and that is why this motion is so important. It is time the federal government looked to farmers as full partners in establishing policies that support and encourage the development of private farmland and ranchland conservation projects. Instead, we have a government that looks at them as tax cheats.

While it is probably too late for the Liberal government to regain the trust of farmers, I believe that through the motion, we can begin the process of involving them in the larger discussion of how we can further improve conservation efforts. We already know that most farm operations are working to protect the environment for the next generation and following generations. In Manitoba, many farmers are working with their local conservation districts or have received funds for such things as shelterbelts.

We know that through technology and innovation, farmers are using fewer resources while improving yields and keeping costs down. Many farmers have implemented new ways to reduce soil erosion, such as using no-till practices. That way, they do not disturb the soil until they plant the following spring.

● (1125)

Such things as old cornstalks and wheat chaff are left on top of the soil. This helps conserve the soil by leaving it intact so that it cannot be washed away by water or blown away by wind. The no-till method can produce high-yielding crops in areas of low moisture, due to the soil staying intact. This method can better manage crop-protection products, labour, and time, as well as a large decrease in water usage.

We also know that beef producers are managing their pasture land to ensure sustainable and viable operations for the long term. Producers are using management practices that promote the health of the animal and the environment by protecting water sources and working toward approved forage practices. In my constituency of Brandon—Souris, many beef producers are using land that is unsuitable to grow crops such as wheat, canola, and soybeans. Such land may be too sandy or densely wooded for traditional crops, but that does not mean it does not play a role in the overall ecosystem and the agricultural industry. Instead of tearing down the trees or using massive irrigation systems, beef producers are using the land to graze their cattle. Nevertheless, there is still pressure being placed on converting some grazing land into crop production. There are 5.9 million acres of grassland in Manitoba. This is one-third of the total farmland in the province. We know that compared on a price-per-yield basis, grasslands cannot compete as well with returns on annual crops. While input costs continue to soar and there is a federal government in power that is intending to raise taxes, it is no wonder why some farmers are looking at converting their grasslands into crop production. Through this motion, the federal government can firmly state that beef producers and all farmers are vitally important in conservation efforts.

To expand on the importance of grain and livestock farmers, I would like to highlight a recent University of Manitoba report that estimates the socioeconomic value of grasslands in Manitoba to be \$936 million annually, with a range of \$702 million to \$2.6 billion per year. The report goes on to note that the key to preserving pasture and hay-land resides in recognizing the increasing value of grasslands. Furthermore, the socioeconomic value of grasslands must include the ecological goods and services, in other words, the many benefits grasslands provide to the environment and to society. However, even though it is widely acknowledged that grasslands are worth more than just the value of the forage produced, defining and assigning a dollar value to that worth is complicated.

My good friend to the north, the member of Parliament for Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, has been a strong proponent of an alternate land-use services program that involves working directly with farmers and landowners. I echo his calls, and that is why it is so encouraging to see the new Progressive Conservative Government of Manitoba get behind such a program in which landowners will be paid to retain or reconstruct natural areas such as wetlands and grasslands and repairing areas near rivers. Therefore, instead of the stick approach, such as the Liberal carbon tax, which will only

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economically hurt our farmers and ranchers, we can use the carrot approach and further enhance what many are already doing. We know that carbon storage is quite high on perennial grasslands. The carbon is stored in the soil and is in the extensive root system of perennials, accumulating over time. When accounting for the total amount of carbon stored in Manitoba grasslands, it is estimated at 250 million tonnes. That is a lot of carbon being taken out of the air, while also providing the necessary pasture land to support beef production.

It is also important to highlight that another report put out by the University of Manitoba found that Canada's beef industry continues to become more efficient. The report stated that beef producers have reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 15% in the last 30 years, which means that the same kilogram of beef we get at the grocery store now has a smaller greenhouse gas footprint. Researchers from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and Environment Canada also found that there has been a 15% decrease in methane, a 16% decrease in nitrous dioxide, and a 13% decrease in carbon dioxide from beef production in Canada over the last 30 years. Comparing the same time periods, it took 29% fewer cattle in the breeding herd and 24% less land to produce the same amount of beef.

We must also never forget that pasture lands are the home of many species in wildlife. Our beef producers are already working with various wildlife organizations and are having a tremendous positive impact. Another tangible way farmers are improving conservation efforts is by keeping livestock out of streams and rivers. In doing so, they are reducing the amount of nutrients that could potentially end up in the water, like nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium.

In closing—

● (1130)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry, but unfortunately the member has run out of time.

Resuming debate. The hon. member for Lambton—Kent—Middlesex.

Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always an honour to speak in the House, and particularly today in support of my colleague from Bow River and his Motion No. 108, which reads:

That, in the opinion of the House, the government should recognize that the ongoing contribution of ranchers and farmers as stewards of the land and conservationists is part of our history, proudly shared by all Canadians, and should consider establishing policies which would support and encourage the development of private farm and ranch land conservation and restoration projects.

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That is quite something. My riding of Lambton—Kent—Middlesex is all about small, family-run businesses, with agriculture being the dominant industry. Though this would likely be disputed, it is maybe one of the richest agricultural areas in Canada, but certainly in Ontario. We are very blessed in this country to have some of the greatest land this world has given us for our farmers and producers. In Canada and in my riding we are very fortunate to have innovation and technology available to our agriculture producers. They are farmers, but they are much more than that. They are innovators. They not only produce food domestically, they are also recognized around the world for producing some of the best, if not the very highest-quality, products we export. Whether it is crops, horticulture, or livestock, because of the standards our agricultural producers follow, we are assured that we produce the best and safest food in the world. When we sell to markets beyond Canada, we are also recognized for that.

I had the opportunity to be involved in CETA and other free trade agreements, but it did not matter what part of the world we were talking about, whether Europe, the Middle East, Central America, or our U.S. friends, because we were recognized by all for doing what we said we were going to do, and for producing the highest-quality product. We have become part of that demand. Why is that? It is because we are diversified in agriculture.

In Canada, we have diversity in agriculture. Not every country has the opportunity to have such agricultural diversity, but we do it environmentally and with a conservation effort that is beyond reproach. This is about the environment and conservation. It has always bothered me that in agriculture we never look back on what we have done. There are those who always tell us what we are not doing, that we are not looking after things right, or that we are not environmentalists in terms of our soil or not looking after our livestock. However, I wish people would take in the full picture and listen to what we have actually accomplished. We look after our soils in many ways.

● (1135)

When I was younger, we plowed the ground, worked it to death, planted seeds and grew a crop. If we grew 65 bushels of corn we did pretty well, if we grew 75 we did really well, and now 200 is actually the target in my area. Why is that? It is because we have adapted. We work with commodity organizations, soil and crop people, and government agencies to adapt conservationist, tillage, and precision planning strategies and to achieve efficiencies in the equipment we use, including fuel efficiencies, and in the specific placement of the seed and fertilizer.

Now they grid the farms and we have equipment showing that on a screen. They use very low amounts of fertilizer, depending on the productivity of the ground. They know how much spray to put on, and variable amounts of pesticide control are used because we can now tell what sort of weeds and infestations are there. The conservation techniques used by our agricultural producers are amazing. Producers do not always use conventional tillage, but use no till, minimum till, and strip tillage.

There are all of these talks about what is being done in agriculture to be conservationists and environmentalists. How do we show

that to Canadians so they recognize the value of this amazing industry in Canada?

If we do not have a car, we do not drive; if we do not have a house, we can live in something else; but if we do not have food, the other things become less important. That is what our agricultural producers do, not only for this part of the country and the countries we export to, but also in terms of Canada's generosity in the products we provide to foreign countries in terms of aid. Even more, it is about the resources and the intelligence we lend to help developing countries so they can be better producers, conservationists, and environmentalists. Quite honestly, it is a gold plate for Canada that we can come alongside some of our developed countries and allies and be able to share that experience with them.

There is a sign on some of our corn fields, which could be 100 or 200 acres in size, that one acre of corn field absorbs eight metric tonnes of greenhouse gases. That is amazing. It will not do that just this year, but also next year and every year. The same happens with the production of our canola, soybeans, and livestock. The changes to improve our environment and soil have been just outstanding.

I want to let everyone know, as I am sure they may understand, that I am here to support this great motion. It is something that I hope the government will take a turn on, so that instead of trying to tax us to death and to set us back, it will come along encourage this great industry so we can continue to be the environmentalists and conservationists we have always been.

● (1140)

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to stand and speak to the motion put forward by our hon. colleague from Bow River, M-108. It is important that we always make sure we stand up for the hard-working citizens and community members in our ridings, and Canadians across our country from coast to coast to coast.

During the time I have been afforded to discuss M-108, I want to talk about my riding of Cariboo—Prince George and, indeed, friends and families of my wife and I. We have just come through one of the most devastating summers that members could imagine because of the wildfires and the huge swaths of farming land that have been lost. Our agricultural land and our agricultural industry, as well as our forestry industry, have been devastated by the wildfires.

I salute our hon. colleague for bringing this motion forward. Our Canadian farmers and ranchers are amongst the very best in the world. There is a huge global demand for the products we grow and produce. My area is primarily cattle country, but in terms of Canada's beef production overall, in 2016 alone, \$2.3 billion worth of cattle exports went to over 56 countries worldwide. Right now, the U.S. is our number one trading partner for our beef shipments, which speaks to the reasons we should be diversifying those trade lines.

Among the things that our previous government did was to invest in our farmers and ranchers, that is, our agricultural sector, to make sure they were leading the charge in new technology and ways that would make us globally sustainable and attractive. Our products and farmers and ranchers are above anything else. They are leading the way in sustainable practices.

Our farmers and ranchers work 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. I always say that while their books may show they are earning a lot of money, they are not the ones who spend that money on fancy condos, villas, or vacations. The money they earn gets spent in the communities they live. They are always preparing for the next season.

My family, as well as my wife's family, are long-standing farming families. We know the ups and downs and how trade and cattle prices can make a difference at our Sunday afternoon dinner or how things are going in our everyday finances.

Farming is not a glamorous life, but it truly is an honourable life. Our farmers and farming families care deeply about their communities. They care deeply about our country, our rivers, lakes, and streams. During the 2017 summer wildfires, it was our farmers and ranchers who refused the evacuation orders. They stood tall to fight back the fires. They protected their own properties and their neighbours' properties. Many of them are also logging contractors. They are the ones who know our region and our communities better than anyone else. They know the shortcuts to the next pasture. They know the shortcuts to the next town. It was that local knowledge that saved many properties and, indeed, lives.

● (1145)

I would like to acknowledge, and I have done it time and time again, the efforts of our farmers and our community, which stood tall during the fires we had.

Sometimes they take a hit, as we just saw with the unfair tax proposals put forward a few weeks back. They were going to target our farmers. They were going to target those hard-working families. I have yet to see what these changes look like. I think the announcement has just been made. We should be doing everything in our power to make sure we are celebrating, not punishing, those hard-working farming families.

Our government invested heavily in our agriculture sector during our term, because we knew that this was a competitive area for Canada and an area where Canada can really be on the forefront in terms of technology and new practices.

It is not a glamorous life. It is a very hard life. Our farmers, much like our foresters and our fishers, are the salt of the earth. They are hard working. They never say no. They have a can-do spirit.

One of the challenges they face is that the next generation is not coming along behind them to take over the family farms. In our neck of the woods, we have seen international firms come along. We cannot blame those farmers who do not have the next generation coming behind them. These firms are offering huge sums of money to take over their farms. We have lost a lot of agricultural land because these international groups have come in and have plowed under generations of grazing lands and fields for the purpose of carbon credits offshore.

Private Members' Business

I first became aware of this in 2015, when I was running for the Conservative nomination and then for this position. It was shameful to see that we lost in excess of 20,000 acres of prime agricultural land in our neck of the woods. It was mowed under and sprayed with incredible amounts of pesticides, with no care whatsoever with respect to adjacent fields and herds. It was all for an offshore company, which makes many brand names. I was shocked to learn that it had purchased this plot of land and had mowed it under, all for offshore carbon credits. That is shameful. I think we have managed to stem the tide of that, but we see a lot of challenges in terms of doing whatever we can to make it easier for the next generation to come into and buy into this honourable profession.

Our farmers and ranchers truly are the conversationists of our land. They know their land better than anyone else. They care for their animals like no other. If members have ever seen a rancher who has lost part of a herd to wolf kills or predator kills and how they grieve and how it bothers them, it is truly moving. Time and again we have people who do not understand the farming life, the ranching life, and the rodeo life who complain about rodeos being rough and animal cruelty. It is a way of life in the Cariboo, and I am proud of it.

I am proud of our families in the Cariboo. I am proud of our ranchers and our farmers right across the country. I will always stand with them and make sure that they know they will get every support and everything they can from me as the member of Parliament for Cariboo—Prince George.

● (1150)

Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC): Madam Speaker, I look forward to hearing the closing remarks by the member for Bow River as he brings together the discussions we have heard here this morning. There were great comments from each of the members we heard.

Part of the motion speaks to our part of history, as far as farmers and ranchers are concerned. I just want to tie in some of the experiences my family has had.

My wife's grandfather came to Alberta in 1892 as a surveyor. He looked at some of the land in my part of central Alberta. The key reason he decided in 1903 to bring his family was the water. That was a key component of what he needed to have to ensure that he could be a good farmer and rancher. At that time, it was true horsepower people were looking at. They had draft horses and range horses. All these things were important to the community and to what was taking place, but water was the key component.

My family came up from the United States in 1903 to the same community. My wife and I lived only about a mile and a half apart. This was a community that looked at farming and at all the things that were important, and again, it was community and it was water. We ourselves have over 100 years of being in that community. When we look at the land we have, when we look at the way it has been managed as far as both farmers and ranchers are concerned, we have done some amazing things. It is important that we recognize the great work being done by farmers and ranchers in our communities.

Private Members' Business

The other thing that is important, and it was mentioned earlier, is the technology being used at this time. In the next month, we are going to have Agri-Trade in Red Deer, which is a massive gathering of farmers, ranchers, and business people who are looking at the way new technology will help our industry. It will help our industry in such a way that we will have less of a carbon footprint. It is the type of thing people talk about, but there is not recognition of the great work done in the agricultural industry. These are the sorts of things we are going to see there.

I taught school for 34 years to support my farming habit, and many people have done the same type of thing. Because of that, I have a great affinity for the things we are speaking about today.

Conservation is important. We also need to look at new farmers who are going to be coming in. I have had the pleasure, over the last nine years, of attending Outstanding Young Farmers presentations, not only in Alberta but also nationally, to look at the amazing things young people are doing. I am proud of that work. I am proud of the types of things we see and the technology that is there.

Again, there is the whole concept of water. I suppose that is one of the reasons people who live on the land get a little concerned when they see those who live in cities taking a run at them, while they are dumping their sewage and everything into the rivers, the lakes, and the oceans. As farmers, we are trying to make sure that we are putting fences around so that those things do not happen, yet we listen to others who feel that they can lecture us.

I look forward to the member for Bow River being able to bring this all together.

• (1155)

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Madam Speaker, it was an honour to listen to my colleagues speak in the House. The member for Hastings—Lennox and Addington said that the best lessons the environment committee learned were from standing on the land with ranchers and farmers for two hours as they explained how it really works. That is the best kind of knowledge one can get. He referred to activities in his riding, where people go out to see farms and ranches. In Alberta, there are Alberta Open Farm Days, where people open up their agricultural operations and encourage people from urban centres to come and see them. Inviting urban people to see where their food comes from is a great program.

The member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay talked about conservation. We have a target of 17%. There are a tremendous number of ranchers and farmers, led by companies and organizations like Ducks Unlimited, that put land into conservation so that it will only be used for what it has been used for, but those lands are not accounted for under our chief targets. They need to be credited, because these farmers and ranchers are making conservation efforts. That needs to be part of the inventory to meet that target.

The member for Brandon—Souris talked about efficiencies. I remember being on a combine with a 14-foot header in the past, but this summer I was on one with a 40-foot header. The less fuel they use, the less greenhouse gas is produced when they go from a 14-foot to a 40-foot header. The efficiency is incredible. Efficiency in the agricultural sector has greatly increased.

My colleague from Lambton—Kent—Middlesex talked about a number of things led by agricultural people, such as the code of practice that feedlot operators produced in southern Alberta, which is now a keystone all over the world. Feedlot operators, given the opportunity to partner, produced a code of practice that is outstanding in the world. As my friend from Cariboo—Prince George said, farmers and ranchers really care about it. It reminds me of the 4Rs of fertilizer: use the right source, at the right rate, at the right time, at the right place. Farmers and ranchers are using this. Instead of fertilizers being put into lost production, agricultural people know how to do that and appreciate it.

My friend and neighbour to the north, the member for Red Deer—Mountain View, talked about water being such an incredible factor in agriculture and how farmers and ranchers have changed their practices to protect the water. The four largest irrigation districts are in my riding. The amount of acreage has increased, but they have not increased water usage due to the efficient use of water. It is phenomenal.

With that said, I encourage all my hon. colleagues to join me in recognizing farmers and ranchers and their legacy of environmental conservation and stewardship of the land.

• (1200)

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

Government Orders

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, October 18, 2017, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

OCEANS ACT

The House resumed from September 29 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. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to compliment the member for Bow River on his motion. I was happy to second it. The speech I am about to give relates quite closely to the wonderful motion he has introduced.

I am pleased to rise in the chamber to speak to Bill C-55, an act to amend the Oceans Act and Canada Petroleum Act. Essentially, the proposed bill will allow the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard to designate interim marine protected areas for five years while the government consults and studies whether the MPA should be permanent.

The Liberal government arrogance knows no bounds, given that the fisheries committee was charged with studying this very topic, and is in the middle of its study. However, the government is going ahead without the benefit of advice from the fisheries committee. I had the honour of sitting on the fisheries committee for nearly seven years. It does great work. People from all parties get together to conserve our fisheries resources and provide good advice, yet the government chooses to go ahead without the benefit of that advice.

Before I get into debating the merits of whether the bill will achieve its desired results, all of us believe in the protection of our coastal waters, and we have a deep connection with the environment. In my own career as a fisheries biologist, I have been involved with environmental conservation for 35-plus years.

When it comes to the preservation of parkland and the protection of our oceans, our Conservative government made giant steps to reconcile the divide between what was best for the environment and the people who lived there and used it. I would again refer to the previous motion. People who live on the land are the best conservationists. People who use our waterways and catch our fish care more about the environment and conservation than just about anyone else.

Our government took consultation seriously and strived to ensure everyone had a say. In 2009, Parliament unanimously passed legislation resulting in a sixfold expansion of the Nahanni National Park Reserve, bringing the park to 30,000 square kilometres in size. A year later, after a parliamentary review, the Gwaii Haanas National Marine Conservation Area Reserve and Haida Heritage Site became the first marine protected area to be scheduled under the Canada

National Marine Conservation Areas Act, which was another great project of our Conservative government.

In a global first, this new marine protected area, along with the existing Gwaii Haanas National Marine Conservation Area Reserve and Haida Heritage Site, to this very day protects the connecting area that extends from alpine mountaintops right down to the bottom of the ocean floor, a rich temperate rainforest and its adjoining marine ecosystem that is now protected for the benefit of future generations. All of this was accomplished as we worked hand in hand with the local communities that were most affected by this. That is the proper way to establish a marine conservation area.

It is important to note that our government not only worked to protect large or remote natural areas such as Nahanni, Gwaii Haanas, and Sable Island. We also worked to protect the endangered habitat and species, and to conserve some of the last remaining natural areas in more developed settings.

I am extremely proud of our Conservative government's track record when it comes to the environment. We were about action, about making the necessary changes for the betterment of all of our citizens. On our watch as a Conservative government nearly every environmental indicator in our country improved. From sulphur dioxide emissions, nitrous oxide emissions, etc., and the amount of land protected, nearly every environmental indicator improved.

A large part of our tremendous environmental track record was under the national conservation plan that Prime Minister Harper announced a few years ago, which unfortunately the current government is letting slip away. Under the NCP, we had the natural areas conservation program, which conserved 800,000 acres of highly-valued conservation land in Canada's developed areas.

One program I was especially proud of was the recreational fisheries conservation partnerships program. In that program, our government partnered with the angling community and the recreational fishing community. About four million Canadians love to angle. We worked with these fisheries groups to fund about 800 projects to improve fisheries habitat right across the country. Unfortunately, this program is sunseting under the Liberal government. It is a travesty that we are losing the recreational fisheries conservation partnerships program, and all the expertise and enthusiasm the angling community has generated. We did work on invasive species. We did important work in toxic site remediation. Randle Reef in Hamilton harbour comes to mind.

● (1205)

We streamlined and made a more efficient project review process without harming the environment in any way. We streamlined the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. We rewrote the Fisheries Act. None of this had any negative impact on the environment, but served to promote and encourage natural resource development.

Government Orders

The Liberals and the Conservatives are very different when it comes to environmental policy. The Liberals and the New Democrats, their fellow travellers on the left, are all about environmental process. The Conservatives are about environmental results. The two are very different.

Getting more specific about marine protected areas, they are a very challenging program to implement. It is much easier to implement protection in terrestrial areas such as our national parks, wildlife management areas, and so on. It is easy to say “protected” when we talk about marine protected areas, but from what? In terms of MPAs, the devil is always in the details.

Let us just visualize what a marine protected area would look like. Visualize the water column, which is a three dimensional slice of the ocean. We look at the surface, the water itself, the volume of water underneath that surface area, and the bottom, the benthic area where the benthic organisms live. Fish migrate through this water column at different times of year. Tides change the currents on a daily basis. The challenges with MPAs actually are much greater than the challenges with terrestrial areas. There are a multitude of activities in that water column, for example, human activity, ships going over the top of the water and recreational fishing. Marine protected areas are quite difficult. It is very important the government gets this right. If it does not, human activity will be disrupted, with very little improvement on the environment.

That is why I find this a bit difficult to support. One one hand, the Liberals say that they will consult with provincial governments and interested and affected stakeholders, yet time and time again witnesses at the fisheries committee testified that these consultations were not taking place. When they did take place, they were sorely lacking.

Leonard LeBlanc, the managing director of the Gulf of Nova Scotia Fleet Planning Board, said:

The process DFO used to approach harvester associations and consult on the areas of interest for designation was unorganized and totally not transparent. This consultation process on the area of interest for MPA designation in the Cape Breton Trough perpetuated the lack of trust between industry and DFO. The lack of inclusion and answers during the consultation phase, the lack of [any] real scientific evidence for reasoning behind the area of interest, and the lack of guarantees that traditional fisheries could continue all led to further distrust of DFO's consultation...

Ian MacPherson, the executive director of the Prince Edward Island Fishermen's Association, said:

...we have concerns surrounding the tight timelines to accomplish these goals. 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.

A gentleman named Jordan Nickerson has invested hundreds of thousands of dollars in a crab fishery. He talked about how well it was going. He said:

Our crab was landed in pristine quality...As a company, we were...relieved, as it looked as though we might actually achieve our dream and see a possible return on investment [but the MPA program has hit]...we were all too quickly familiarized with the concept of MPAs...and marine conservation targets, by DFO and the Government of Canada. Abruptly, our access to...fishing grounds was being called into question, thereby adding more complexity to an already strenuous situation.

Mr. Nickerson went on to say:

Canada should be a leader in listening to its people and taking the time to listen and spend the money and do the proper science before coming to a huge decision

such as establishing...MPAs supposedly based on science. These decisions will take time, but they should be Canadian decisions based on Canadian timelines, not offhand commitments made to international arenas void of any voices of those who will be impacted most and who are most informed...We should all understand the importance of saving and protecting the environment; however, environmental groups don't depend on the fishery to put food on the table and tax dollars to work. They are using their campaigns to maintain their future funding strings and their own future.

● (1210)

Christina Burrige, executive director of the BC Seafood Alliance, said:

On the west coast, we're not seeing a lot of evidence-based decision-making. It's beginning to look like political decision-making....

Closing large areas to fishing off the west coast does little for biodiversity, little for conservation, little for the men and women up and down the coast who work in our sector and who are middle class or aspire to [be] middle class and little for the health of [citizens], who deserve access to local, sustainable seafood.

Jim McIsaac, the managing director of the BC Commercial Fishing Caucus, said:

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.

On and on, throughout the hearings, stakeholders, people who live and work on the sea, complained bitterly about the lack of consultation and, quite frankly, the lack of science.

Sean Cox, a professor of fisheries from Simon Fraser University, 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.

Callum Roberts said, “If you want to build on a process of trust and goodwill, you don't then ignore what your stakeholders say and consult on only a minority of the protected areas that were being recommended” or we will end up without “a network of protected areas.”

Chris Sporer, the executive manager for the Pacific Halibut Management Association, said, “The MPA process needs to take into consideration and evaluate the ecological consequences of displacing fishing effort.”

Mr. Sporer talked at length about the fact that halibut fishing would be much more difficult and perhaps threaten non-target species if they were, “kicked out” of some of the prime halibut fishing areas.

Again, unfortunately for those making a living off of the ocean, the Liberal government has a pattern of broken promises and has continually put its own partisan interests above what is best for its citizens. To be honest, it makes me question why the Liberals are pushing the bill so hard. Could it be they are merely trying to appease the international community to score points for a much-touted Security Council bid?

With respect to the bungling by the current government in managing our environment and resources, nothing quite comes close to the bungling that happened on the energy east project. I am going to quote from an article by Dennis McConaghy, a former TransCanada Pipeline employee who designed pipelines. The title of the article is “I helped plan Energy East, and I know the government's excuses are bunk”, a very telling statement by a person who was on the ground. The article stated:

The vast majority of the \$1 billion in Energy East development costs went to pursuing regulatory approval...Since TransCanada first filed with the National Energy Board in late 2014, the project has had to cope with litany of regulatory dysfunctions.

This may not seem related to MPAs, but it is all part and parcel of the government's approach to local communities, economic development, and our natural resources industries. He went on to say:

...regulatory dysfunctions ranging from protracted information requests beyond the initial filing, recusal of the original NEB panel to be replaced by a panel of limited pertinent regulatory experience, failure to use the existing regulatory record prior to the recusal, inadequate security arrangements for attempted public hearings and, worst of all, the recent decision to “re-scope” the issues to be addressed in the hearing itself.

From when TransCanada first conceived this project internally in late 2011, accumulated development costs have exceeded \$1 billion, the vast majority relating to the pursuit of regulatory approval. No private sector entity would ever have expended such a vast amount of capital seeking regulatory approval if it had known the dimension of the regulatory and political risk...

The last straw was the re-scoping decision taken by the current NEB panel, and supported by the [Liberal] government. This decision concerned whether carbon emissions generated by the production process of the oil to be moved by Energy East were consistent or not with Ottawa's carbon policy. To be clear, these are not emissions generated by the Energy East pipeline directly, but are emissions TransCanada is not responsible for...

● (1215)

Over the past week, the Trudeau government has offered various sophistries to obfuscate the basic point that it bears culpability for a dysfunctional regulatory system and its failure to clarify basic elements of Canadian carbon policy. Latest of all is the government invoking changed commodity-price conditions

—as the natural resources minister always does—

as the cause for Energy East's demise, while it proudly points out that Trans Mountain and Keystone XL are still alive, despite these projects facing the same commodity-price environment.

Again, the dysfunctionality, I think I may have coined a new word here, of the government when it comes to regulatory affairs, managing our natural environment, and consulting with local people, is clearly abysmal. I would like to go back to Mr. Jordan Nickerson, who has invested hundreds of thousands of dollars in his small business. Just as he is about to show some success, his fear is that his access to his fishing-grounds will be compromised. Not only that, there is the small business tax program coming down upon him.

Of course, we were all treated to the excuses by the finance minister in not disclosing the fact that he owned a French villa. Having what he has, I would definitely excuse him from that. As well, there was his use of the phrase that it was caused by “early administrative confusion”. Should any of us ever be audited by the CRA, because the finance minister used that excuse, we could state the same excuse of “early administrative confusion”. We can say we have the finance minister's backing on that. I can see the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries. I am not going to say he agrees, but I think he is enjoying this particular example.

Government Orders

The small business tax will make life harder for fishing families like Mr. Nickerson's. Throw in the MPA designation, throw in a potential carbon tax, and one wonders why somebody would ever take that risk, hundreds of thousands of dollars to set up a fishery in this risky environment created by the current Liberal government with its dysfunctional regulatory approach.

Again, we are concerned that this is another tax grab and a way to thwart the ambitions of people like Mr. Nickerson. We know that Liberal tax hikes are making it more difficult for entrepreneurs like Mr. Nickerson to maintain and grow their businesses. The previous Conservative government created a low-tax competitive business environment that drove investment and created hundreds and thousands of private sector jobs. In terms of the Liberals' small business tax proposals, Jack Mintz from the University of Calgary, said, “This is just one more way to discourage entrepreneurship, on top of all the tax increases in the past two years.”

Kim Moody, the director of the Canadian tax advisory at Moodys Gartner stated:

What the government will do here is stifle entrepreneurs who have been the backbone of Canada's growth ... and all in a 75-day consultation period, held mainly over the summer, when everyone, including the government bureaucrats supposedly listening, are on holiday.”

It is my hope that we can work together on the issue of MPAs and that the government will listen to the members of the fisheries committee, and to local communities. As I said, I have been involved with fisheries conservation for many years and natural resource conservation, and I sat on the fisheries committee for nearly seven years. The conservation of Canada's natural resources is of paramount importance. It is vital that the government listen to the people who are on the land.

I am constantly astonished. I have the honour of representing Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa. In my riding, I have commercial fishermen, farmers, ranchers, trappers, tourist operators, hunters, and anglers. My particular constituency could be considered a model of natural resources development with people working in harmony with their environments. I have the honour of owning a little 480-acre farm south of Riding Mountain National Park. The biodiversity in my region is truly phenomenal. It is maintained by people on the land.

To conclude, it is very important that the government listen to people who commercially and recreationally fish. It is critical that they get the MPA program right.

● (1220)

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for his seven years of work on the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans and for getting me up to speed when I became the parliamentary secretary. I can assure the member that, despite the fact that he has gone on to a new committee, his presence is still felt. I speak on behalf of the entire committee when I say that.

Government Orders

The message I get from Canadians across the country is that they are counting on us to protect our oceans. I have just returned from a three-day Southern Resident Killer Whale symposium with scientists and experts from across the country and the United States who are talking about how our green ecosystems are being affected at rates far faster than we ever expected.

When it comes to the amendment on interim protection, within the first 24 months when we know there have been some initial science and initial consultations, we realize there is some level of biodiversity that is at risk. The member opposite must agree that the precautionary principle tells us, and this amendment is in lockstep with the principle, that we must take action.

I imagine there must be a circumstance where the member opposite would agree with that statement and I would like his comments and reflection on that point.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Madam Speaker, it is always tempting when a government member asks a question to get aggressive, tough, and snarly, but with the kind words from the parliamentary secretary, even for me that will be extremely difficult. I want to thank him for his very kind words and for the many conversations we had about fisheries conservation.

As someone who has spent his entire career in natural resources conservation, nothing could be more important. As a member of Parliament for a rural natural resource area, it is absolutely critical that the needs of local people, local residents and the natural resources community be taken into account when MPAs or any other conservation programs are put in place. When we do that, we will get way better conservation.

● (1225)

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for the efforts we have seen for the past seven years on our fisheries committee. I will echo the parliamentary secretary's comments that the impact our hon. colleague has had on the committee in the past will carry on in the future. He is indeed one of our leaders in this area within our caucus.

Bill C-55 gives the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, and the Minister of Natural Resources the ministerial power to immediately designate a marine protected area without consultation. At the heart of this, it is about protecting our waterways, oceans and no one is debating that we want to make sure we are doing everything to protect our oceans. It is misleading when the parliamentary secretary says that perhaps we do not feel the same. It is our previous government's targets that the government is trying to fast-track, but consultation has to be met.

I know the member touched on this in his presentation, but would he agree that giving complete ministerial oversight in terms of powers to designate an MPA without consultation causes concern?

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for Cariboo—Prince George for those kind words. I certainly enjoyed my time on the fisheries committee and if they will have me back, I will visit from time to time.

The issue about MPAs is getting it right. When I describe what the water column in an ocean is, there are a multitude of activities. When

we write a law, we proscribe certain activities that are allowed or not. Let us say we want to protect the sponge reefs off the B.C. coast. How would ocean shipping a few hundred metres above those sponge reefs affect the benthic invertebrates? It simply cannot.

We heard at the fisheries committees about the interests from the shipping industry, fishermen's groups, recreational fishing groups, and so on, and about the complexities of setting up MPAs and that if we do not do it right, we will cause more harm than good. I will go back to Mr. Nickerson, who has put hundreds of thousands of dollars of investment in his crab fishery. He is terribly worried about his access to fishing-grounds. What does that mean in terms of his employees, bank loans, and all those kinds of things? The risks he takes are enormous and government should help people like him and not hinder them.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, my colleague mentioned issues related to international agreements in his speech, and of a conspiracy that it is going to trade for something by agreeing to some elements of international agreement percentages, as we are very much behind places like China, for example.

What is the Conservative Party's position with regard to percentages of coverage and international agreements? What particular trade-offs does the member think the federal Liberal government is getting in trying to reach those international agreements?

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Madam Speaker, I find it astonishing that the member would compare China's environment with ours.

Canada is an environmental leader around the world. Our Conservative government pushed that agenda extremely hard. For example, the United Nations in 2010, under our government's watch, said that Canada, of all the industrialized countries, is almost at the very top in terms of water quality.

International agreements, unfortunately, do not take into account local considerations. The member for Bow River also talked about the problems with the definition of conservation. There are all kinds of conservation lands in Canada that "do not count" under the IUCN definition.

We need a made-in-Canada conservation, environment, and marine protected areas policy that benefits local communities and local people, and puts Canadians first.

● (1230)

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, Canada has the largest coastline in the world.

Does the member feel that comparing Canada to other countries, in terms of ranking where Canada stands, is a fair judgment? Canada has some of the most geographically diverse, as well as the longest, coastlines. Comparing us to the U.K., Ireland, Norway, Denmark, or indeed China is a misrepresentation. It truly is not comparing apples to apples.

Government Orders

We are standing up against Bill C-55, because, again, true consultation has not taken place, given that we have such a geographically diverse and long coastline.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Madam Speaker, just as an aside, I had the honour this summer to be on leg six of the Canada C3 150 voyage. It was truly a remarkable experience. I will give the government credit for initiating that particular voyage. The icebreaker went from Montreal all the way around to the Victoria. I think it is still on the trip.

My own experience was from Nain, Labrador to Iqaluit. I got to experience the Labrador coast. I spent time in the eastern Arctic in a previous life, but had never seen the Labrador coast. It was truly remarkable. I use that as an example of what Canada has done. The area we went by was Torngat Mountains National Park, a national park created by our Conservative government, I might add.

Canada's environmental track record is exemplary. I happen to live next door to Riding Mountain National Park, which I affectionately refer to as my park, a 1,100-square mile treasure trove of biodiversity that Canada, in its wisdom, set aside many years ago. We have example after example of this.

Canada can stand proud in terms of our environmental record.

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise in the House today to talk about Bill C-55. The Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard has been given a clear mandate to protect Canada's three oceans, our coasts, our waterways, and our fisheries to ensure that they remain healthy for the benefit of future generations. This is a commitment that I take very seriously and personally. I am extremely honoured that my first piece of legislation as the parliamentary secretary to the minister is for such a worthy cause.

The Oceans Act is a fundamental tool that Canadians rely upon to ensure the future health of our marine ecosystems. A pristine and abundant environmental ecosystem is the greatest underlying economic driver that we have.

Specific to today's debate, the Government of Canada is committed to meeting Aichi target 11 under the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity. This commits us to conserving 10% of our coastal and marine areas through the establishment and effective management of marine protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures by 2020.

Canada's commitment to meet this target was confirmed again in 2015 through our support of the United Nations General Assembly 2030 sustainable development program. Our government established an interim target of protecting 5% of marine and coastal areas by the end of 2017 to show our seriousness in achieving this goal, and we will meet this standard.

The government is making progress on our marine conservation targets through co-operation and strong partnerships with provincial, territorial, and municipal governments, and through a renewed relationship with indigenous peoples. These partnerships enable us to deliver real and positive changes that will preserve ecosystems and species to ensure that Canada's marine resources can continue to

support sustainable industries, local economies, and our coastal communities.

Our three oceans are complex webs of ecological and human systems that need to be understood and, in many cases, protected. Marine protected areas and marine protected area networks preserve these ecological links and protect diverse marine ecosystems and species.

Canadians understand that our oceans hold many wonders and are an important source of resources. They also expect us to deliver healthier oceans for generations to come, and this legislation would help us do that. We will continue to establish marine protected areas through science-based decision-making, transparency, and in a manner that advances reconciliation with indigenous peoples.

The government has been following the five-point plan that we announced on World Oceans Day, 2016. This plan is not only guiding our efforts at home but also helping us reclaim our position as a leader on the international stage when it comes to ocean protection. The five-point plan includes advancing areas of interest toward designation as marine protected areas, such as the 140,000 square kilometres of ocean off the west coast of Vancouver Island that was identified for protection earlier this summer. The plan also includes the goal of establishing MPAs faster, based on results of scientific study and thorough consultations. As mentioned previously by the Prime Minister, Canada has taken important steps toward its 5% target, having now achieved 3.63%, or almost 209,000 square kilometres of marine and coastal protection across our three oceans.

It currently takes an average of seven years to designate a marine protected area under the Oceans Act. It requires time to undertake scientific assessments and socio-economic studies, as well as to conduct consultations with governments, indigenous groups, and stakeholders. These are important steps that cannot be eliminated, as they will ensure that a marine protected area will achieve its intended objectives while supporting local culture, the economy, and other needs. That said, a very clear understanding of what needs to be protected typically emerges well before all the data is compiled.

The amendments to the Oceans Act under Bill C-55 propose solutions that would help us protect critical and unique areas of Canada's oceans faster, without sacrificing the necessary scientific and consultative processes. The amendments will ensure that collaboration continues, requiring provinces, territories, indigenous groups, industry, and other stakeholders to be a part of both the establishment and management processes. Essentially, Bill C-55 proposes amendments that would provide an additional tool that would allow for interim protection of areas requiring protection through a ministerial order. This interim protection would be done following initial science and consultations, which would take around 24 months. Following this step, the full federal regulatory process would continue to formally designate the marine protected area within five years.

Government Orders

•(1235)

These amendments would ensure that when it is needed, an interim marine protected area could be put in place. New activities that risk further harm to ocean ecosystems, habitat, or marine life would not be allowed to occur in these interim protected zones. These amendments not only respect current activities but also the need to conduct comprehensive consultations and scientific research before a final marine protected area is established. The time frame to fully establish a marine protected area may still be up to seven years, but there could be some level of interim protection in place within the first two. No longer can a lack of 100% scientific certainty be used to delay or prevent the protection of a sensitive marine area that Canadians are counting on us collectively within the House to protect.

This is a policy that is entirely in lockstep with the precautionary approach, a founding principle of conservation in Canada. To put it another way, an interim marine protected area would essentially freeze the footprint of ongoing activities. Under this concept, only ongoing activities, meaning those activities occurring within one year before the interim protection is in place, would be allowed to continue. For example, current fishing activities, or fishing activities for which a moratorium is in place but licences are still held, would be considered ongoing activities.

To further support this new concept, which is integral to the creation of an interim marine protected area, Bill C-55 also includes amendments that would require application of the precautionary principle when deciding whether to designate new marine protected areas. This means that incomplete information or a lack of absolute certainty, 100% scientific certainty, as I previously described it, would not be justification for avoiding protection where there is a risk to the biodiversity in the marine ecosystem.

Bill C-55 also includes modernized, updated, and strengthened enforcement powers, fines, and punishments under the Oceans Act. The amendments and additions proposed in Bill C-55 align with other environmental laws, such as the Environmental Enforcement Act and the Canadian Environmental Protection Act.

The proposed amendments to the Oceans Act have received broad support during outreach efforts to discuss the bill. Canadians recognize that the amendments would not short-circuit the development of sound science or cut off people's opportunity to collaborate and be consulted on the development of marine protected areas. Instead, they would ensure that protection could be put in place more quickly in the interests of all Canadians. We would be able to act on initial science and information to help keep these areas safe while the additional research, engagement, and regulatory processes are worked through.

Supporting the health of our oceans is necessary to ensure that future generations will be able to rely on the unique and precious marine ecosystems and resources that underlie our environment and our economy. It should go without saying, but Canadians are counting on us to protect our oceans more than ever before, a resource that at times we have too often taken for granted.

I invite everyone in the House to support Bill C-55, an act to amend the Oceans Act, to ensure the protection of our oceans not only today but for generations to come.

•(1240)

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I enjoy working with the parliamentary secretary on this file.

Time and again my colleagues across the way have mentioned the precautionary principle. Could the member perhaps indulge the House and describe the precautionary principle itself and the measures and the criteria for invoking it in Bill C-55?

Mr. Terry Beech: Mr. Speaker, within the context of Bill C-55, what we have come to realize from the development of previous marine protected areas, MPAs, is that they can take anywhere from seven to 10 years to establish. The ocean is changing rapidly and there are times when we need to take action to protect biodiversity before we are 100% certain about what all of the science will say or what the results of all of the consultations will be.

With this legislation we would be allowed to freeze the footprint. The current ongoing activities would be allowed to continue, but we would hold off on new activities while we do the rest of the science and consultations to make sure that we get it right when we finalize the version of the marine protected area. This means that we will not hold back from protecting an area simply because there are some outstanding scientific questions.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, what is the position of the parliamentary secretary and the government with regard to the International Union for Conservation of Nature and the protection offered by MPAs? Do they support the union's standard application for MPAs, or will ours be different?

Mr. Terry Beech: Madam Speaker, I would have to do a deeper analysis of exactly what those standards are versus what we are doing in order to give any sort of realistic line-by-line response to that very specific question. I am would be happy to do so. If the member opposite would like to reach out to me, I would be happy to show areas where the regulations are the same or where they might differ.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): There you have it, Madam Speaker. The parliamentary secretary has just admitted that he is not aware of the standards that we aspire to attain. Our hon. colleague from Windsor West brought up a good point. Again, we are letting international parties outside of Canada influence our decision-making and policy. This is the argument that Conservatives have been presenting for some time now.

I previously asked my hon. colleague, the parliamentary secretary, about the precautionary principle and he said that it is the reason the government may not be able to do the full consultation and may have to designate an area a marine protected area immediately. This is what we are arguing now. He did not answer the question about the precautionary principle and the criteria for invoking it.

Government Orders

Will he not agree with me that for true consultation, we have to make sure that local stakeholders are engaged at the very beginning and that we not have a top-down process?

• (1245)

Mr. Terry Beech: Madam Speaker, I will agree with one aspect of what the member opposite said and disagree with another.

At the start of his question, he said that we do not understand the individual principles we are applying to MPAs. Of course, we do, but when it comes to specific answers on very detailed legislation, I want to make sure that the member opposite gets a very specific response.

In terms of my previous answer on the precautionary principle, it is an underlying principle that underlies all kinds of decisions we make within the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, including TAC decisions for various fisheries right across the country. In instances where we are not sure if we are causing harm to biodiversity, we take precautions. That is the definition of the precautionary principle, and it is exactly what we are doing with these amendments to the Oceans Act.

The other aspect of the question is whether consultations are required and/or necessary. The government agrees with that 100%. The average MPA length is seven years. After this amendment, it would still be seven years. The only difference is that there will be an additional tool after 24 months that would allow us to take additional actions to protect our oceans when necessary.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am happy to speak to this bill today.

In his mandate letter, the Prime Minister directed 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 protected marine and coastal areas to 5% by 2017, and to 10% by 2020.

Before addressing various concerns with this bill, I want to comment on the feasibility of these targets and on the importance of advancing policies and legislation that actually deliver on intentions. The Liberals are hoping to reach 5% protected marine and coastal areas in three months from now. As of June this year, approximately 1.5% of coastal areas and 11% of land and inland water were protected spaces in Canada. It will be a very short time period between the Liberals pushing this bill through the House of Commons and the deadline they have set. The outcomes of either not meeting the deadline they have set and the target for protected spaces in that anticipated timeline, or reaching that timeline, but with insufficient consultation, research, and environmental and economic impact analysis, are both likely scenarios.

Bill C-55 would amend the Oceans Act and the Canada Petroleum Resources Act to allow the government to act unilaterally without consultation. The Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard would be able to act on political whims, selecting areas and prohibiting activities without consultation and without rationalizing the decisions publicly with the science and evidence about which Liberals always love to talk a big game. What is it about these Liberals and consultation or, more accurately, their lack of

consultation under the guise and repeated claims that they actually do consult?

The amendments would allow the minister of fisheries and oceans, five years from the day an area is given designation, to make it a permanent marine protected area or remove the designation all together. Canadians whose livelihoods depend on marine and coastal areas, people who work in commercial or recreational fisheries, researchers, scientists, academics, and industry, are all going to be left in limbo. This is becoming a typical pattern. It seems that the Liberals are satisfied to keep talking about how important consulting is to them but not actually doing it, and especially if there is a chance that the outcome is not what they already want.

During an ongoing study on marine protected areas at the fisheries and oceans committee, witnesses gave testimony on the process of designating MPAs. Callum Roberts, a professor at the University of York, said, "If you want to build on a process of trust and goodwill, you don't then ignore what your stakeholders say...if in the end all you were going to do was cherry-pick..."

Chris Sporer of the Pacific Halibut Management Association of British Columbia said that "if fishermen are forced from productive, high catch per unit effort areas to less productive" areas, there will be an increase in fishing time and an increased cost for less fish. He said that the process needs to take that into consideration and evaluate the ecological consequences of displacing fishing efforts.

One of the points that the minister of fisheries and oceans raised in his speech on this bill was consultation and reconciliation with first nations people. However, Canadians are learning that this another subject on which the Liberals like to talk a lot. As the Hereditary Chiefs' Council of Lax Kw'alaams from British Columbia stated on the proposed Liberal oil tanker ban, "We absolutely do not support big...environmental NGO's (who make their money from opposing natural resource projects) dictating government policy and resource developments within our traditional territories;"

The Liberals and the left often imply that all first nations people are against natural resource development, which is what they are doing here, yet AFN Chief Perry Bellegarde says that some 500 of the 630 first nations in Canada are open to pipelines and petroleum development. Natural resource development is the largest private sector employer of first nations people across the country, and first nations across Canada support crucial energy infrastructure like Trans Mountain and energy east.

Government Orders

The Liberals need to do more than talk about consultation, and they should prioritize the needs and the future of Canadians across this country over their political agenda. In addition to speeding up the designation process for marine protected areas by allowing the minister to arbitrarily designate an area to fulfill a campaign commitment, the Liberals are also proposing amendments to the Canada Petroleum Resources Act that would prohibit oil and gas activities in marine areas where interim protection is declared unilaterally. Their amendments would give the Minister of Natural Resources and the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs the unilateral power to cancel proponents' oil and gas interests, wiping out leases and assets, and eliminating investment and job opportunities for Canadians.

• (1250)

This arbitrary and unilateral authority to extinguish development rights signals significant investment risk for Canadian offshore development. It is yet another decision that will undermine certainty, clarity, and predictability in Canada as a place to do business, and yet another way that the Liberals are violating competitiveness and confidence in Canada as a world-leading energy producer. These kinds of actions cause investment to leave Canada, and it kills jobs.

The Liberals are yet again specifically targeting the Canadian oil and gas sector. Considering the totality of Liberal policy and legislative decisions around energy during the past two years, it is completely rational and almost unavoidable to conclude that the Liberals are trying, any which way they can, to stop oil and gas development in Canada.

Canada has a thriving offshore oil and gas industry, with most of the activity in Atlantic Canada. More than 9,000 people work in the sector directly, and thousands more are employed indirectly. There are more than 600 supply and service companies, and there has been over \$40 billion worth of capital spending in offshore development in Atlantic Canada since the mid 1990s. Canadian oil and gas companies also have interests in northern Canada and in B.C.

The Liberals are not considering the economic consequences of once again creating more chaos and uncertainty for energy proponents. Projects that are in provincial and federal regulatory review processes, and approved projects that are moving forward right now, will be put in jeopardy by these proposed amendments.

Continuing down this path will destroy economic opportunities in Canada. It is not balanced. Canadians witnessed this first-hand less than two weeks ago with the cancellation of energy east. After spending \$1 billion, and years into the regulatory review, harmful Liberal policies forced TransCanada to abandon a project that would have added \$55 billion to Canada's GDP, created over 14,000 jobs, and brought benefits to communities across the entire country.

Similarly, the Liberals are harming Canadian energy development with their proposed oil tanker ban. Somehow, the Liberals have managed to propose a bill that does not actually stop American or foreign oil tankers, or tankers carrying anything other than crude oil, from being in a designated area.

Likewise, the Liberals have announced a five-year moratorium on drilling in the Arctic, completely ignoring the very Canadians it negatively affects. The Premier of Nunavut said, "We have been

promised by Ottawa that they would consult and make decisions based on meaningful discussion. So far, that hasn't happened..". Premier Bob McLeod of the Northwest Territories added, "It feels like a step backward..".

The proposed new powers of the ministers could be devastating to energy investment in Canada. Paul Barnes, from the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, said this in the fisheries committee:

...our biggest fear would arise if there are already licences in that particular area, because there would obviously have been a decision made by an oil and gas company or a consortium of companies to invest in an area. If a subsequent decision is made to have a marine protected area placed over those licences, potentially affecting the ability to do work, that's obviously lost investment and doesn't send a very positive signal to the investment community regarding Canada's competitiveness.

The federal government has a variety of roles to play to meet Canada's conservation goals, to be sure, but it should not be to eliminate the oil and gas sector in Canada.

The Liberals constant attacks are particularly galling, given the reality that Canadian energy operates under the strongest regulatory controls, with the best compliance and transparency in the world. Energy benefits all Canadians. It is the second-biggest investor in the Canadian economy, and it is Canada's second-largest export.

Recently, Nunavut cabinet minister Johnny Mike addressed the Liberals' lack of consultation on Bill C-55, saying that his residents "are well aware of the potential in our offshore areas, which is used for economic opportunities today by interests from outside of Nunavut. ...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." He said, "The federal government never consulted any northerners or my constituents on what concerns they may have...".

This is a disturbing trend in the Liberal approach. Canada has a strong and world-renowned track record of environmental stewardship, and ongoing innovation that minimizes the environmental footprint and enhances the sustainability of responsible natural resource development. That economic and industrial development, in turn, provides jobs for hundreds of thousands of Canadians everywhere. It generates revenue that is shared across the country and lifts the standard of living of all Canadians.

It is crucial that while Canada continues to protect the environment that it continues to be an attractive jurisdiction for investment for offshore oil and gas development.

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● (1255)

[Translation]

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech.

I just want to say that I think it is great that the government wants to increase the number of marine protected areas. That is good news. However, what worries me is the leeway the minister would have to make all kinds of decisions without holding more consultations.

Does my colleague agree that no single minister should be given too much power, as that could have dangerous repercussions?

[English]

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Madam Speaker, I completely agree that is the main concern with this legislation. The target of 10% marine protected areas by 2020 was a target of the former Conservative government. As Conservatives, we are conservationists. We believe in protecting marine areas. We believe in continuing to support innovation and environmental stewardship in Canada, which will protect air, land, and water for all Canadians.

However, on this bill, like on so many other issues, the Liberals talk about consulting. They say they are going to consult, yet here they are attempting to enable ministers with a unilateral power to make arbitrary decisions that will risk investment and will not be based on consultation or science and evidence-based decision-making. By that, they are reducing the timelines for any of that economic, environmental and consultative analyses to take place.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I disagree with the member opposite. I believe we have seen the government listening to what Canadians have to say, in many different ways, and consulting with Canadians. The current department, which has done a phenomenal job in all regions of the country, is bringing forward solid legislation. I believe we will find that all Canadians are connected in one way or another to our oceans. We understand and appreciate how important they are. With respect to what we are talking about, the government is committed to increasing the proportion of Canada's protected marine and coastal areas to 5% this year, and by 10% in 2020. Would the member not agree, in principle, that is a good thing and a reflection of what Canadians would want government to do?

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Madam Speaker, as a first-generation Albertan with family in Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, and New Brunswick, I certainly agree with the importance of marine areas and oceans, and the connection that Canadians have to our coastal areas.

As I have already mentioned, the Conservatives support the protection of marine areas, and policies and legislation that are actually about environmental stewardship, environmental conservation, and protecting air, land, and water for all Canadians. However, the expedition of these timelines, and granting ministers unilateral and arbitrary power without having to go through a diligent, comprehensive process that mandates consultation with local communities and involves publicly available economic and environmental analyses to make decisions, is a very concerning pattern. It is on those grounds that we oppose that aspect of this bill.

● (1300)

Mr. Mike Bossio (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I sat on the environment committee, where we did a report on protected spaces. Part of the Aichi targets is to achieve 10% protected waters. Moving forward, if we do not attach timelines to protecting these coastal waters, which, as the member has already stated, are so important, we are never going to get there. Would the member not agree that we need to start taking this seriously to achieve our Aichi targets and move as quickly as possible to protect these spaces?

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Madam Speaker, given my colleague's comments about the importance of timelines, I look forward to his support on advocating for concrete, clear timelines and regulatory approval processes in Canada in general, both for pipelines and northern development.

I will read a quote by Paul Crowley from the Arctic program of the World Wildlife Fund-Canada. He stated:

While we do want to reach marine protection targets, we need to ensure that this protection is meaningful. The goal should be not only to get to 10% but to choose the right 10% through proper siting. MPA networks provide a foundation of sustainability by systematically selecting sites that operate synergistically at various spatial scales and with ranges of protections to reach ecological goals more effectively than individual sites can alone.

That reinforces the importance of consultation, careful, diligent and—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The time has expired. I actually gave the member a few more seconds, but I could not extend it any longer.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Windsor West.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak to Bill C-55, an act to amend the Oceans Act and the Canada Petroleum Resources Act. The Canada Petroleum Resources Act would still, with special favour and curry from the minister, win out over conservation. We will continue to treat our biodiversity differently than, for example, parks. Specifically, mining cannot be undertaken in provincial and federal parks. However, with the proposed changes to the act we will continue to see the potential and continued use of exploration and extraction of petroleum resources from these marine areas.

It is important for people to understand that distinction. We would not want to go to a national park, which was free admission during Canada's 150 anniversary celebrations this past summer, and see mining going on by the private sector. Unfortunately we are missing a specific opportunity carved out by the Liberals on this. I cannot understand it, but it goes with the theme of the government.

Some of us will remember when Paul Martin was prime minister. He eventually became known as Mr. Dithers. The Liberals would often talk about a lot of good things to take place, but they never really made decisions on those things. Now a decision is being made but it is a lazy one. It is mediocre. It is like being hungry at breakfast and having a bowl of corn flakes because they are just there. It will sustain us, but it really will not do much other than that. It is the same thing as sprinkles on ice-cream. They look great, but there really is no substance.

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Mediocracy has consumed the government. It continues to be a major problem, but has become the staple approach. In the 15 years I have been here, I have never seen less work in the House of Commons than now. The agreement with regard to the percentage of the acquisition of space and protection of marine areas was signed in 1992. We are just barely bubbling above 1% where we are supposed to be. Ironically, it comes closer to the broken promises of the Liberals on climate change. We are light years away from our actual percentage requirement. We are also not even following some of the rules in that.

It is important to recognize a couple of major powers that will be put in place, but they do not have the teeth necessary for conservation. Hence, we had some hesitation. In fact, the thought that we could actually freeze zones, as described by the parliamentary secretary and others, while at the same time allow perpetual work and activity, knowing they are a danger to the biodiversity and marine activity, just because it meets a date is puzzling. We could literally have situations where a change happens rather rapidly. We have seen this with whales and other populations. We could literally protect zones after the damage has been done and the species is hurt beyond the potential of recovery. That is the model the Liberals are proposing in the bill.

We have not met Canada's international commitments to protect our marine biodiversity. There has been some criticism about painting a picture that other people are setting the rules and standards, the international community versus Canada. Our scientists, bureaucrats, workers, and politicians have all been part of this discussion going back to 1992, and before that, about what those standards and elements should be. We have been part of that discussion to create the base for an international agreement, which is very difficult to reach. We have failed to meet our targets, quite significantly.

We are not taking on oil and gas exploration in these zones, and that is important. Essentially we will not have that preservation.

I mentioned the pledge of the international community, the convention on biological diversity, which we were part of in 1992. If we measure Canada today, we are at 1.5% of marine protected areas.

• (1305)

We are behind China. China has protected more marine area space than we have. Japan is at 5.6%. The United States, our partners, is at 30%-plus. Australia is at 33.2%. Those countries use of marine areas is a much more sophisticated way for ecotourism and opportunities there.

The failing of the minimum protection requirements and having the elements related to oil and gas allowed is likened to the creeping privatization taking place. The creeping privatization on public elements, property, and space also happens in our social services and in a number of different of different things.

I want to compare a recent example in my community so people have an idea. In Ontario, we allowed creeping privatization, and continue to allow it, of medical services. For example, Unifor 2458 medical lab workers are on strike right now. Under creeping privatization, their wages are \$12.50 an hour. They are involved in blood work, which is high risk. It is a challenge. Our entire treatment

and publicly funded system are based on that. Most important, that creeping privatization now has a piece of private profit in it. We could do much better without that private profit.

This issue with regard to the MPAs and the availability of having privatization elements as part of them is quite a concern. Oil and gas is of particular note. Its activity can create further hazards for other types of industries that use the space or want to use it, for example, commercial fisheries and things of that nature. The fact that the minister would have so much leverage with no moratorium to stop it, allows for hard industry in our parks. We should not become accustomed to having that hard industry.

We have had a number of comments from industry and other people on that. I want to read a couple of quotes.

The World Wildlife Federation about the banks of Scott Islands said, "Oil and gas exploitation will still be permitted and harmful fishing practices, such as bottom trawling, will not be legally prohibited in the area." That is the problem. It does not allow stopping of the extraction and exploration.

Canada's biodiversity is critical as we go forward. We should be looking at our international agreements and measuring ourselves by those. I know we are supposed to reach certain targets by 2020. We signed on in 1992. This is a credibility issue for our country to reach them. At the very least, the government should be benchmarking why we are not meeting those targets and the reasons why. It should be upfront and let the Canadian public have this debate. If we will not meet those targets, those types of agreements we have signed, at the very least we have the responsibility to tell the public and our partners why.

Our country has been blessed. We have invested in our scientists. Under the previous administration, there was virtually a war with regard to their involvement in government operations. The types of connections we have through marine biodiversity and scientific research also help us in other ways. When we backtrack on international standards, at least expect to have some type of discussion as to the reasons why. Maybe they make sense and maybe they do not, but the public can decide.

• (1310)

Mr. Mike Bossio (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, Lib.): Madam Speaker, on one hand, the member criticized the government for not going fast enough to achieve our targets. On the other hand, the member talked about the lack of consultation that happened in making draconian decisions as he reflected toward the previous government and the *modus operandi* on that front.

The position our government has taken is that through the consultation process, we have established a process that has time limits attached to it, so we can meet our Aichi targets. A goal of 5% next year and a goal of 10% by 2020 becomes more achievable because of the timelines. Would the member not agree that trying to reach the balance between consultation and establishing time limits so we can reach our targets toward protected spaces is a balance that should be reached?

Government Orders

Mr. Brian Masse: Madam Speaker, if the member were to read the blues, he would see that I did not say that about the previous Conservative government. What I questioned was the use of the scientific community and researchers. I did not talk about consultations and timelines related to that.

As it is often heard with a lot of subjects, the Liberals believe in it. However, then there is a big but, and the but is the fact that nothing really gets done because it is a mediocre attempt to try to do something that does not really have heart behind it. That is the difference. What really takes place for real change is having the convictions. Of course we consult but we do so in a way that is earnest in trying to accomplish an objective in the true sense and following through on it, versus just consultation for appeasement, for ensuring enough people think we are actually doing something on the environment. The devil in the details in this is the minister's powers and the mere fact that the Liberals will not back away from allowing oil and gas petroleum exploration, development, and extraction. There is a hard line right there. They do not want to do it.

• (1315)

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, I was supposed to be with our fisheries committee, travelling in Atlantic Canada and listening to stakeholders from a number of different communities regarding the government's proposed MPA process. Bill C-55 is being rushed through, and today we are debating it while most of the members of the fisheries committee, with the exception of me and one other, are on this consultation. The Liberals like to say they are consulting and they really want to hear from Canadians, but the committee that has been tasked to consult with Canadians on this very important issue is still consulting. The government wants to rush a bill through that deals with the very issue that the committee has been studying for four to six months, hearing Canadians coast to coast to coast. Much of what we hear is that the government consultations are a sham, that they are not real.

Does my hon. colleague from Windsor West think this is curious as well, that the government is just talking about consultation so it can check a box to say that it has considered it?

Mr. Brian Masse: Madam Speaker, my colleague brings up a good point. If the Liberals were so interested in the results on this right away, the minister could have expressed to the committee that they would like to have this legislation tabled and through the House at a certain set time. He could have asked the committee to wrap up its consultations and so forth on a specific date. That would have been the reasonable approach to take. People are being asked for input. We are spending a lot of taxpayer money to travel and to do other things to ensure they get the hearings that are so desperately needed on this issue, to have the consultation. Regardless of whether they believe in it, it is a fair opportunity. Most important, if the Liberals really cared, the minister could simply have said to the committee, "Here is a date, could you please be done by then."

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to rise in the House to talk about marine protection, biodiversity, and marine protection areas across Canada.

This is a very important issue to me, one on which I have been working since 2012. At the time, the Conservative government

wanted to build an oil terminal in Cacouna, right in the beluga nursery. Fortunately this project fell through thanks, in part, to the NDP's work.

It is a pleasure for me to speak to Bill C-55, an act to amend the Oceans Act and also, strangely enough, the Canada Petroleum Resources Act. There are several important points to remember on this issue.

This bill will create the legal tools needed to fast track the creation of marine protected areas, which, in itself, is good news. It was recommended by the committee that studied this issue. On this point, we are very happy. This will help us meet Canada's international commitments on protecting our marine biodiversity.

We have been lagging well behind for a long time, and it is impossible for us to meet the 5% marine conservation target in 2017. We cannot create marine protected areas simply by snapping our fingers. It is more complex than that. This bill has several flaws. For one thing, it does not include minimum protection standards. That is unacceptable. We cannot have marine protected areas unless we state the minimum standards that will be in place to protect them.

That is one big problem with this bill. Another is that the bill gives the minister far too much decision-making power over which activities are permitted within a marine protected area. This is a major problem, as I will explain shortly.

Let me give some background. Canada made a commitment to the international community to protect 5% of its marine areas by 2017, a virtually unreachable target, and 10% by 2020. This is an ambitious goal, one that will require much work on the part of the current government, but if we do things right and spare no efforts in the process, we will be able to meet it, or at least come close. These are the targets we committed to when we signed the Aichi Convention on Biological Diversity, but they are nowhere near the target levels recommended by our top scientists and environmentalists.

They are recommending that we far exceed those targets. They are even asking that the targets that have been set be minimum targets and they are saying that, if we want to protect our marine biodiversity and habitats, we should exceed those targets.

I spoke about the beluga whale, which was an endangered species and is now at risk of becoming extinct.

According to the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada, when a species is endangered, we need to ensure its natural habitat is identified and protected. As a result, we should have a lot more protected habitats, including those of marine species. There are many threatened and endangered species whose habitats are not protected.

To date, Canada has protected only 1.5% of its oceans through the creation of marine protected areas. We are not even close to meeting our objectives.

Government Orders

Countries such as Australia and the United States are already protecting 33% and 30% of their oceans, respectively. There is a marked difference between the protection that we provide and the amount of protection being offered by countries similar to ours.

• (1320)

The current situation is far from satisfactory, particularly if we do not have any minimum protection standards for MPAs.

What does that mean? Linda Nowlan, a lawyer for West Coast Environmental Law, gave a clear explanation as to why these minimum standards are so important. She said that the proposed amendments are useful short-term additions to the federal Oceans Act and related oil and gas laws, but they could and should go much farther. She also said that, for the long arm of the law to be truly effective, we need even stronger legal powers like minimum protection standards. Ecological integrity must be the top priority in MPA management.

When I was a member of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, the issue of ecological integrity came up on several occasions, particularly when we were talking about creating new parks. Ecological integrity is just as important when it comes to creating new terrestrial parks. All scientists, environmentalists, and experts pointed out that there could be no turning back in that regard. It is extremely important that we continue to protect ecological integrity.

We cannot allow harmful oil and gas development or fishing activities, such as ocean dragging, in our marine protected areas, just as large-scale mining operations are not allowed in Canada's national parks. That would be ridiculous, and yet that is exactly what this bill would allow if it does not include minimum protections. We want to fix that.

In my region, in Quebec, and in Atlantic Canada, there is an excellent marine protected area project under way, the Laurentian Channel. It will be the largest protected area of its kind in Canada. This unique ecosystem is located at the entrance to the Gulf of St. Lawrence and is home to several endangered species. It is a great example of a great project that must be promoted.

Unfortunately, the government would allow oil and gas exploration within this MPA, which sets a dangerous precedent. We are very worried about this, as are many others. Furthermore, it would also allow future fossil fuel reserves and seismic testing, which is very dangerous because of its detrimental and even deadly effects on many marine species.

One expert stated that the government absolutely wants to reach its targets, but that it is taking shortcuts to do so. In other words, its measures are detrimental to the protection of species and their habitat.

Sylvain Archambault, of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, a biologist I have spoken to a few times and who advises me on marine protection issues, mentioned that the federal government risked setting a very worrisome precedent by opening the door to oil companies. He also added, "Why bother creating a marine protection zone designed to protect biodiversity, if activities that are completely incompatible with the protection of this biodiversity will be allowed?"

I could go on all day quoting experts, environmentalists and scientists who say that it makes no sense to establish marine protection zones without having minimum protections in place. I gave the perfect example of the Laurentian channel, the largest MPZ project in Canada. We want this project to go ahead, but we are very concerned. We do not want a precedent to be set because there would no longer be any restrictions. For that reason, this bill must be amended as soon as possible.

• (1325)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I see this as positive legislation, reflective of what Canadians want. This is a government that truly cares about our coastal waterways. This is something we are all connected to, directly or indirectly. Aspects of the legislation would provide the minister with more tools to protect our coastal regions, and we see that as positive.

My question to the member is more on the principle of what I believe Canadians want their government to do in demonstrating good stewardship. When we look at the legislation before us, that is what it would do. It would ensure that, going forward, we would have more protected coastlines, and that is a good thing, especially with Canada having the largest coastal region in the world. Would the member not agree?

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Choquette: Madam Speaker, I want to answer the member by sharing a quote from Sabine Jessen, the national director of the Oceans Program for the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society. She said:

While CPAWS is very supportive of the government's efforts to meet its international commitment under the Convention on Biological Diversity...by 2020, we are concerned the areas being "protected" [as they would under the government's proposal] do not meet the standard set out under the convention, and therefore will not actually count toward this target.

How can the government brag that it is creating new marine protected areas that will not even truly be considered protected under the convention, in accordance with the Aichi targets?

• (1330)

[*English*]

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member for Drummond talked about the goals and objectives of marine protected areas. Time and again, Canadians heard in our consultations, which we have been tasked to have, that there are no goals and objectives set forth. The government has not specifically communicated what these goals and objectives are. The hon. parliamentary secretary mentioned earlier that by opposing Bill C-55, the Conservatives are against marine protected areas. That could not be further from the truth.

My hon. colleague commented on the size of a couple of countries and their marine protected areas. Canada has the longest coastline, which has been mentioned before, about 243,000 square kilometres, which is vast. The next longest one is Norway's, at about 80,000 square kilometres.

Government Orders

Would my hon. colleague agree with me that in terms of marine protected areas, we must state our goals and objectives clearly? Doing so would drive our consultations. Regardless of whether it is one year, two years, or seven years, getting it right is fundamentally the right thing to do.

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Choquette: Madam Speaker, I agree with my colleague that we must get it right.

The Liberal government is cutting corners. The new marine protected areas that it wants to create may not even be included in the targets of the international conventions we have signed. The marine protected areas do not meet the standards set out in these conventions.

Yes, we must get it right, but we must also move quickly. Right now, the government is not doing either.

[*English*]

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to get up and speak about conservation, something that we, as Conservatives, know a lot of about and have done a lot about. When we were in government, I note that we were able to increase by 50% the amount of protected area around Canada. This is an accomplishment that is unrivalled in Canadian history. For example, we set aside the world's first protected area extending from the mountaintops to the sea floor, which would be Haida Gwaii; the largest freshwater protected area, which was the Lake Superior National Marine Conservation Area; a sixfold expansion of the Nahanni National Park Reserve in the Northwest Territories; and three new national wildlife areas in Nunavut, protecting close to 5,000 square kilometres of marine, coastal, and terrestrial habitats, including the world's first sanctuary for bowhead whales. It goes on. There is so much more I could talk about.

Canadians understand that we should be protecting our environment. One of the keys to achieving that is to make sure our conservation goals are ambitious and that our conservation strategies are effective. I am looking at the bill before us, Bill C-55, an act to amend the Oceans Act and the Canada Petroleum Resources Act. Now, there would be those on the Liberal side who would have us believe that this is a conservation piece of legislation. In fact, nothing could be further from the truth.

If one actually reads this carefully, this is about the Liberal government doing an end run on those people who should be consulted before we set aside any marine protected area. We are hearing that from all over. We are hearing it from the territories, which have expressed significant concern about the lack of consultation that has taken place. We have heard it from the key stakeholders from one ocean to the other. For example, let me just go to some of these concerns.

From the east coast fishery we have the Prince Edward Island Fishermen's Association that says it:

...understands the requirement to protect marine environments, but we do have concerns surrounding the tight timelines to accomplish these goals. [We are concerned about] the displacement of fishers...we must also consider the independent owner-operator fleets and their significant financial contribution to the economy of Canada.

The concern is raised that small businesses that are fishers, the processors that rely on the fishers themselves, and even the recreational anglers and fishers have not been consulted adequately.

Let us go to the west coast fishery. Jim McIsaac, managing director, BC Commercial Fishing Caucus says, "We need to engage stakeholders from the start, not bring stakeholders along at the end", which is what the Liberal government is doing. "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."

That is what stakeholders are saying about this bill. What it is doing is avoiding key consultations. Let me paint the picture for everyone about why this bill is even here. Countries around the world have recognized that if we do not protect the earth's biodiversity we are going to pay a huge price for that. Under the auspices of the United Nations, countries like Canada came together and said that they should establish targets for setting aside marine protected areas and terrestrial areas so that over time they achieve protection of the biodiversity of our globe.

Canada decided what its target would be. By the way, this happened under the previous Conservative government, which I was very proud to serve in. That government said that it would set a target of 17% for terrestrial areas by the year 2020, but for marine protected areas it would be 10% by the year 2020.

● (1335)

Now, for some reason, during the last election, the Prime Minister thought it would be a smart idea to one-up the previous government, and said that he could do better, that he would do 5% by the year 2017, not 2018 as someone mentioned earlier.

Two years have elapsed, and what has the federal government done? What has the federal government done to achieve the 5% by 2017 goal? Absolutely nothing. Now it is scrambling to try to get some legislation in place that will allow it to do this by fiat, top-down government.

Let us imagine this, we have less than three months left to go before 2017 is history. The federal government promised that by this year it would have 5% marine protected areas set aside. It realizes now that it is not going to achieve that, because to do so properly would require ongoing consultations with the key stakeholders. These are the stakeholders I mentioned earlier, the fishers, the recreational angling industry, those who depend on the processing industry.

There is also the mining, and the oil and gas industries that have to be consulted. These are areas that many of them have concessions. They have invested billions in exploration. They have invested billions in securing rights. In order to impose these protected areas on them, they have to be consulted. Compensation has to be talked about, compensation to be paid to large businesses and smaller businesses that derive their livelihood from the sea.

Government Orders

What do we see happening here? We have a Liberal government that made a promise, like so many other promises the Prime Minister made in the last election. In fact, the Liberal government is a monument to broken promises. It is a road littered with broken promises. This is another one where the Prime Minister promised that we were going to achieve 5% marine protected areas by the year 2017. Now that we are getting close to the end of 2017, the government has run out of runway, and is now asking how it will do this. Then it says that it will pass legislation that gives it the power to just, boom, impose this on the different communities around the country. Then after the fact, it will consult. After the fact, not before.

I would refer members to the mandate letter that the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard was given when the government was elected, and he was appointed to the cabinet.

One of the mandates is, “Work with the Minister of Environment and Climate Change to increase the proportion of Canada's marine coastal areas that are protected—to five percent by 2017, and ten percent by 2020”. Then it goes on to say “supported by new investments in community consultation”. That is what the Liberals are doing an end run around.

If we look at the mandate letter that was issued to the minister, it talks about strengthening the middle class and those working hard to join it. We hear that every day in this House, and it is not happening because the Liberals are dumping on small business. Time and time again, they are undermining our small business sector.

With this bill, the Liberals are again undermining the economic viability of the small businesses that operate in these proposed marine protected areas. It is a scandal.

We can go through this mandate letter and see the commitments that supposedly the minister was making to his Prime Minister, and it is just a record a failure. It talks about setting a higher bar for openness and transparency. This bill, this end run, has nothing to do with transparency. It undermines transparency and openness.

I am looking at this piece of legislation that should have been about conservation but instead is about the Prime Minister not being willing to acknowledge his mistake in making a commitment that he could not keep. He made many promises during the last election. We knew he could not keep them, but he kept making them. Time and time again, he would make a promise, and he would break a promise. He is doing it again. Now he is trying to cover his tracks.

● (1340)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I disagree with the member opposite and I suspect that is no surprise.

I sat in opposition for a number of years and I saw Harper consultation first-hand. Harper consultation meant absolutely nothing. Virtually from day one, the present Prime Minister has been in touch with what Canadians have to say. We have been doing our homework. We have been consulting with the different stakeholders.

Looking at the essence of the bill, what is the member talking about? He says they want to see 10% by 2020. This legislation is going to go a long way toward achieving that 10% by 2020.

I am sure my colleague across the way would acknowledge that Canadians expect their government to deliver when it comes to protecting our oceans. This government is doing that. That is what this legislation would do.

Would the member not agree that Canadians in all regions of our country would support the principle of this legislation? Will he get onside and support it also?

Hon. Ed Fast: Certainly not, Madam Speaker.

It has been pointed out time and time again by members on this side of the House that this is about a Liberal government that chose to make a commitment to Canadians, has realized it cannot meet that commitment, and is now going to meet that commitment by undermining transparency and consultations.

The member is suggesting that the Liberals have been having ongoing consultations, but everything that we have heard and all the quotes that we have heard in the House from various members show that the industries that will be most impacted are saying there is not enough time, that they have not been adequately consulted.

The same thing happened earlier with electoral reform. The Liberals pretended they were consulting but at the end of the day, the fix was in. They had a preferred option that they realized they could not get and they cancelled electoral reform. It goes on and on.

This legislation is an effort to undermine the transparency of imposing something significant on those who derive their livelihood from these marine protected areas.

● (1345)

Mr. Fin Donnelly (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, I was recently at a very interesting conference in Malta along with the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard as well as the member for Cariboo—Prince George. We talked about the health of our oceans and the dramatic concerns that we have. One proposal that came out of the conference was that we might need to look at protecting up to half of our oceans because of the impact and the way we are treating them.

One of the concerns with the bill is that while it would allow the minister to look at how we can achieve the targets of 5% and 10% by this year and 2020, which are minimal standards, the bill would allow destructive practices like oil and gas that impact the marine diversity that we are dependent on.

I agree that consultation is critical and that we need to consult with our industries and with those who use the oceans, but we also need to protect them in order to keep our industries thriving. Would the member not agree that we need to set a minimum standard in the legislation as to what we would allow and not allow in those protected areas?

Hon. Ed Fast: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from the west coast for understanding how important it is that we consult with those most impacted.

Government Orders

The member talked about establishing minimum standards for the oil and gas industry. Canada is a world leader when it comes to the oil and gas industry and the technology we bring to bear when we operate in the field. We will find this time and time again with some of the companies that have leading-edge technology that not only protects our environment but also reduces the footprint of a barrel of gasoline for example that is taken out of the ground.

Canada is doing well as a country but we can do more. More protection is necessary. We need to ensure that we meet our Aichi targets, not the ones the Prime Minister set, but the ones that were established beforehand.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to be back in the House of Commons. It really is a typical day in the House, because we are talking about broken promises of the government and its failure to consult properly. We deal with that fairly often here.

The issue at hand is the government's legislation, Bill C-55. In its desire to window dress its failure to meet its promises with respect to marine protected areas, it now wants to be able to make interim designations of marine protected areas. That would be done without the normal process of consultation and a fulsome review that would happen under a typical proper designation of a marine protected area. It is trying to give itself the power to do this through this legislation, effectively circumventing what is supposed to be and has historically been the consultation process for these marine protected areas, and it is doing so in an interim way to try to catch up with what in reality has been its failure to keep its promises.

We see this across the board with the current government. In so many areas, it is failing to keep the commitments it has made to Canadians. It is trying to disguise that through its shabbily designed consultation processes. We have one example in this legislation. Another example that many people are talking about today is the failure of the government to consult and to keep its promises to small business. In the summer, it came out with a set of proposals with respect to small business. What it put forward in the middle of the summer was an incredibly unpopular attack on small business that it planned to undertake, but there has been a large backlash in response. It was so important to the government, in fact, that the Prime Minister talked about these proposals during his speech at the United Nations. Apparently, hundreds at the United Nations were thought to be interested in hearing about the current government's plan to raise taxes on small business.

The government, in spite of coming out with clear proposals and draft legislation as part of its start of consultations, realized just how intensely unpopular these were because of the strong response by the Conservatives. Therefore, it is now trying to couch this in different ways. However, we know in reality that it is going ahead with trying to squeeze small business because it is desperate for revenue. Because of its failure to keep its promises in so many different areas, it is facing a revenue squeeze.

There are multiple different areas where the government is failing to consult properly, where it is not listening to what Canadians, businesses, and others are telling it, and where it is trying to cover up its failure to keep its promises. In this legislation, we are talking

about marine protected areas, but we could talk about its failures with respect to small business.

When the Liberal government took power, it announced initially that it would no longer keep its promise to reduce the small business tax rate down to 9%. Let us remember that these were tax reductions that were already booked by the Conservative government. Small businesses were counting on them. In fact, every party had made that promise. However, we saw the government reneging on that commitment.

There have been repeated failures to listen, to consult properly, and to follow through on its promises. Another area where we saw the government fail to properly consult was in the debacle with respect to its electoral reform proposals. It had promised that the last election would be the last one under the first-past-the-post system. What happened to that? All of a sudden it was not in its interest to keep its platform commitment.

Here with the legislation now before us, we see another example of the way in which the government is trying to change the process, in this case around marine protected areas, and to back away from its previous commitments on consultation. Because it now realizes that it will be difficult to keep its commitment to having a certain amount of protected areas in place, it is coming up with this mechanism of an interim designation. However, this is out of step with the kind of consultations that we would expect to have, especially for something this important.

Our party, our caucus, is very much in favour of having a proper process for designating and protecting marine protected areas. We had a proper process, and I think we were able to make substantial progress on this. However, what we are not seeing from the government at all is a real plan to move forward with the proper process of designation. In general, it is trying to jump the process. It is trying to skip ahead by not having proper consultation at all. On that basis, I am proud to join my colleagues in opposing this bill.

• (1350)

Mr. Fin Donnelly (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, I appreciate my hon. colleague's intervention. I just want to take him back a bit to the global setting in 1992 when the world came together to say that we needed to protect our oceans. The oceans were in trouble. Marine species, especially our predators, were in huge decline. The oceans were acidifying. Fast forward to today, and now we have a huge problem with marine plastics proliferating our oceans, an even greater problem we now have to deal with.

Member states were given 25 and 30 years to protect 5 and 10% of the oceans. In the last 25 years, until last year, Canada had protected only 1% of our ocean. That is inadequate by any standards. Over the last 10 years it was not just Conservative governments but also Liberal governments that brought us to that 1% protection.

Statements by Members

Would the member agree that not only do we need minimal standards, but that we also need to intensify this process to achieve our 5 and 10%? As I mentioned earlier, I was just at a conference where the leading scientists were talking about going to half, to protecting 50% of our oceans. Therefore, we are not doing enough in Canada. Would the member not agree that we need to do more?

• (1355)

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, the specific issue dealt with this bill is the distinction between interim and permanent designations. Absolutely, when you have a proper and fulsome consultation, there is a process in place, which we have used in the past, to recognize and designate marine protected areas. However, this bill allows for an interim designation without the proper consultation process to take place, which has significant implications for communities, for commercial interests, for jobs, and opportunities, as well as for the environment.

What we are saying is that it is important to have that full process in place and to make use of it, not to short-circuit the process to allow the minister to make these designations on an interim basis outside of that normal process. In effect, that would stop any kind of activity happening in the designated area for a period of time, and likely permanently.

We are in favour of a stronger process for that. That is where we are standing and that is our basis for opposing this bill.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank our hon. colleague from Sherwood Park for his impassioned speech, as well as the comments by our colleague from Port Moody. I had the pleasure of attending the same conference with our hon. colleague, as well as the minister. I heard the same message, but I also heard that Canada is not one of the worst contributors to ocean plastic. We know there are other countries that are doing it. However, Canada is in a position to assist and we should be doing everything we can to do so.

I will bring it back to his point that 1% of Canada's coastline is protected. We have the longest, most geographically diverse coastline in the world. There are more than two ways we should be protecting and maintaining our clean oceans and the livelihoods of the communities along them.

The one message that we also heard, and I know my hon. colleague was listening to it, was by His Serene Highness Prince Albert of Monaco in his closing remarks that we must also make sure that appropriate consultation is done.

Can we bring this back to the conversation that there be proper and appropriate consultation with all stakeholders?

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his excellent intervention. He is doing great work on this file and he is absolutely right.

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have listened to the tremendous amount of debate in the House and have tried in my speech this morning and in some of the back and forth to address the concerns of the other side. It is confusing to me. I do not understand why the opposition cannot get on board with these proposed amendments to the oceans act.

Canadians are telling us that they want us to protect the oceans and want us to do it urgently. This is simply a tool whereby an average seven-year MPA could now be given interim protection when necessary after the first two years. I think that applies to the precautionary principle. I would like the member opposite to comment on that.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, I have made it clear that we are talking about a distinction between proper designation with good consultation and interim designation, but I do not think time allows me to go further, so I will leave it at that.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I would like to ask that the vote be deferred.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Accordingly, the recorded division stands deferred until Tuesday, October 17, 2017, at the expiry of the time provided for government orders.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1400)

[*Translation*]

DAN HANGANU

Mr. David Lametti (LaSalle—Émard—Verdun, Lib.): Madam Speaker, on October 5, Canada lost an incredible architect. Dan Hanganu was world renowned for his work at the Pointe-à-Callière museum, HEC Montréal, and the Théâtre du Nouveau Monde, all three of which are in Montreal. He was also the architect behind the Marc-Favreau Library, the Cirque du Soleil workshops, and the McGill University faculty of law atrium and Nahum Gelber Law Library, a building I spent time in daily.

Statements by Members

Mr. Hanganu was born in Romania and came to Montreal in 1970. He contributed to Montreal's urban landscape for over 40 years and received numerous distinctions for his architectural designs, including becoming an officer of the Ordre national du Québec in 2005 and an officer of the Order of Canada in 2010.

[*English*]

I would like to personally thank Mr. Hanganu for contributing to the aesthetics of Quebec's architectural landscape. May he rest in peace.

* * *

WORLD SPINE DAY

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today is World Spine Day. The purpose of World Spine Day is to raise awareness about spinal health and spinal disorders among individuals, communities, professionals, and all stakeholders associated with spine care. This year's theme is "Your Back in Action", with a focus on the importance of body awareness and activities that promote a healthy spine.

One in eight Canadians suffer from chronic back pain. We all spend hours reading, hunched over our computers and our smart phones. This all adds up, especially for those with bad posture. As a chiropractor myself, I am pleased that the Canadian Chiropractic Association is on Parliament Hill today to educate members on chiropractic care and opportunities to improve posture. I encourage all members to sit up straight and visit the Speaker's salon after question period to have their postures assessed by leading chiropractors, such as the team of chiropractors for the Ottawa Senators, the Toronto Argos, and the Canadian Winter Olympic team.

Happy World Spine Day.

* * *

[*Translation*]

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH IN CANADA

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos (Saint-Laurent, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, October is Women's History Month in Canada. In October, Canadians celebrate the achievements of our nation's trail-blazing women. Women's History Month is also an opportunity to recognize women's significant contributions to our country's history and our quality of life.

[*English*]

Our government is committed to improving the status of women in Canada and around the world. Our Prime Minister has already set an amazing example for the world to follow by appointing a gender-balanced cabinet and by getting more women elected. We will continue to encourage women and girls to believe in themselves and to become leaders in their respective fields. There is a lot of untapped potential in our country, and we must not let it go to waste.

[*Translation*]

Women and girls must bring their passion, compassion, and creative ideas to bear on solving contemporary problems. Women make an essential contribution to our society.

WORLD FOOD DAY

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today is World Food Day, a day worth celebrating, but also a day for drawing attention to and addressing food security challenges in Canada and around the world. Does the House know that 800 million people worldwide go hungry and that that number has gone up by 38 million since last year? That is why the United Nations launched the Zero Hunger Challenge.

The goal is to mobilize governments, businesses, and civil society to eliminate hunger. This challenge is important because the right to food is a basic right. Canada, too, has hunger issues. Food insecurity is getting worse, especially in the north and in indigenous communities.

The government must support initiatives to reduce inequality, poverty, and food insecurity in Canada and around the world. Every month, 850,000 Canadians must rely on food banks. That is unacceptable. Let us work together to end hunger.

* * *

[*English*]

ATTACK IN MOGADISHU

Ms. Anita Vandenbeld (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians have watched in horror as news of the deplorable terrorist attack in Somalia this weekend has emerged. I rise today to add my voice to the chorus of others who have expressed their deepest condolences to the people of Somalia and around the world affected by the terrible bombing in Mogadishu. Sunday's attack was the deadliest in the history of Somalia and the region. As more information becomes available, we are learning more gruesome details about the aftermath.

I want to commend the bravery of the first responders and all those who have been working tirelessly to assist the victims. I and all members of this House and Canadians extend our deepest condolences to the families of the victims of this heinous attack. Canada stands with the people of Somalia. In trying times like these, we must all work together in support of a more peaceful future, free from violence and hate.

* * *

● (1405)

TAXATION

Mr. Kerry Diotte (Edmonton Griesbach, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is Small Business Week, and I want to tell you about my friend Marie. She and her husband, Doug, built an award-winning renovation company in Edmonton. Sadly, Doug was stricken with cancer and died five years ago. Marie, newly widowed and a single mom, took a big risk. She quit her full-time teaching job to run the reno company and keep it afloat. She wanted her employees to keep their jobs and feed their families.

Statements by Members

The company flourished, but Marie is now terrified that the proposed Liberal changes to the small business tax could sink her company and kill 20 jobs. She wrote a letter to the Liberal finance minister and to her Edmonton Centre Liberal MP. Her letter reads in part, “I strongly urge you to reconsider the proposed tax changes. You need to help small business owners not hurt them. Reward those who work hard and take risks.”

The Liberals should listen to this woman. Canadian small businesses are the heart of our nation, and this week we honour them.

* * *

SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East—Cooksville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this week we are celebrating Small Business Week, and the theme of the week is about uncovering emerging trends that will shape and grow Canadian companies for years to come.

My riding of Mississauga East—Cooksville is a local innovation hub, with companies like Fielding Environmental and N'Take eco-durable products creating innovative technologies and good middle-class jobs. That is why I am proud that our government has invested \$1.4 billion to support clean tech firms; announced the creation of innovation Canada, a one-stop shop for government support for entrepreneurs; and just last week revealed the short-listed winners of the superclusters initiative to accelerate growth from coast to coast to coast.

I am proud that Canada leads the G7 in economic growth. Working with our entrepreneurs and innovative small businesses, we will continue to grow the economy for the middle class and those working hard to join it.

* * *

[Translation]

WORLD FOOD DAY

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is World Food Day, an event established to raise awareness and inspire action to help the hungry and ensure food security and nutritious diets for everyone.

Here in Canada, our government is committed to supporting our producers and will be implementing Canada's first national food policy.

[English]

Today the Minister of Agriculture is joining G7 agriculture ministers and His Holiness Pope Francis to speak on this important topic at World Food Day ceremonies in Rome. The Minister of International Development is also marking World Food Day by announcing additional funding via our trusted humanitarian partners to bring vital food aid to the Rohingya population that is fleeing violence in Myanmar.

Our government is proud to support our world-class farmers and food producers here at home and to support international goals to help address hunger.

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, two days ago, I returned from Serbia and Hungary after productive meetings with a number of their members of parliament. Travelling on Thanksgiving weekend, the autumn colours there reminded me of home. Later in the week, as part of an international consultation on Christian persecution, I visited “Cross-in-Fire”, an exhibit at the Hungarian National Museum.

In the west, we have not yet awakened to the magnitude of the destruction, particularly in Syria, Iraq, and North Africa. In 2015 in Iraq, one Christian was killed every five minutes, simply because of his or her religious beliefs. Here in Canada we are right to give thanks to God for bountiful harvests, our freedoms, and countless other blessings, yet we cannot forget the plight of our brothers and sisters enduring brutal physical persecution, having lost homes, family, and even life.

Today thousands of refugees want to return home and resettle in their native lands. We need to help provide security and stabilization and humanitarian aid and create opportunities for life in the region. Canada can help. Canada must help.

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●(1410)

[Translation]

LIONS CLUBS

Mr. Michel Picard (Montarville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this year the Lions Club organization is celebrating its 100th anniversary.

Founded in Chicago in 1917, the Lions accepted the challenge of being knights of the blind in the crusade against darkness. We have the Lions to thank for widespread use of the white cane with a red band, donations of audio readers, support for eye banks, and treatment for river blindness, among many other things.

The member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot and I joined Lions Club members Cécile Langelier and Denis Poulin, a fine man from Sainte-Julie, in the walk for dog guides to support the Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides.

I invite all my colleagues to join me in wishing the Lions a happy anniversary.

[English]

SPACE DAY ON THE HILL

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is Space Day on the Hill. In 1962, the *Alouette 1* marked Canada's entry into space. We built the Canadarm, which maintains the International Space Station, and now our Canadian space industry will launch a constellation of satellites that will monitor our sovereignty, environment, and climate change.

Innovation in space permeates our entire economy. From GPS to banking to cellphones, our daily lives rely on space-based assets. The space sector employs over 10,000 Canadians in high-quality jobs and creates over \$5 billion in revenue. Canada is a leader in space technologies, and a new national space strategy will ensure that we do not lose our competitive edge in this important sector.

I thank the Aerospace Industries Association of Canada and all our leading-edge companies for making Canada a world leader in space technology today and in the future.

Join us tonight for our space reception.

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JACK ROBERTSON

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Abbotsford has lost a community champion. On October 1, my good friend Jack Robertson died at the age of 91. Jack loved our community and did everything he could to contribute to its success, but he never sought recognition for his own accomplishments.

A former city councillor, he spearheaded the creation of Rotary Stadium, which remains the jewel of Abbotsford's sports facilities. Jack was the founding president of the Abbotsford Sports Hall of Fame and chaired the highly successful 1995 Western Canada Summer Games. He also co-founded the Abbotsford Police Foundation on which he sat as a director until his death. Jack was the recipient of the Order of Abbotsford and is a member of the Abbotsford Sports Hall of Fame.

What I will miss most about Jack is his willingness to inspire and encourage the next generation of community leaders. I am among that ever-growing cohort, and those public servants are perhaps the most enduring legacy he has left behind.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to Jack's wife, Jean, and their family. I thank them for sharing him with us.

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YOUNG QUEBECERS LEADING THE WAY AWARD

Mr. Nicola Di Iorio (Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Quebec Community Groups Network recognizes every year an exceptional individual with the Young Quebecers Leading the Way Award.

She "is a brilliant, resilient and courageous young woman who overcame adversity to become a highly visible and influential proponent for safe driving", as stated by the QCGN. It went on to say, "Beginning in 2010, during the summer of her 16th birthday, she battled back from devastating injuries caused by an impaired driver.... since 2012, she participates in numerous school presenta-

Statements by Members

tions, documentaries and media interviews". She also speaks for a number of organizations, including Cool Taxi. "Her extraordinary road-safety advocacy and inspirational influence" is recognized all over Quebec.

Her miraculous comeback to life and tremendous devotion fills my heart with great joy for another important reason. That young lady is my daughter, Claudia Di Iorio. She is here today, alive and well, and, as throughout her ordeal, is accompanied by her two sisters, Arielle and Emma Rose.

* * *

• (1415)

[Translation]

150TH ANNIVERSARY OF CONFEDERATION

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Saint-Hyacinthe cathedral is hosting its Canada 150 event on Saturday, November 18, at 1:30 p.m. I am pleased to be involved in this major community celebration that honours our history through music.

I would like to thank the Saint-Hyacinthe Philharmonic Orchestra, which worked with the Centre d'histoire de Saint-Hyacinthe to organize this great event that combines music and history. The 6th Battalion of the Royal 22nd Regiment, the No. 1 Saint-Hyacinthe Cadet Corps, and the 953 Saint-Hyacinthe Squadron will see to the official portion of the ceremony.

I would like to thank the key financial partners: Chartwell, *Le Courrier de Saint-Hyacinthe*, Sylvestre et associés S.E.N.C.R.L., the Coopérative funéraire de Saint-Hyacinthe, Baril Ford, the Maskoutains RCM, Imprimerie Maska, Desjardins, H. Gagnon et fils, Marché Lacroix, Les Monuments Roger Fontaine, and Coop Comax.

I invite all residents of Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot and my colleagues in the House to come out and take part in this momentous event.

* * *

[English]

ATTACK IN MOGADISHU

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a tragedy and a moral outrage when even one innocent life is taken. This weekend saw one of the world's deadliest terrorist attacks in recent memory as over 300 people were killed in an attack in Somalia. That death toll continues to rise. Our thoughts and prayers are with the people of Somalia, and especially the affected families.

African nations are on the front line of the fight against terrorism, and many have suffered greatly through terrorist attacks. Attacks in Africa have not always had the same attention or level of response as attacks in western nations, but it is time that this changed. We must show our solidarity and commitment to act together with our partners against terrorism and violent extremism, wherever it is and whatever the nationality of its victims.

Oral Questions

Somalia has identified the al Qaeda-linked terrorist group al-Shabaab as being responsible. We must renew our commitment to defeating Africa-based terrorist groups like al-Shabaab and Boko Haram as well as affiliates like al Qaeda and Daesh, and we must proactively promote religious freedom, pluralism, and human dignity as an alternative to the ideology of these groups.

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SMALL BUSINESS WEEK

Ms. Karen Ludwig (New Brunswick Southwest, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise in the House today to recognize small businesses across our great country during Small Business Week. I know well the excitement, sacrifices, risks, opportunities, and nimbleness required to start, maintain, and grow a business.

I am proud of the business owners in my riding of New Brunswick Southwest, and how they have shared with me suggestions to improve our policies and plan for the future, including lowering the small business tax. Our government is fulfilling our commitment to lowering taxes on small businesses, from 11% in 2015 to 9% by 2019.

This week, and every week, I want to thank our small business owners for what they contribute to their communities, the economy, and our great country.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

TAXATION

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as we already know, the Liberals have been attacking the investments that local businesses use to create jobs for Canadians. Now, they also want to go after employee discounts. Yesterday, the President of the Treasury Board contradicted the Prime Minister and said that employee discounts will be taxed, but he was unable to provide any details. Will the Prime Minister clarify his government's policy? Is he going to tax employee discounts?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since day one, our government has been focused on helping the middle class. The document in question did not reflect our government's intentions. It has been removed and is being reviewed. We will continue to ensure that our actions support the middle class, and like the Prime Minister said, we will not be going after anyone's retail employee discounts.

[English]

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, revised but not cancelled. That is an important distinction. This Prime Minister just cannot help but hurt the very people he claims he wants to help. Now we learn that he wants to tax the discounts received by employees. The Liberals claim they never intended to do this, and then they even tried to blame public servants, but the finance minister's own officials told committee members over a month ago that they were going to do this.

Why is it that whenever hard-working Canadians look behind them, they see the Prime Minister trying to take more and more of their hard-earned money?

• (1420)

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since day one, our government has been focused on helping the middle class. The document from the agency did not reflect the intention of our government. It has been removed and is being reviewed. We will continue to ensure that our actions support the middle class and, like the Prime Minister stated, we will not be going after anyone's retail employee discounts.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the problem is that nobody believes them. They have lost all credibility on this file. It took them over a month to walk this back. It was only after they were caught and only after the outrage expressed by thousands of hard-working Canadians that they pulled this back.

Can the Liberals be crystal clear on this? Can they commit that nobody's employee discounts will be touched after they get through with these changes?

[Translation]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I already said, the document in question did not reflect the intentions of our government. It has been removed and is currently being reviewed—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order.

[English]

I am trying to save my voice today. I wish others would try to do the same, until they have the floor, of course. It would be good.

The hon. Minister of National Revenue has the floor.

[Translation]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier: Mr. Speaker, I have instructed officials to clarify the wording in the document. Our government cares about the middle class. I want to remind my colleagues opposite that we raised taxes on the wealthiest 1% in order to lower them for middle-class Canadians. The opposition members voted against that initiative, because they prefer to lower taxes on the wealthy at the expense of the middle class.

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, two million Canadians work in retail. They include youth, seniors, and students who work hard every day. Right now, these workers are getting mixed messages from Revenue Canada and the minister herself. We are still looking for answers. Does the government think that by taxing employee discounts, it has found a new way to extract even more cash from the pockets of ordinary Canadians?

Oral Questions

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I just said, the document in question did not reflect our government's intentions at all. It has been removed and is now being revised. I have instructed officials to clarify the wording of the document. Our government cares about the middle class and is taking concrete steps to help middle-class Canadians. We stopped the cheques the Conservatives were sending to the wealthiest families, and we replaced them with the Canada child benefit, which puts more money in the pockets of nine out of 10 families. We have lifted more than 300,000 children—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Richmond—Arthabaska.

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister said she was never informed or consulted on the CRA's decision to tax employee discounts.

Does she know what is going on in her own department?

If so, can she tell us where the directive came from and how Canadians can trust this Liberal government, which sees middle-class workers as part of the wealthiest 1% in Canada?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since day one, we have been focusing on helping the middle class and those wanting to join it. The document in question did not at all reflect our government's intentions. It has been removed and is being reviewed. We will continue to ensure that our actions support the middle class, and as I have said and as the Prime Minister stated, we will not be going after retail employee discounts.

* * *

ETHICS

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance must not have had a pleasant week in his riding. First he was accused of not disclosing a private company and now we have learned that his business interests were never placed in a blind trust. Instead of taking responsibility, the Minister of Finance told us that the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner did not tell him that he was required to do so. The Liberals do not appear to be interested in following their own code of ethics.

Why are the Liberals not interested in using common sense?

• (1425)

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, common sense tells us that today is a great day for Canadians and small business owners.

In August 2015, we made an election promise that I am going to quote. "...we [will] reduce the small business tax rate to 9% from 11%..." Today we kept the promise we made. We are proud that we have kept our promise to reduce the business tax rate from 11% to 9%.

We really listened to Canadians, and the caucus, in order to make our tax system fairer for all Canadians.

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, if he does not want to answer my question, maybe he will come see me after question period. I might have a French villa to sell him.

The Liberals promised to set a new standard in ethics, yet they continue to miss the mark. Shortly after his appointment, the Minister of Finance admitted that he should place his interests in a blind trust, but he chose not to do so. I wonder why he did not think this necessary?

In what universe does the Minister of Finance think he can continue to run his affairs—

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of International Trade.

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can assure the House that our Minister of Finance is in the universe that works hard for Canadians. The minister has worked with the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner to make sure that all conflict of interest laws are followed.

The appropriate steps have been taken to ensure full compliance with the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner's recommendations. This is what Canadians want to hear. On this side of the House, we work on behalf of Canadians.

* * *

[English]

TAXATION

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, one of the great mysteries of political life in Canada is exactly how to get a Liberal to keep a Liberal promise. Well, now we have the answer.

When Liberals have totally screwed up a small business tax plan, when they have attacked small businesses while ignoring their wealthy friends, when they are backed so deep into a corner they have nowhere else to go, then and only then will Liberals honour their commitments to Canadians.

Why is keeping a promise the Liberal version of damage control?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we know, it is a great day for small business owners in Canada.

In August 2015, we promised in our platform, and let me quote it because these members may want to hear the answer: "to reduce the small business tax rate to 9 percent from 11 percent".

We said we should be doing that, and we now are doing what we promised. Our government is proud to fulfill our commitment to lowering taxes on small business from 11% in 2015 to 9% in 2019. We have truly listened to Canadians and our caucus to ensure a fairer tax system that will benefit all Canadians.

*Oral Questions***ETHICS**

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the finance minister seems so very forgetful these days. He forgot that cutting small business taxes was a promise that he ran on. He forgot he owned a luxury villa in France, but, hey, what middle-class Canadian has not? He also forgot to tell us that his vast wealth was not in fact in a blind trust, and he only comes clean when he is in a world of trouble.

Why does this forgetful finance minister never remember his promises to Canadians but always remembers ways to protect his own wealth?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a good day for Canadians. Canadians know that when we make a promise to Canadians, we fulfill this promise.

Let me answer the member's question. The minister has worked with the Ethics Commissioner to ensure that all conflict of interest rules are indeed followed. Appropriate measures and screens have been put in place in order to fully comply with the recommendations provided by the Ethics Commissioner. These members had better listen to Canadians.

• (1430)

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the finance minister's apparent wilful disregard of the Conflict of Interest Act raises some serious questions. Did the minister intentionally mislead the Ethics Commissioner about the nature of his private interests in France? Why did he withhold details of his private corporation in France? Why does this extremely wealthy minister believe he is above conflict of interest and ethics reporting rules?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to reassure the member that the Minister of Finance has always worked with the Ethics Commissioner to make sure that all rules are followed and will continue to do so, but if they want to play politics while we work for Canadians, it is their business.

I am very proud to work with a finance minister who has achieved more growth in two years than they ever could, and who has done it at the same time as reducing child poverty by 40%, helping 900,000 seniors, and reducing taxes for 9 million Canadians. I am proud to work with him.

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government is guilty of any number of lapses of judgment, but the finance minister's violation of the straightforward requirements of the Ethics Commissioner's disclosure declaration for all members of cabinet raises serious questions, not only of ethics, conflict of interest, and credibility, but of the confidence that Canadians have lost in the government.

When will the minister come clean with the Ethics Commissioner and Canadians?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to reassure my colleague that the Minister of Finance has always worked closely with the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner. He will continue to do so to

ensure that he is in compliance with the law and with the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner's directives.

The member is trying to ignore all of the good things we are doing for small business owners by fulfilling a commitment we made in the 2015 campaign and by lowering the small business tax rate to 9%. We support our small business owners and our small businesses, and we will always support them. We know just how important they are to Canada's economy.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary seems to forget that in its first budget, his own government abolished the tax cuts that our government had proposed. That is the reality of this government.

The CBC's reports last week were extremely troubling to Canadians. For two years, the Minister of Finance hid the fact that he owned a corporation from the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner. This corporation owns a villa in Provence, France. I remind members that this is the same Minister of Finance who is going after business owners to take more of their money—

The Speaker: The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said, the Minister of Finance has always worked closely with the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner and will continue to do so to ensure compliance with all of the commissioner's recommendations.

The member is forgetting what we have always said and what we said in August 2015. I am very proud that we are lowering the small business tax rate, but we have always said that it must be done in the context of revamping our tax system to make it fairer. I am also very proud that we are doing this after having listened to Canadians from coast to coast.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary claims that the Minister of Finance is working hand in hand with the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner, but that he just forgot to mention that he owns a company and a villa in France. A minor oversight, to be sure. He and the commissioner may indeed work well together, but he is forgetting to mention the important stuff.

Will the Minister of Finance promise not to hide anything else from the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can reassure the opposition member that the minister will always work with the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner to ensure compliance with all of the rules. All appropriate measures will be put in place.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this cannot be sugar-coated. According to the law, the Minister of Finance had 60 days to disclose his assets to the Ethics Commissioner. He did not do it. It is that plain. It is that simple. Has the finance minister become so arrogant and so entitled that he actually thinks he is above the law?

• (1435)

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to reiterate that the minister has worked with the Ethics Commissioner to make sure that all conflict of interest rules are followed and that appropriate measures and screens have been put in place in order to fully comply with the recommendations provided by the Ethics Commissioner. I am very proud to be working with this minister, who today announced that we are lowering the tax rate for small businesses from 10.5% to 9%. We stand behind small businesses in this small business week, and we have always done so.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have a Prime Minister who, for the first time in history, is being investigated by the Ethics Commissioner. We have a finance minister who is refusing to obey the law. That is nothing to be proud of. In fact, the stench coming from the two most senior Liberals in that government and in that caucus is overwhelming and cannot be ignored. It begs the question: What else is that finance minister hiding from Canadians?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to reassure the member that the finance minister has always worked with the Ethics Commissioner, in full transparency, to make sure that he is in full compliance with the rules and the recommendations of the Ethics Commissioner. That is what Canadians expect. That is what we will keep doing.

* * *

*[Translation]***PENSIONS**

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on Friday, Sears received approval to liquidate its assets. Because our bankruptcy laws are inadequate, our workers and retirees will be the biggest losers. They could lose their pensions and their benefits.

It is absolutely ridiculous that the Liberals are letting the big CEOs off the hook at the expense of workers and retirees, who sometimes struggle to make ends meet.

When will the Liberals join the NDP in making workers and retirees preferred creditors?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are always concerned about the impact on employees and their families.

[English]

That is why we are monitoring the situation very closely. We understand that this is very difficult for many regions, for many of the workers and their employees, as well with Sears Canada. That is why we are closely looking at the situation that is before the courts. We cannot comment on any of the specific matters that are before the courts, but we are also looking at what benefits we can provide. We

will continue to engage and work with the workers and their families in the different communities across the country.

Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Well, they can start by taking action.

Mr. Speaker, last Friday, Sears Canada received court authorization to liquidate its assets. Because of our inadequate bankruptcy laws, shareholders and managers like Edward Lampert will end up even richer than before, while workers and pensioners will lose jobs, benefits, and some part of their pensions. The worst part is that it is legal. It is scandalous that the Liberals continue to place the interests of wealthy and well-connected insiders above the well-being of working Canadians and retirees. When will the Liberals join the NDP to make workers and pensioners the first priority?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can understand and appreciate that this is a very difficult time for the workers and their families in many communities across the country. I understand that the current Sears Canada pension fund assets are held in trust and, as such, must be used solely for the benefit of pensioners. It is completely protected from the claims of other creditors. The unfunded pension portion will have a claim, and the proceeds of those claims of liquidation will be a priority for the pensioners as well. We will continue to monitor the situation. We are going to work with the workers, we are going to work with their families, and we are going to work with the different communities.

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ETHICS

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance is always forgetting things. He forgot his keys. He forgot his villa in France. He forgot even the corporation he holds that villa inside of. He forgot the \$30 million of shares in Morneau Shepell, and he forgot to put that into a blind trust. He forgot today to tax any of his own family fortune.

Why is it that the only thing that the minister does not forget is his wallet?

[Translation]

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance has always worked closely and openly with the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner to ensure that all rules are followed.

The opposition member wants to hijack the debate and play political games. However, on this side of the House, we are focusing on Canadians. That is why today we are cutting the small business tax rate, which will stimulate growth.

The economy has been growing since we took power. We have created 437,000 jobs. The Conservatives cannot claim to have such a good record.

Oral Questions

● (1440)

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in his very first budget, the finance minister cancelled the small business tax cut, breaking a Liberal platform promise. Now they expect us to pat them on the back for unbreaking their promise. It is kind of like his Morneau Shepell subsidiary that he keeps in Barbados, a tax haven for which he is responsible for overseeing a review.

Are any of the measures he is proposing today planning to impose taxes on Morneau Shepell's assets in Barbados?

[Translation]

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have always been clear with Canadians about our intention to lower taxes for small and medium-sized businesses. We made that promise during the election campaign because we recognize how important SMEs are. We will always support middle-class entrepreneurs.

We have also always said that we want to improve the fairness of certain aspects of our tax system. That is exactly what we are doing after having consulted Canadians across the country in order to be sure that we are doing things right.

Hon. Maxime Bernier (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, during the Liberal leadership race, the Prime Minister promised Canadians new, stricter standards of ethical behaviour that would ensure that the fortune he received from his father in stocks and bonds would be placed in a blind trust.

We now know, however, that the Minister of Finance never bothered to comply with that standard. He is not complying with the code of ethics or the law.

When will the Minister of Finance show some respect for Canadians and comply with the code of ethics?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance has been working with the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner from the beginning to make sure that he is in full compliance with her recommendations. That is what Canadians expect, that is exactly what the minister is doing, and we are proud of that.

Hon. Maxime Bernier (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with a blind trust, one normally has no say or control over the management of their own fortune.

Today we learned that the Minister of Finance, while managing the country's finances, can also see to his own fortune and make it grow. We know that his fortune is not in a blind trust.

Why did the Minister of Finance introduce a tax rule today that does nothing to ensure that Morneau Shepell pays taxes in compliance with the law?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can assure the member that the Minister of Finance has always worked closely with the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner in full transparency and followed her recommendations regarding a blind trust.

I am very proud to work with a minister who has lowered taxes for nine million Canadians, who today announced a tax cut for SMEs,

who has helped 900,000 low-income seniors through the guaranteed income supplement, and who has reduced child poverty by 40%. I think we can be proud of our Minister of Finance.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, after Netflix was allowed to bypass our tax laws, the Canada Revenue Agency issued a new interpretation that would tax employee discounts, affecting small retail businesses everywhere.

You heard right. The Minister of National Revenue would rather keep chasing after middle-class employees than the CEOs of major corporations who hide their income in tax havens. It is absolutely shameful.

How can she allow a giant like Netflix not to pay taxes, while employee discounts will be taxed?

The minister said that she was not aware. Come on. Who is in charge of the Canada Revenue Agency? Is it the minister?

When will she take responsibility on this issue?

Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has already said that it would not tax Canadians more. Our vision for a creative Canada involves investing in creators, ensuring their success, and showcasing them on the national and international stage.

Canada's arts and culture sector is a \$55-billion industry that accounts for over 630,000 jobs. That is why we continue to support our creators.

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*[English]***INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in this fourth round of NAFTA renegotiations, President Trump continues to speak negatively about the deal, even while sitting beside our silent Prime Minister. The Americans are clearly bargaining in bad faith, placing poison pills on the table, such as the requirement that vehicles contain at least 50% U.S. content. The automotive sector has stated that not only will this backfire, companies will simply pay the low 2.5% tariffs instead of ensuring the content is regionally sourced and jobs are secure.

When will the Liberal government present its plan to protect the future and health of Canadian jobs and our auto sector?

Oral Questions

●(1445)

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Canada-U.S. Relations), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada is the biggest market for the United States, bigger than China, Japan, and the U.K. combined. We are negotiating with the most protectionist U.S. administration since the 1930s. We never said these negotiations would be easy. A modernized NAFTA remains a goal, but we cannot accept proposals that will leave the middle class in all three countries, especially Canadians, worse off.

We will always defend our national interest and stand up for Canadian values.

* * *

[Translation]

TAXATION

Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Sudbury, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as you know, I own a small business and had a career in tax law.

[English]

The discussion on tax reform created many concerns for small business owners throughout the country, including myself.

Could the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance update the House on what we are doing as a government to support small businesses to grow our economy?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his tireless work on behalf of small businesses and his very constructive feedback with these proposals.

I am very proud that our government today has announced that we are lowering the corporate tax rate for small businesses to 9% by 2019. We have always been the government of growth, of inclusive prosperity, and we will always be behind small entrepreneurs. The small business tax rate was already the lowest in the G7. That is going to make our businesses more able to compete, grow, prosper, and contribute. We will always be behind small businesses.

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GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals tried to cover up spending nearly a quarter million dollars on the design of their 2017 budget cover, which included \$90,000 in so-called talent fees. They obviously do not have the talent of respecting taxpayer dollars. While \$212,000 is not much to the owners of family fortunes and French villas, it is several years of wages for middle-class Canadians.

How can these Liberals justify sticking hard-working taxpayers with a quarter million dollar bill for nothing more than some fancy photo images on a budget cover?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to set the record straight, the Conservatives spent twice as much every year they were in power. I rest my case.

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, only a Liberal would think \$600 is more than \$212,000. We know the Prime Minister loves his covers, whether it's *Rolling Stone*, *Vanity*

Fair, and apparently budget covers as well. In two years, the Liberals have spent nearly \$400,000 on budget cover images. Even the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister can appreciate \$400,000. That represents a down payment on a French villa or half of a Mercedes Roadster.

How can the Liberals justify sticking taxpayers with \$400,000 for two years' worth of budget cover pages?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I just want to remind everyone that the previous government spent millions on flashy television advertising to promote and brand itself. They spent twice as much as we have. We have taken a much more targeted approach to our advertising and to our branding. He should look at the numbers of the previous government before standing in the House to ask a question like that.

[Translation]

Mr. Alupa Clarke (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC): Mr. Speaker, \$200,000 for a book cover, \$200,000 for the cover of the federal budget, \$200,000 for a piece of paper, that is the Liberal government's trademark. This was not a gaffe or a mistake. It was an actual decision by the Liberals.

The hon. member for Louis-Hébert says that his government is working for the less fortunate. What does he have to say to them after spending \$200,000 on a piece of a paper?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would simply say to them that the previous government spent \$750 million on promoting its brand when it was in power.

We are taking a much more targeted approach, one that is very responsible with taxpayers dollars. We took the exact same approach in our last two budgets, and spent half as much as the previous government spent on its budget.

I am very proud of our record.

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[English]

ETHICS

Hon. Tony Clement (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary just talked about a targeted approach. The hon. members on the government side know a lot about targeting small business owners, targeting middle-class Canadians, and targeting people who are struggling to make ends meet. That is their targeted approach.

When will the Liberals understand that the blind trust they have in the Minister of Finance is misplaced?

Oral Questions

● (1450)

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a targeted approach was raising taxes on the wealthiest 1% to lower them for nine million Canadians, a measure the Conservatives voted against. A targeted approach was making the Canada child benefit more progressive, reducing child poverty by 40% in the country, a measure they voted against. A targeted approach is one that has grown this economy at its fastest rate for the last decade, that has reduced unemployment to its lowest rate in the last nine years, and that has created 437,000 jobs, most of them full time. That is a targeted approach that is working.

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INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the allegations of widespread fraud committed against the people of Kashechewan raises serious questions about the operating culture in the Minister of Health's office.

Joe Crupi is alleged, among other things, to have stolen a million dollars from a breakfast program in a community so poor the kids do not have a school, yet her officials protected his access despite the warning bells from the Attorney General and the RCMP. Now her lawyers are going after Crupi for the money, but that was money stolen from the mouths of children.

What steps will she take to make it right for the children of Kashechewan and right for the people of Canada?

Mr. Don Rusnak (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is completely unacceptable when public funds intended for indigenous peoples are misappropriated. The consulting group in question was involved in a third party agreement with Health Canada and the Kashechewan Health Services board between 2010 and 2015. Once the department was made aware of an RCMP investigation into the consulting group, it conducted an audit of its agreements with the company. The department is now exploring its options to recover the funds that were found to be misappropriated. The department has taken corrective actions to ensure this does not happen again.

Ms. Georgina Jolibois (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Métis and non-status found out last week that they were not included in the government's sixties scoop survivors' settlement. This betrayal has caused great pain to Métis and non-status survivors, who were no less part of the sixties scoop.

How can we truly achieve reconciliation when Métis and non-status are being told by the Liberals that they do not exist and that their suffering is not worthy of recognition and compensation? Why were the Métis and non-status intentionally excluded?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the sixties scoop is a dark and painful chapter in Canada's history. This agreement, in principle, represents the first step in resolving this issue. We know there are other claims that remain unresolved, including those of the Métis and non-status. We remain committed to working with all indigenous people affected by the sixties scoop to resolve these remaining litigations by negotiation.

[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there are reports that the parliamentary secretary announced the government's true position at an event in Washington when he mentioned there would be “room to negotiate” on supply management. This government keeps selling out the farmers in my riding, Lac Saint-Jean, and Quebec as a whole to accommodate Washington. It is plain to see that this government is all too willing to bow and scrape to the United States.

Will the Prime Minister confirm for our farmers that he plans to use them as a bargaining chip, despite claims that supply management is not on the table?

[English]

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Canada-U.S. Relations), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have always defended supply management. It is a system that works. Protecting supply management is important for us, to Canadian consumers, and for dairy and agricultural industries across the country. I believe in supply management, as does everybody in the House—oh wait, except for members of the Conservative Party.

[Translation]

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, dairy farmers in Lévis—Lotbinière, Bellechasse, Lac Saint-Jean, and all across Quebec are worried. The parliamentary secretary for Canada-U.S. relations announced that there is “room to negotiate” on the issue of opening up supply management. The Minister of Foreign Affairs had to contradict him to hush up the whole business.

Will the Liberal government confirm for our farmers that the parliamentary secretary laid out the Liberals' true position and that they are preparing to open up supply management to accommodate Washington?

● (1455)

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Canada-U.S. Relations), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the aisle are committed to protecting the supply management system. We agree with the idea that every person should be free to make their own decisions, but I believe everyone in this House supports supply management, except the Conservative Party.

[English]

Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when the Liberals think Canadians farmers are listening, they claim they are defending them at the NAFTA negotiations. However, in Washington, behind closed doors, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Canada-U.S. Relations) said that Canada had “room to negotiate” on supply management.

Oral Questions

Protecting our agricultural sector should not be negotiable. How can Canadian farmers trust the government to defend supply management in public in Canada, when behind closed doors, in secret, in Washington, it is something different?

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Canada-U.S. Relations), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, actually I was there and it was on a TV panel, and I did not say the words ascribed to me.

I will make the point that we have always defended supply management. It is a system that works. Everyone on this side of the House, everyone in the House, indeed, supports supply management, with the exception of a significant portion of the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada.

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HEALTH

Mr. Ron McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the B.C. Coroners Service announced last week that the province's death toll from suspected overdose now stood at 1,013, more than the entire number recorded during 2016.

We know this is an urgent public health crisis. Could the Minister of Health tell us what she is doing to address this deadly epidemic?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for his advocacy on this issue. Our government has been very clear that this is a national public health crisis in Canada, and we are responding in a way that is collaborative, compassionate, and comprehensive.

In addition to passing Bill C-37, which streamlines the application process for supervised consumption sites, we are also providing over \$10 million in urgent support to British Columbia to assist with its response to the opioid crisis.

Our government will continue to bring forward evidence-based solutions to help save lives in Canada.

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VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Phil McColeman (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Veterans Affairs.

Late last Friday the minister quietly announced that he was severely cutting the number of wreaths to be distributed for Remembrance Day ceremonies. With all of the extravagant and unnecessary spending that the government is involved in, why is it that commemorations to honour the sacrifice of Canadian veterans are the first things to get cut?

What was the minister thinking when he signed off on this shameful idea?

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me be blunt that there will no depriving any member of the wreaths that he or she may lay at a cenotaph or at a monument in his or her riding. In fact, every member in the House, as always, will be allotted at least two. If you need more, all you have to do is ask us and we would be happy to give you as many as you need.

The Speaker: Order, please. I want to remind the hon. Minister of Veterans Affairs that when we say "you" around here, it refers to the

Speaker. I do not think he wants to just refer to the Speaker. I would ask him to remember to direct his comments to the Chair in the future.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert.

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CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, for 18 months, the Minister of Canadian Heritage consulted with all the stakeholders of our cultural ecosystem without ever listening to them. All the stakeholders were clear: our culture is on the line here and now. However, the minister did not listen. She chose to offload the hard decisions on the CRTC, which will get to it in June 2018. Come on, this is an emergency.

Furthermore, *Le Devoir* revealed on Friday that even the deputy minister warned the minister that giving a free pass to web giants was not viable. However, the minister did not listen to him either.

Does the minister only listen to the Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance, and lobbyists, or does she ever only listen to herself, in the end?

Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is proud to have announced its vision for the future of creative industries.

These industries provide quality employment to over 630,000 Canadians. Through our new economic strategy, we are committing to support families across the country. Thanks to Creative Canada, we are going to amend our policies to help our cultural creators and entrepreneurs face the challenges of today's digital age. This approach will help Canadians share their creations on the international stage.

* * *

● (1500)

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Darrell Samson (Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the global economy is undergoing major changes. More and more, countries are leveraging their unique specialties and capabilities and focusing on developing their expertise in these sectors. Canada has a number of sectors that are rich in talent and economic capacity, where it is well-positioned to be a leader.

[English]

We must take full advantage of the changing global priorities and create jobs for the future now to ensure a strong foundation for the next generation of Canadians. Can the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development please explain to the House the steps the government is taking?

Oral Questions

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member for Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook well knows, part of our innovations skills plan was to introduce superclusters. This initiative was about growing the economy and creating jobs. This is a \$950-million investment to create up to five superclusters and is really about collaboration. I saw that first-hand when I travelled across the country to identify the short list for this initiative.

I can say right now this is a business-led initiative. We had over 1,000 businesses participate, and over 350 partners including 100 academic institutions. This is good for the economy and good for jobs.

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JUSTICE

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice claims to support mandatory sentences for serious offences. However, Liberal MPs voted to defeat a Conservative amendment to Bill C-46 to provide for a five-year mandatory sentence for impaired drivers who kill.

Was the minister insincere when she claimed that she supports mandatory sentences for serious offences or does the minister believe that impaired driving causing death is not a serious offence?

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said many times, the Prime Minister is asking to do a broad review of the criminal justice system. I am undertaking that in partnership with the provinces and territories. Review of mandatory minimum penalties in the Criminal Code is a substantive part of that review.

I hope to bring forward changes in the near future with respect to impaired driving. We are doing everything we can to ensure safety on our roads. That is why we introduced substantive legislation by way of Bill C-45, to ensure that we have as much safety on our roads and to ensure that people do not get behind the wheel of their car and drive with alcohol or drugs.

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[*Translation*]

TAXATION

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, what we have before us is a government of bad ideas and broken promises that always seem to hurt ordinary Canadians, a government that is incapable of going after the major players. We saw that with this government's attempt to weaken the Consumer Protection Act, give special privileges to Netflix, and tax employee discounts for those earning minimum wage. Now we have the small business tax reform.

Instead of holding a press conference to frantically announce that he is going to make an announcement, why does the minister not simply put off his reform and do something that makes sense?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think that we were quite clear during the election campaign on the fact that we wanted to bring more fairness to our tax system in areas where such fairness is lacking. That is why we made proposals and listened to the reactions

of Canadians across the country, and to our caucus as well, to be sure that we are getting this right. That is what we are getting ready to announce to Canadians this week.

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RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Michel Boudrias (Terrebonne, BQ): Mr. Speaker, two years ago the Minister of Transport said that rail safety was his top priority. Two years later, that does not appear to be the case. Lac-Mégantic still does not have a bypass, the rail infrastructure in many communities looks like it dates back to the 19th century, and ticking time bombs are rolling through our streets, our lands, along our rivers, and in our towns and cities.

Is the minister asleep at the switch? Is he waiting for another tragedy before he changes the rules surrounding transportation safety?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as members know, rail safety is my top priority. Of course our sympathy and thoughts are with the victims of the Lac-Mégantic tragedy. We have been working very hard since that time to bring in measures to make rail transportation safer. With regard to Lac-Mégantic, we are working with the Province of Quebec and the Town of Lac-Mégantic to come up with a solution. I can assure the House that we will find a solution.

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● (1505)

[*English*]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Hon. Hunter Tootoo (Nunavut, Ind.): *Qujannamiik uqaqti.* Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Indigenous Services. The government has split Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada and designated a minister of indigenous crown relations and northern affairs and a minister of indigenous services. While touring my riding, I heard concerns that this decision will only add another layer of bureaucracy and make it even more difficult to deliver on pressing issues like Nunavut's suicide rate and the lack of mental health services.

How will the split of the department help solve these and other issues that Nunavummiut currently face?

Mr. Don Rusnak (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to a renewed relationship with indigenous people. We have listened to ARCAP's recommendation to simultaneously improve the delivery of services while accelerating a move to self-determination for indigenous people. We have committed \$187 million toward community-based health programs in Nunavut, and the Inuit crown partnership committee will help guide our actions on shared priorities.

Routine Proceedings

We must continue to address the day-to-day realities in Nunavut and all indigenous communities while building a path toward reconciliation and systematic change.

● (1510)

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Jean Rioux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 109, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's official response to the sixth report of the Standing Committee on National Defence entitled, "The Readiness of Canada's Naval Forces", tabled in the House of Commons on June 15, 2017.

JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 15th report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights in relation to Bill C-46, an act to amend the Criminal Code (offences relating to conveyances) and to make consequential amendments to other acts.

[*English*]

The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House with amendments.

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BILLS OF EXCHANGE ACT

Ms. Georgina Jolibois (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-369, An Act to amend the Bills of Exchange Act, the Interpretation Act and the Canada Labour Code (National Indigenous People Day).

She said: Mr. Speaker, in the spirit of reconciliation, it is an honour for me to introduce my bill that seeks to turn national indigenous people day into a statutory holiday. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission report stated, "Reconciliation is not an Aboriginal problem; it is a Canadian one. Virtually all aspects of Canadian society may need to be reconsidered." My bill seeks to offer an opportunity to all Canadians and all government and community levels to reflect on concrete actions for reconciliation and recognition of first nations, Métis, and Inuit, their history, their rights, their cultures, and their languages.

June 21 would be a day to reflect on treaty relationships and the legacy of residential schools that continue to be a heavy weight on indigenous peoples. I look forward to getting my bill passed in the House.

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

VIA RAIL CANADA ACT

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-370, An Act to continue VIA Rail Canada Inc. under the name VIA Rail Canada, to amend the Canada Transportation Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

She said: Mr. Speaker, even though VIA Rail is a crown corporation, it was given no clear mandate by the federal government. This lack of a long-term plan and direction has had adverse consequences for many Canadians. For instance, VIA can unilaterally end service on a given route without Parliament's approval, which affects thousands of people, especially in remote regions, yet Canadians should have the right to the highest levels of service, protection, and accessibility of travel that can be provided.

Therefore, I am pleased today to introduce a bill that would establish a mandate for VIA Rail. This bill would make it mandatory for VIA to offer minimum services, specified frequencies for those services and would require VIA to increase its level of service with regard to punctuality, and, very importantly, make VIA Rail's decisions to cancel services or close stations subject to approval by Parliament. Canadians must be able to rely on VIA's passenger rail service, which is an economic driver for many regions, but that economic benefit is dependent upon VIA's reliability and efficiency. Moreover, increasing rail travel has the great advantage of reducing environmental and financial costs.

It should be stressed that this bill follows on the great work of former MP for Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Philip Toone, and an extensive consultation with stakeholders. I would be remiss if I did not thank Mr. Chris West and Mr. Greg Gormick of All Aboard St. Mary's for their invaluable assistance.

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

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COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITIES

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC) moved:

That it be an instruction to the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities that, during its consideration of Bill C-48, An Act respecting the regulation of vessels that transport crude oil or persistent oil to or from ports or marine installations located along British Columbia's north coast, the Committee be granted the power to travel throughout Canada to hear testimony from interested parties and that the necessary staff do accompany the Committee, provided that the travel does not exceed 45 sitting days.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is as always a pleasure to rise in the House on behalf of the people of Chilliwack—Hope.

Routine Proceedings

We are going to speak a bit this afternoon to Bill C-48, the proposed oil tanker moratorium act, which the government does not actually want us to talk about. The government moved closure and cut off debate after only two official opposition members had an opportunity to speak to it. They used what the member for New Westminster—Burnaby calls the parliamentary “guillotine” to cut off debate on a bill that is important to people in our caucus and the people we represent.

People all across the country have different views on Bill C-48, but they were not allowed to be heard, so we are going to give them a voice here today in the House by debating this motion to have the committee travel.

Even though the government does not want to hear from the representatives of the people of Canada, we want that committee to go across Canada to talk about this legislation and to the people who will be most impacted by it. That could mean going to Calgary to talk to people who have seen their livelihoods ripped away from them, aided and abetted quite frankly by government policy that is punishing the energy sector. We saw today on the news that the vacancy rate in Calgary office towers is still near 30%. It is a tragedy that the Liberal government has ignored, but we will not let it ignore it. That is why we will be talking about this here in the House today.

The committee could go to northern British Columbia, where members could talk to the aboriginal equity partners, a group of 31 first nations and Métis communities that signed on to be a 33% partner in the northern gateway pipeline project that was killed by the government for no reason other than it went through a forest the Prime Minister liked. This was a completely arbitrary political decision not based on evidence, not based on science, but on the political whims of the Prime Minister and his friends in the PMO.

What did that decision do? It stole \$2 billion of prosperity from aboriginal communities in northern B.C. and northern Alberta, which have no other prospect of economic development. They were going to be for the first-time owners of a major trans-provincial pipeline. They were going to have a stake in that, and the Liberal government took it away. Not only did the government take away the prosperity that would have resulted from that project, but took it away for every project that might cross northern British Columbia for the rest of time, by making this oil tanker moratorium come into effect.

The government never talks about how the aboriginal equity partners supported this responsible resource development project, which was approved using the exact same rules this government used to approve the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion. The Liberals talk about what a great decision that was. They brag about it when they are in Houston. They brag about it when they are in Calgary. They do not come to B.C. and talk about it very much because Liberal members are afraid of the backlash they will receive, but they used the exact same process for the northern gateway pipeline as the Trans Mountain pipeline, but again, this one went through a forest that the Prime Minister might have hiked in a couple of times and he did not want it to go there.

What did that do? I am going to read into the record a statement by the aboriginal equity partner stewards, Bruce Dumont, the past president of the Métis Nation British Columbia; David McPhee,

president of the Aseniwuche Wienwak Nation; Chief Elmer Derrick, Gitksan Nation hereditary chief; and Elmer Ghostkeeper of the Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement, who said:

We are profoundly shocked and disappointed by the news that the Federal Government has no intention of pursuing any further consultation and dialogue with our communities on the important issue of the Northern Gateway Project. We are also deeply disappointed that a Prime Minister who campaigned on a promise of reconciliation with Indigenous communities would now blatantly choose to deny our 31 First Nations and Métis communities of our constitutionally protected right to economic development. We see today's announcement as clear evidence of their unwillingness to follow through on his promise.

● (1515)

The Government of Canada could have demonstrated its commitment by working with us as environmental stewards of the land and water to enhance marine safety. All 31 AEP plus the other affected communities should have been consulted directly and individually in order to meet the Federal Government's duty to consult.

The North Coast tanker moratorium will eliminate significant financial and social benefits committed to our communities through our ownership and participation in the Project.

It is time for governments to stop politicizing projects which take place on our lands - especially projects that are owned by Indigenous peoples.

The Aboriginal Equity Partners is a unique and historic partnership that establishes a new model for conducting natural resource development on our lands and traditional territories. We are owners of Northern Gateway and are participating in the project as equals.

The economic benefits from Northern Gateway to Indigenous communities are unprecedented in Canadian history. As part of the opportunity to share up to 33% ownership and control in a major Canadian energy infrastructure project, the project's Aboriginal Equity Partners will also receive \$2 billion in long-term economic, business, and education opportunities for their communities.

Our goal is for Northern Gateway to help our young people to have a future where they can stay in their communities with training and work opportunities. We remain committed to Northern Gateway and the opportunities and responsibilities that come with our ownership. We also remain committed to working with our partners to ensure our environment is protected for future generations.

AEP will now consult with our member communities to determine our next steps.

Routine Proceedings

We have never heard that from the government. The Liberals shut down debate on Bill C-48 so we could not hear it again. The Liberals do not want people to understand the damage they would do to aboriginal economic prospects, to aboriginal prosperity, by shutting down tanker traffic in just one region of the country. The health and prosperity of those communities would be put at risk. We notice this does not apply anywhere else in the country. For Venezuelan tankers coming up the St. Lawrence Seaway, no problem. For Algerian tankers coming in to New Brunswick, it is all good. For U.S. tankers coming in to the Port of Vancouver, no problem. It is only when Canadian tankers might take Canadian oil to sell abroad that there is a problem, that we then have to shut down an entire region to economic development. There is more aboriginal support for responsible resource development and more opposition to this very bill, Bill C-48, that the government does not want us to debate here in this chamber.

Here is a statement on the federal tanker ban legislation by the chief's council of the Eagle Spirit energy project:

As Chiefs from British Columbia and Alberta we are very disappointed with the inappropriate actions taken today by [the] Prime Minister...and the Federal Government by introducing a tanker ban on Canada's west coast. We feel strongly that a blanket tanker moratorium is not the answer. Once again, government and international environmental lobby groups want to make decisions for our communities instead of us letting us make them.

The Government of Canada should accept the analysis of affected coastal First Nations rather than put in place a blanket Tanker Moratorium, especially for First Nations led projects. We believe a First Nations process should be implemented to help determine what resource projects can be developed on our lands and what products can be shipped off of our coast lines.

To be clear; there has been insufficient consultation for the proposed Tanker Moratorium and it does not have our consent. As Indigenous peoples, we want to preserve the right to determine the types of activities that take place in our territories and do not accept that the federal government should tell us how to preserve, protect, and work within our traditional territories.

[The Prime Minister] committed to support the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples which combined with Section 35 of the Constitution means that the Government of Canada has a commitment to achieve free, prior and informed consent of Aboriginal groups in several instances, including for the approval of any projects affecting Aboriginal lands or territories. We will not support projects that endanger our communities and the environment; however, we do believe environmental protection and responsible economic development is possible. This ill-conceived legislation puts the prosperity and the future of our people, particularly our youth, in jeopardy.

Once again the federal government is not respecting nation-to-nation dialogue and consultation and is forging ahead on proposals without the consent of many Indigenous communities. We urge the Prime Minister to live up to the commitments he has made to Indigenous Peoples. The Chief's Council will continue to study this legislation and our options and will have more to say in the days to come.

● (1520)

Again, these are indigenous groups who stand to benefit from responsible resource development on their traditional territories, first nations-led projects. However, the Liberals saw no need to consult with them. They only want to consult with people who agree with their point of view. We have seen that time and time again, and we saw it again in this House. When they did not agree with our point of view as the official opposition, they shut down the debate all together. After only two opposition speakers, they cut off the debate and said this would be better studied in committee, as though the 96 members of Parliament represented in our caucus have no value here. What we saw is the breaking of another promise.

In their throne speech of December 4, 2015, entitled "Making Real Change Happen", the Liberals said the following on page 1:

Canada succeeds in large part because here, diverse perspectives and different opinions are celebrated, not silenced. Parliament shall be no exception.

In this Parliament, all members will be honoured, respected and heard, wherever they sit. For here, in these chambers, the voices of all Canadians matter.

Once again, that was a broken promise. They obviously did not mean it. That did not last very long.

We want to be heard on Bill C-48, on this tanker ban moratorium, and we want to be heard because of the people this impacts. The Liberals just want to pat themselves on the back and say they did not need to consult with Aboriginal Equity Partners or with Eagle Spirit Energy group. They did not need to consult with them because they had heard enough. They heard what they wanted to hear, so then they stopped listening. That is what they are doing again today. That is what they have done throughout this Parliament. They simply say that they know best and only consult with groups that are going to tell them what they want to hear.

That is why, when I was the shadow minister for natural resources, I asked, through Order Paper Question No. 786, for the government to detail the consultations they had between October 19, 2015 and November 26, 2016, the date they announced they were killing northern gateway. I asked them to include a list of the dates that they met, the location where they met, the first nation and Métis communities present at those meetings, the cost of each meeting, and the summary for each meeting. That was to make sure that they had fulfilled their duty to consult with those groups. What did I get back? In short, I got back that the Government of Canada was not required to undertake those consultations with indigenous groups because they determined it did not impact their section 35 rights. I would say that the aboriginal communities that I have read these letters from certainly feel that their section 35 rights have been impacted, yet the Liberal government does not want to hear from them.

Closure has been forced. They slammed the door on further debate at second reading and sent it off to committee. We say that the committee should travel to hear from Canadians. If they do not want to hear from the representatives of Canadians, which they obviously do not and have made that clear, then maybe we should go from coast to coast to hear from those Canadians who would be directly impacted. They could also talk about the impact they have had, not only on the west coast but on the east coast as well. There has been deafening silence from the 32 Liberal members of Parliament who represent the Atlantic provinces after the actions of the Liberal government helped to kill the energy east project.

Routine Proceedings

The Liberals want us to believe that the spot price of oil on any given day determines the outcome of a 50-year, \$55-billion project. That is crazy to think that the spot price today can impact the decision for energy east. Former employees who worked on that project have made it clear that it was the government's interference, the changing regulatory regime, the constant moving of the goalposts, and the shutting down of the review process and restarting it again that caused energy east to back away and give up the \$1 billion they had already sunk into the project. They said they were done, that they knew under the Liberal government they could not get this project built.

• (1525)

We saw Liberal politicians dancing on the graves of those energy worker jobs. We saw Denis Coderre celebrating and taking credit for it. Did we see any push-back from the government when that project that would represent 15,000 construction jobs, that would represent \$55 billion in GDP to this country, which would have displaced foreign oil from conflict regions of the world, was killed by this regulatory burden? Did we see any push-back?

We saw the government hilariously trying to blame Stephen Harper. That was a new one. Apparently Stephen Harper was not in favour of energy east. I do not quite understand. It blamed Stephen Harper for its killing of energy east. It blamed the spot price of oil, as if TransCanada, the same company that is still building the Keystone XL pipeline, had suddenly decided that the spot price of oil is where it is and it could not build pipelines anymore. TransCanada is still building pipelines. It is building them now in the U.S.

It is like all of the major energy projects that have fled the country or have been cancelled since the government took office. These companies have not left the oil and gas sector, they have left Canada because of the regulatory burden and uncertainty that has been created by the government.

We say that we should go across the country. We should send the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities across the country to hear from Canadians. Even though the Liberals do not want to hear from their representatives here in the House, we want to hear from them. We know there is not universal acceptance of this. We know that the energy sector has suffered in the last two years because of the uncertainty that has been created by the government's regulatory processes. We should go across the country and talk to energy workers in Alberta, in Fort McMurray, on the west coast of British Columbia, and to the east coast folks, who now see their job prospects evaporating thanks to the work of the government.

Again I am reminded of how different the government's actions are from its rhetoric, how every time there was time allocation under the previous government, the members, who are no doubt going to stand up and ask me questions here, would get up and rail about what a horrible thing this was, how this was a deadening of democracy, a terrible precedent, and how they would never do this.

The Liberals did it on the only bill that we told them we wanted to have a substantial debate. We have had five or six bills that the Liberals have passed already in the first three weeks of this Parliament. However, instead of taking that as a good faith gesture, the Liberals telegraphed that they were going to use time allocation

this fall, and they have been true to their word on that. That is about the only thing they have kept their promise on, that they were going to limit our debate opportunities.

We have said again and again that we wanted this to be a substantial debate. We had significant interest in our caucus in it. What did the Liberals do? They used the occasion of the Governor General's installation, a half-day Monday, and counted it as one of the days of debate. Then, on a Wednesday, after they invoked a bunch of procedural manoeuvres to cut the day off, we had one eight-minute speech. There were two full speeches and an eight-minute speech at second reading, and that was good enough for the government. It had heard all it needed to hear.

This is, again, what the Liberal government is all about. It wants an audience; it does not want an opposition. When it fears that it might hear something it does not like, the Liberals cut off the consultation process. It cuts off debate in this House.

Canadians are growing tired of it. We are seeing that. We certainly saw it during the small business proposals that the government tried to ram through, which it was unsuccessful at due to the good work of the opposition and business groups across the country.

We are not going to let them do it on Bill C-48. We think the committee should travel across the country to hear the voices of Canadians, even if the government does not want to hear from them.

• (1530)

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member was part of a government that invoked closure in this place over 100 times. This is not someone I think should be giving lessons on consultation.

I oversee the translation bureau as part of my job as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement. We have gone from 28 million words translated from consultations in the previous government's era to over 60 million words that have been translated in parliamentary committees. That will give some sort of indication of the depth, the level, the breadth of the consultations that the government has undertaken, including, I might add, on resource issues and the kinds of issues that the member was talking about.

Would the member join us in celebrating the government's commitment to consultation, a commitment to having parliamentarians travel across the country, talking to their constituents, and working on policies that favour middle-class Canadians?

Routine Proceedings

Mr. Mark Strahl: Mr. Speaker, the member gets a gold star for working middle-class Canadians into his question. However, I again quote from page 1 of the Liberal throne speech on December 4, 2015, which states, “Canada succeeds in large part because here, diverse perspectives and different opinions are celebrated, not silenced.” They are only celebrated if they are the same as the Liberals’ preconceived notions. That is the only time they celebrate diversity and different opinions. We can have different opinions as long as they are the same as the Liberals’. They say diversity is our strength as long as they are the same as we are.

Conservatives have a different opinion on Bill C-48, and again and again the government takes away an ability of the representatives of the people to speak. We are temporary occupants here, but we are each sent here to represent about 100,000 people. When Liberals prevent us from sharing the points of view of the people who sent us here, they are not depriving Conservatives of their right to speak, which is what they think they are doing—they think this is just a partisan game—they are depriving the people of Chilliwack—Hope, and all constituents, the right to be heard. This is the House of Commons. It should be respected, and it is time that Liberals started to do it.

• (1535)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, prior to the last election, a Liberal candidate, now the Minister of Democratic Institutions, tweeted, “It’s time to landlock Alberta’s tar sands.” She deleted that tweet, and I guess after she did, there was some controversy around it. We were supposed to assume that she had changed her mind somehow because the tweet was deleted. The reality is that the government is putting into action precisely the program articulated in that tweet by the Minister of Democratic Institutions. She said, “It’s time to landlock Alberta’s tar sands.” Now the government is effectively directly killing the new pipeline west, and, indirectly, through impossible regulatory hurdles, killing the pipeline east.

Can the member comment on the fact that although the government would like to cover this up with all kinds of doublespeak about reviews and extra processes, the reality is that one member of the cabinet said what she wanted to do, and now it is doing it?

Mr. Mark Strahl: Mr. Speaker, I agree completely with the member. As I said last week, the Liberal plan to halt energy east has finally worked. Liberals worked very hard to make sure that energy east would never proceed. They worked very hard to ensure that the northern gateway pipeline was cancelled. They did nothing to support the Keystone XL pipeline until Donald Trump was elected, and then they suddenly realized they had better get to that. During the bromance between the Prime Minister and Barack Obama, there was not a word about Keystone XL, about promoting Canadian energy. In fact, Liberals left the natural resources minister behind when they had the state dinner in Washington. There was no room for him on the plane because of the Liberal fundraisers and family members of the Prime Minister. That shows the priority that Liberals place on our natural resource workers.

This is happening exactly as Liberals want it to, with projects being killed. Former Liberal minister Denis Coderre celebrated and toasted himself and other Liberals for having killed the energy east

project and took credit for it. No one on that side countered that. They are all celebrating with him.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I agree with my friend from Chilliwack—Hope that it is most unfortunate when important bills have closure on debate. That is the only point with which I agree with him.

I am dismayed by the political willingness to try to claim credit or score partisan points for a business decision, TransCanada’s decision. I think it was well explained by Andrew Leach, associate professor, School of Business, University of Alberta, who pointed out quite clearly that what we have is a declining price for bitumen. It is a product that is expensive to produce but gets a low price on the market, because it is a solid. It is not even synthetic crude. It cannot go into a refinery until it is upgraded. Personally, and on behalf of the Green Party, we think that exporting raw bitumen to other countries for upgrading and refining is a loss for Canadian jobs. In that we are supported by the largest unions in northern Alberta.

However, I put to the member that with regard to the analysis that claims that this is somehow a regulatory process or uncertainty, that regulatory process was put in place by Bill C-38 in the spring of 2012, when, for the first time, the National Energy Board started doing environmental reviews. It is unsuited for it. There has been more uncertainty and more confusion and there are more court cases because of the shemuzzle of reviews we have had post the previous prime minister. Mr. Harper’s approach to reviews, which was to fast-track approvals, had the opposite effect.

Meanwhile, there is a glut of pipelines. As Professor Leach pointed out, when Trump approved Keystone, the same producer had a problem. It could not find enough long-term contracts from suppliers who were willing to convey their product through the pipeline to justify it. It was the better business decision to kill energy east in order to line up long-term contracts for Keystone, which is more advantageous to that industry. We can twist ourselves into all kinds of knots to say that it was someone’s political fault. However, this was a business decision based on a low price globally for oil, retreating investments in the oil sands, and so many pipelines approved that there is a glut.

Routine Proceedings

● (1540)

Mr. Mark Strahl: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that the leader of the Green Party wants to take the word of academics who have made that argument. I will take the word of former energy east executives, who say that it was the government that killed that project. It was the government, by restarting the hearing process unnecessarily, that killed the project. It was the government, which made the pipeline responsible for calculating how many upstream and downstream greenhouse gas emissions would be created by the product that flowed through that pipe. Suddenly that was the responsibility of the pipeline company. That has never been done before. We cannot blame that on the previous government, as much as I know that the member likes to lay most of the problems of this country at the feet of that government. We will take the word of energy east executives, who said that it was the regulatory process by the government that created that uncertainty.

I talked about the northern gateway pipeline. What impact do you think it has on investor confidence when a pipeline that has been approved, subject to 209 stringent environmental conditions, is simply cancelled by a subsequent government for no reason whatsoever other than political whim? What do you think that does to investor confidence when they say that they can spend \$750 to \$800 million to get a project approved and it cannot even be built, because it is arbitrarily killed by an ideological government that is opposed to a pipeline that goes through a forest they like? It kills investor confidence, and that is what the government has done all across the energy sector from coast to coast.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloil—Chambly, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his motion. As democrats, we are certainly always pleased when consultations are held. However, the ongoing challenge with consultations, especially with this government and its approach, is knowing where to draw the line, since excessive consultations prevent us from making progress on extremely important files.

It is all very well to boast about how much was said in committee. However, all these fine exercises in democracy must produce results.

That is why we always support giving a committee the opportunity to travel, especially with respect to an issue that mainly affects Canada's west coast. We know that my colleague from Skeena—Bulkley Valley in particular and the other members from B.C. have been working on this file for quite some time. With that in mind, we find it difficult to agree to a 45-day consultation period, since that seems rather excessive. Once again, we must strike a balance between holding consultations and taking concrete legislative action.

[*English*]

More particularly, and I know that my colleague from Skeena—Bulkley Valley would certainly emphasize the importance of this, there are three communities in particular that New Democrats would like to see visited as part of this tour, which we support in principle, although it is too long. In particular, we believe that the committee should visit Kitimat, Haida Gwaii, and Smithers to hear what people on the ground are saying.

Consultation is important, but at the same time, the bill is also extremely important, and 45 days seems like too long a holdup.

[*Translation*]

I thank my colleagues for their attention.

[*English*]

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask my colleague about the national unity dimension of the whole discussion around pipelines, because some of this has come out recently. It is my belief that we should be able to have these kinds of debates without the Prime Minister, for instance, saying that we should not have this debate for fear of a negative impact on national unity.

We should be able to have this conversation and debate and present different points of view. Most Canadians I talk to are united in believing that development should be able to go forward. Maybe the NDP and the government have a different perspective on it, but certainly we should be able to have debates on Bill C-48, the importance of pipelines, and these sorts of things in the House without raising the spectre of negative impacts on national unity.

If there is anything negatively impacting national unity, frankly, it is the unfair policies of the government toward the west. I wonder if the member would agree with me on that.

● (1545)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Matthew Dubé: Mr. Speaker, I certainly do not agree with the Liberal government that we need to pit one region against another.

That said, we also believe in sustainable development. However, when it comes to such matters, it is not enough to believe in sustainable development. We also have to seek to obtain social licence. That is something the previous government did not manage to do, and the current government has not been very successful in this regard either, even though it talks a lot about consultation.

Nevertheless, we have to move forward, and I would like to reiterate for my colleague that consultations should not be used as PR opportunities. The government cannot keep paying lip service and making promises. It must also take action. That is why we think that, although it is important to consult and listen to communities, especially the ones I mentioned, it is also important to move forward with a bill based on the important work that has been done, not just by government members, but also by members on our side of the House.

[*English*]

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, we hear the term social licence from a few different places. I want to pick up on that a bit, because the challenge with a term like social licence is that it can always be a moving target. We might say one needs to obtain social licence, yet that seems to be an excuse that is continually used to push the discussion further without ever actually coming to a definitive conclusion.

Routine Proceedings

Any process needs to have a mechanism in place for evaluating the evidence, for weighing the feedback, and ultimately, for making a decision. We hear New Democratic and Liberal politicians, here and in Alberta as well, say that they just have to wait until they get social licence. However, in effect, what that leads to is projects being killed.

If the member is so convinced of the importance of social licence, which to me seems an ethereal concept, I wonder if he could actually define it. I wonder if he could actually tell me what achieving social licence on a project would look like. Clearly, it is not unanimity, because we are never going to have unanimity on any policy, no matter how demonstrably beneficial it is. What would achieving social licence, and therefore getting to a yes, actually look like, in the member's view?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Matthew Dubé: Mr. Speaker, I have a great example of social licence for my colleague.

It is easy to say that we are striving for unanimity, but what people really want is respect. Take for example reconciliation with first nations. That involves understanding their role in the process, which is something the previous government, the Conservative government, did not do. The fact that first nations have to hold protests because they feel as though their rights are being violated during the planning and implementation phases of these projects is a good example of what social licence is all about.

Social licence is not about saying we need 100% approval when 99% of the people are in favour of something and only one person is unhappy about it. It is about truly recognizing that a nation-to-nation dialogue has to happen respectfully with an understanding that first nations play an important part in the process. That aspect has been glossed over for too long, and we are looking to finally make some progress on that front. Obtaining social licence is not something politicians should be able to use as an excuse; we should use it to ensure we are doing the best work we can and moving forward in a way that respects everyone.

The member spoke about unity and not pitting one region or group against another. The perfect way to achieve that is by ensuring respect for indigenous peoples during this process. Again, that is something that has not been done to date.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I always find these types of debates interesting when we compare the contrast inside the House. On the one side, we have the Conservatives, who like to think that they actually made progress on the issue of pipelines. However, we all know that we saw zero inches built in the last 10 years by Stephen Harper that went to tidewater. That is not a very good success rate. We have the New Democrats, who really oppose any form of pipeline.

However, one thing we all share, or at least should, is the understanding that Canadians desire that a moratorium be put in place that will take into consideration the importance of our oceans, in particular out in B.C. I am wondering if my colleague across the way can add his thoughts on the importance of a moratorium in terms of responding to something Canadians want to see.

● (1550)

Mr. Matthew Dubé: Mr. Speaker, this is once again the Liberals' Goldilocks approach. They feel that because they are being attacked from all sides, they must be doing something right. The reality is that they are being attacked from all sides because they are doing nothing right. The current government has Stephen Harper's greenhouse gas emissions targets, which it will not even meet and which are a far cry from addressing climate change. We have an environmental assessment process that it promised to fix, which was already broken before the Conservatives completely dismantled it, and the Liberals have still has not fixed that. It did not re-evaluate the projects that were on the table using a fixed process that was never actually fixed.

When I hear the member say that they are doing a bit of this and a bit of that, it is just a lot of nothing. The fact of the matter is that the Liberals can say all the great things they want, and they can consult and consult. As New Democrats, we will always support consultation. However, we also want to see action, and that is certainly not what we have seen from the current government when it comes to sustainable development, tackling climate change, and standing up for the workers whose jobs are on the line.

Mr. Fin Donnelly (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the debate going back and forth. We have heard Conservative MPs, and now Liberal MPs, responding and going back and forth about the nature of consultation. I will remind members and those listening that in the past government, the Conservative approach was to create division and to radicalize those who stood up for the environment, the ocean, and the well-being of salmon and watersheds. In fact, we recently heard the current Minister of Natural Resources talking about the need to bring in the army if necessary on energy pipeline projects.

While we talk about consultation and we talk about a nation-to-nation relationship and true reconciliation, we have to take a serious look at how we do this process. We cannot rely on a window-dressing consultation or just listening and checking off boxes. We actually have to engage with others in this process, whether that be first nations, the provinces, communities, or others. It is a difficult process. We definitely want to protect the environment and those things we value truly. We want to have resources we can use in our communities and that power our local economies. It is a tough road forward as we realize that we are absolutely changing our climate.

I would ask if the hon. colleague could comment on the need for consultation but also the need for action.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Matthew Dubé: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his interesting question. It reminds me of what we saw with the Conservative government's Bill C-51 and what we are still seeing with Bill C-59. Bill C-59 is supposedly going to repair the damage caused by Bill C-51, which jeopardizes the right of activists to protest for the environment.

Routine Proceedings

The Canadian Civil Liberties Association is currently in court because the CSIS watchdog refuses to release documents that would show whether these people were spied on. This is sowing division and keeping people from speaking out and making sure the country and the government are on the right track with regard to the environment and sustainable development. We find that unacceptable.

• (1555)

[English]

Mr. Scott Duvall: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order to request unanimous consent to temporarily move to the rubric request for emergency debate, so I may make my request to the Speaker for an emergency debate on the dire situation facing thousands of Sears employees and ask that the House then revert to the business currently before it.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY DEBATE

SEARS

Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am asking for this debate to allow parliamentarians to address the court-ordered liquidation of Sears Canada granted last Friday. The liquidation of Sears Canada would affect the well-being of 17,000 current and former employees and their families, which will adversely affect thousands of small businesses and other retail suppliers and affect the viability of local real estate holdings.

The social and economic effects on Canadians will be profound and will be felt from coast to coast. It is imperative that parliamentarians be granted the opportunity to discuss means to mitigate the significant impacts of this devastating decision and also help prevent similar occurrences in the future.

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I want to thank the hon. member for bringing forward this request for an emergency debate, however, I find this does not meet the exigencies of the Standing Orders.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Edmonton West.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITIES

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill C-48, the oil tanker moratorium act. I am very pleased because I was intending to speak to this two weeks ago before the Liberals brought in closure on this, but it is part of their whole plan of hypocrisy with their government. They say one thing and they do the other. For years, we heard about no more closure and how evil it is to have constant closure on debate. What they do every single chance they get when they do not

like what they are hearing from the opposite side, or before they even hear from the opposite side, is bring in closure. Shame on them, but I am glad that we are able to discuss it today.

I want to correct the record. One of my colleagues across the way, the member for Winnipeg North, constantly talks about there being no pipelines built under the Conservative rule. I just want to correct that. Four were built. They are going to say that none went to tidewater. Three of the four connect to pipelines that go to tidewater. Saying that the TMX anchor that connects into Kinder Morgan that goes to Burnaby is not a pipeline that goes to tidewater is like saying that there are no flights that go from Ottawa to Vancouver because they have to connect through Toronto. They do get there. The reality is that the former Conservative government approved and had built four pipelines during our rule, three of which go directly to pipelines that go to tidewater. Therefore, I just want to correct the roll.

The Prime Minister has stood in the House many times promising to achieve both environmental salvation and unparalleled economic growth. He said his government believes that the Liberals and only the Liberals know how to bring about the true formula to achieve this seemingly oxymoronic balance of economic growth and environmental care. They dismiss the critics in the NDP as excessively environmentalist and they scoff at the Conservatives' concerns about putting arbitrary limits on business and economic development. No, they assure the economic growth and environmental communities, they know what they are doing. What better document to prove this finely calculated balance than Bill C-48, the oil tanker moratorium act?

Let us look at some history. Alberta, being a landlocked province, is paying dearly for the situation of not having more pipelines. Our energy companies apply for pipeline permits to the faraway paradises of British Columbia, New Brunswick, and the gulf states in the U.S. Pipelines, being the safest method of transporting crude, are in short supply in Canada despite the previous government's approval and oversight of the construction of multiple new ones, as I mentioned previously. Frustrated with selling a product under market value for years, Alberta companies placed their hopes in projects such as Keystone XL, northern gateway, Kinder Morgan, and energy east. The gargantuan, bureaucratic pipeline approval process in Canada means that most of these projects had their inception in the late 2000s, before finally becoming topical today.

Routine Proceedings

One by one, project by project has made its way through the National Energy Board, and one by one the projects were demonstrated to be safe. The NEB, in doing its job, attached conditions, sometimes hundreds, to the pipeline approvals but some groups were not happy. Some special interest groups did not like the fact that Alberta might get its oil to market and so began protesting. Sensing an opportunity, the activist Liberals, at the time in third-party status, captured this overblown sentiment by promising to redo the process. If people do not like the process and do not like the decision, the Liberals said, then it must be flawed. The Liberals then began a campaign of discrediting the National Energy Board for following a long-standing process that arrived at decisions that the Liberals did not like. They shamelessly accused the NEB of bias, industry favours, and lack of diligence. For many decades of its existence, the NEB was a harmless and adequate process but suddenly, with Liberal votes on the line, it became a tool of Stephen Harper, the paragon of anti-environmentalism—so said the Liberals—and thus the NEB was his way of destroying the planet.

The Liberals promised to reform the NEB to remove bias and make decisions on evidence. What is one of the first things they did? They ignored the evidence surrounding the northern gateway decision by the NEB and killed it; then, they reformed the NEB in a way that does not make the process any better but does absolutely make our process more bureaucratic, a winning formula to be sure. With a few strokes, the Liberals now watch from the sidelines as pipelines languish. Where once there was hope, we are now left relying on Keystone XL to the U.S., the very same pipeline the Prime Minister, despite his cringe-worthy bromance with President Obama, could not deliver; northern gateway, cast aside by the oil tanker moratorium, which the government wants to codify with Bill C-48; and energy east, of course left to die in the labyrinth of ever-changing rules that only apply to Alberta oil, special interests, pontification, and Liberal indecision. That will be the new NEB.

• (1600)

Kinder Morgan is on its way to the courts thanks to the new government in British Columbia and the lack of enthusiasm from the Prime Minister. It will spend years tied up in court, moving from one hearing to another, until, as I am sure the government hopes, the company finally relinquishes the fight and concedes defeat.

Perhaps if Kinder Morgan had named the pipeline the C Series, the Liberals would be tripping all over themselves to get it built. Oddly, the government does not realize that approved does not mean constructed. Just two weeks ago in this very House, the energy minister stood and claimed that 6,400 jobs had been created already for Keystone, even though it has not been started, and by the way it was approved by the U.S. government, not the Liberal government.

He stood here and claimed that 15,500 jobs had been created for Kinder Morgan already, despite the fact that it has not started and they are sitting idly by while this project is slowly smothered. Like the non-stop bragging about historic levels of infrastructure spending, mere announcements do not mean anything has been accomplished. Until the taps are turned on, the Prime Minister's approval is meaningless.

What should the Prime Minister do? He should champion the project. He should meet with stakeholders, press his claim and make

the case for the project to go through. If he can get down to the U.S. and press President Trump for Bombardier, he can certainly do the same by heading to B.C. and pressing for Kinder Morgan.

The current government seems to forget that projects do not magically happen. Budgets do not just balance themselves, and pipelines do not magically build themselves. Most likely, the Prime Minister took a call from Gerald Butts who took a call from some angry activists in British Columbia, who were astonished that the government would ever approve something as dastardly and destructive as the Kinder Morgan pipeline.

This brings me back to Bill C-48. We expect to hear much about how the Liberals have found the formula for protecting the environment while at the same time allowing our natural resource sector to grow. They have consulted far and wide, they say. In the government's press release, the Liberals have held approximately 75 engagement sessions to discuss improvements to marine safety and formalizing the oil tanker ban. It is funny that with a number as low as 75, they have to approximate and cannot count how many they actually did.

The Liberals consulted extensively with indigenous groups, they say, and also consulted with industry stakeholders and communities across Canada. Much like their consultations on electoral reform and the small business tax attack, they only listened to a select few within the Liberal echo chamber.

Here are some other voices from the consultation, though, that the Liberals did not seem to hear. The Chamber of Shipping of B.C. suggested that the proposed moratorium:

...contradicts ...the federal government's stated approach to environmental protection: evidence-based decision making....sends a very harmful signal to the international investment community.

The Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers argued that this proposed moratorium:

....could significantly impair Canada's oil and natural gas resources from reaching new markets....

It added that such a moratorium also prevents Canada from:

....receiving a fair market value for its resources.

The Chief's Council Eagle Spirit Energy Project, a first nations-led energy corridor proposal that has the support of the affected communities in B.C. and Alberta, has stated, on the proposed moratorium, which they say does not have their consent:

....there has been insufficient consultation....

Routine Proceedings

Most interesting is the Liberals' outright ignoring of the fact-based evidence of the B.C. Coast Pilots. The B.C. Coast Pilots, who are responsible for the safe operating of ships off the coast, have some interesting facts. There has not been a single accident or oil spill with an oil freighter off the B.C. coast in over 50 years. That is not something we can say on the east coast where oddly enough we are happy to bring in oil from some of the worst human rights abusers in the world.

The B.C. Coast Pilots have an aggressive and unmatched-in-Canada safety program that has successfully protected our oceans and coastlines. At least a month before a vessel is placed on hire to come into our waters, the pilots do an extensive vetting process that includes all aspects of the vessel: safety records, crew records, past history. Any deficiencies will ensure that the vessel is not hired. This is even before the ship leaves foreign ports to come to our shores.

In addition, in the 96-hour report sent in, the Coast Guard VTS, the vessel traffic services, port state control will have all the necessary information from its last 10 ports of call, and any and all incidents will be recorded, as will all equipment deficiencies, if there are any.

•(1605)

Before the pilot boards, the VTS will have been provided with the deficiencies and the Transport Canada safety inspectors' report. Then, and only then, does the pilot board the vessel and is the final eyes and ears of the inspection process. The pilot will have the final say whether the ship will be put into anchor.

They have other safety standards above and beyond what I have listed, which is why they have an unblemished record with the transfer of oil on the B.C. coast over the last 50 years. That is not something we can say in regard to the east coast. Do we use the same strict measures on the east coast for oil brought into refineries in Newfoundland, New Brunswick, and Quebec? No, of course we do not.

Also, let us look where we are bringing this oil into eastern Canada from. Six hundred and fifty thousand barrels a day of conflict oil is brought right into Canada off the pristine shores of the east coast. Why is there no ban on the east coast? Why is there a double standard? Is it not a case of pristine coastal shoreline is pristine coastal shoreline? I guess not.

The oil that we bring in from Saudi Arabia is from a regime that is often criticized in the House for rights abuses using Canadian-made arms. The Liberals will gleefully hold that country and the oil freighters it uses to a lower safety standard than used on the B.C. coast.

Oil comes from the democratic paradise of Venezuela. This is what the foreign affairs minister had to say about our great oil supplier off the east coast: "Canada denounces and condemns today's significant and undemocratic action by the Venezuelan regime.... robbing the Venezuelan people of their fundamental democratic rights." The minister even applied sanctions two weeks ago against the officials responsible for the deterioration of democracy in Venezuela. However, it is okay to allow its oil to come into Canada with freighters using a lower safety standard.

On the east coast, we bring in oil from Nigeria. Human Rights Watch says this of Nigeria: "Many of the grave human rights challenges he promised to address in his inauguration speech remain largely unaddressed and unresolved." Again, that oil is subject to lower safety standards than on the west coast. Human Rights Watch continues that Angola has suffered during 2016 due to continued government repression.

I want to read a couple of quotes from people in this House about some of the countries we bring oil into Canada from. The NDP foreign affairs critic said of Saudi Arabia that "These cases once again highlight the Saudi authorities' disregard for human rights.... Canada must stand up for its values and show leadership in defending human rights at home and abroad." Here we are criticizing Saudi Arabia, saying our government must stand up and show its leadership and Canadian values at home and abroad, at the same time as we are banning the use of oil freighters off the north coast using Alberta oil, the most highly regulated oil extraction in the world. We are banning that, but on the east coast, which uses a lower safety standard for oil freighters, we are bringing in oil from Saudi Arabia, one of the worst human rights abusers in the world. Even our NDP colleague stated this.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs states about Venezuela that "Our government deplores the actions of the Maduro regime.... [A]nd will not stand by as the Government of Venezuela robs its people of their fundamental rights." She will not stand by while the government robs its people of their fundamental rights, but she will stand by to ensure that they get Canadian money for their oil. The oil industry has been nationalized in Venezuela, so every single day we bring in oil from Venezuela, we are propping up the despotic regime of Maduro. We sit in the House and criticize him, but at the same time we block Alberta oil and ensure that we enrich the thugs of the Venezuelan regime. It is absolutely shameful.

The former leader of the NDP, a man I have a lot of respect for, has said, "It does not make any sense that in Canada right now, we are importing crude oil from insecure foreign sources like Algeria and Russia, and having it refined at Valero's large refinery in Saint-Romuald across from Quebec City." He was also commenting on the hypocrisy of the Liberals in dealing with Saudi Arabia, selling them arms and bringing in Saudi oil.

● (1610)

He continued, “They can emote about human rights and Canada’s role in the world. What we see them...doing is selling...[arms] to one of the most gruesome, repressive regimes on the planet...Saudi Arabia.” It is one of the most repressive regimes, and yet we are happy to buy their oil, give them hard currency, and prop up their despotic regime. Again, why is bringing in oil from serial human rights abusers using lower safety standards for shipping into the east coast okay, but shipping Canadian oil from the Pacific coast using the highest safety standards not okay?

Industry believes that Bill C-48 is too heavy-handed, and first nations groups who stand to benefit from the project did not give their consent to the moratorium. Of course, environmentalists believe that the legislation does not go far enough. Social licence to them is much like the Stanley Cup to the Maple Leafs, something to be dreamed about but we know is never going to happen.

The government does not seem to get it. It writes legislation solely to satisfy foreign-funded special interest groups to chase away investment and jobs from Canada and to punish Albertans and Canadians. This legislation, Bill C-48, is the epitome of typical Liberal policy. It is too focused on special interest groups to look at real evidence, the Liberal government then capitulates, and Canadians are made to suffer for it.

I want to discuss a few letters I received from some Albertans in my constituency. It is no secret that the province has been suffering for a few years between the provincial government’s carbon tax, chasing away investment, driving up costs, and driving up taxes, and the Liberal government’s carbon tax and pipeline killing rules. Alberta is suffering. We have received a lot of calls to the office about some of the issues.

Since 2014, unemployment has doubled in Alberta. Over 200,000 people are unemployed, 122,000 oil workers have lost their jobs, and unemployment is near a 20-year high. Food bank usage in Edmonton alone is up 60%. According to the CFIB, 45% of Alberta business owners are looking to cut back on staffing. What do we do? We have a government that destroys pipelines and takes away the hope of getting our oil to market. Our communities and families are suffering.

I received a letter from a lady named Sharon who lives in my riding. She says:

The job crisis in Alberta affects my family...negatively. My husband lost his job last July, and is still job hunting. I’m worried because I’m the only one working in the family. It’s...tough...now, and I don’t know when everything goes back to normal.

I can feel for Sharon. Just last week, we held a town hall in downtown Edmonton because the member for Edmonton Centre refused to do an open town hall. We had a town hall on the business tax attack. We had well over 120 people come out and tell us about their issues. I met a young lady whose husband had just been laid off. She had been laid off as well. They could not find work so their answer was that they would create their own work, create their own jobs and go into business for themselves. Then they sit and look at the Liberal attacks on small businesses and ask us how they can do that. They have lost their jobs in the energy sector, the Liberal government is killing pipelines and killing hope. They want to go into business for themselves but now they are being attacked on that

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front as well. They asked how they could even hope to thrive in Alberta. It is difficult to understand how, given what the Liberal government and the NDP government in Alberta are doing, they can find help or hope, but I can trust that Albertans will pull through if anyone can.

I met a lady named Kathy who said that her husband worked for a large firm. That firm has is are continuing to lay off thousands, and it is scary living that way. A gentleman named Don contacted our office and said that the Liberal government’s lack of a real plan was putting families like his further in debt with no help to recover. It is a struggle to keep up with day to day bills. A lady named Martha said that the continuing lack of employment opportunities were concerning and disheartening. She constantly worries about how she will be able to support her family. It goes on and on and on and on.

● (1615)

What could we do to help? A perfect example would be the superclusters we hear so much about from the Liberal government. Superclusters here, superclusters there, superclusters for everyone. The energy industry, together as a consortium, put in a bid for some of the supercluster funding. We had some of the biggest names in the energy world putting through a package to be one of the named superclusters. They put one through for energy investment, including clean energy investment, and what happened? The government passed them by in order to invest in other areas of Canada.

The government’s attack on Alberta must end.

I see that I am out of time.

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for acknowledging that the government has undertaken 75 consultations on this piece of legislation. We have scheduled seven days of testimony at the transport committee. I know the member understands that when we do 75 consultations, we will get a variety of opinions and viewpoints. If 75 consultations are not enough, how many would be enough?

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Mr. Kelly McCauley: Mr. Speaker, 75 is enough, but the government only listened to those it wanted to hear. The views of BC Coast Pilots on delivering safety to our coastlines were ignored. They gave examples and evidence of 50 years of safety off the B.C. coast. Can we say that for the east coast? Can we? Can anyone say that in the House? No, we cannot. They do not have the same safety levels on the east coast. We have had oil spills off the east coast, but not the B.C. coast. The people responsible for 50 years of safety went to the consultations and were ignored. Liberal committee members could hold 150 consultations, but if they are only going to listen to their echo chamber, it will not help the people of Canada one bit.

Mr. Fin Donnelly (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's intervention, but he talked about many things, including the Liberal position on Kinder Morgan, which he says they got right and did consult about. However, I would argue that the Liberals broke their promise. The Liberals campaigned on revamping the NEB process and that they would not make a decision until they had done so, which in fact they did not do. They betrayed the people of British Columbia with what they campaigned on and then what they did.

My hon. colleague also talked about the oil industry's unblemished record, but he conveniently forgets things that are incredibly important, such as the fuel spills that have happened. Here I refer to the *Marathassa* in my part of the world in English Bay in Vancouver, the *Nathan E. Stewart* on the mid-coast in Bella Bella, not to mention some of the pipeline spills on land, whether in British Columbia, Alberta, or right across the country, or even in the United States. We cannot forget the spills that have happened. It is this kind of one-sided presentation of information that does not help build Canada's energy future. There are many Canadians who are worried not only about jobs, but also about the kind of environment their kids and grandkids will be left with.

It is to a point where world scientists are telling national decision-makers like those in Canada that the status quo energy systems are just not the way forward with, because these are going to drive ecosystems and our climate to a breaking point. We have seen many examples of that over the last couple of decades.

Consultation is important and we agree with it, but we actually have to listen. Is the member willing to listen to top scientists around the world who have overwhelming evidence about things like climate change?

• (1620)

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Mr. Speaker, the question is whether the NDP member is willing to listen to his own past leader and his own foreign affairs critic when they point out that we are buying oil from some of the most horrific human rights abusers in the world, people who are happy to execute their own people for no reason. I would like to know why they are so happy bringing in oil from these governments and propping them up instead of helping the people in Alberta and Canada to have prosperity and jobs.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about the consultation. I think our hon. colleague from Port Moody brought up the fact about listening to the scientists and those who were out there saying that this was indeed the right way to go. We heard earlier on about 75 consultations. Now

we are hearing first nations that have a stake in this saying that they categorically reject that the government truly consulted with them and listened to what they had to say. I think the hereditary chief said that. These first nations are in the communities that would be impacted by this decision.

We know this moratorium will cause more concern with respect to the economic viability of the first nations communities, as well as the coastal communities there. It could also put Canada at risk for lawsuits by the U.S., because of the shipping routes up there. U.S.-bound ships would be impacted by this.

Therefore, I want to touch on two points, which are the consultations with the shipping industry and with first nations. Does our hon. colleague feel that some time should be spent listening and fully understanding what the ramifications of passing legislation such as Bill C-48 will be for these communities and the industry?

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Mr. Speaker, I talked about some of the consultations and the voices not heard. I mentioned the chiefs council eagle spirit energy project. I made it clear that it was allowed to present but it was not heard. Its comment was that there had been insufficient consultation. This is a first nations group that is ready to create jobs for its people and for other first nations. It is a chance for them to take part in the wealth that the energy industry delivers. The government sat there, thanked it for its comments and said that it was going elsewhere.

The Chamber of Shipping of British Columbia, which is responsible for shipping the oil, commented that the government was not interested in what it had to say.

The BC Coast Pilots, the people responsible for the safety of the marine life off B.C., presented but was told that it was nice, but the government was not willing to hear what it had to say.

That was the problem with the consultations the government had with respect to the small business tax. It said that it heard 2,100 consultations. However, it only listens to those who are willing to provide a Liberal point of view, not to anyone providing a point of view with respect to first nations so they can get jobs for their people. The Liberals are not willing to hear the evidence from the experts in the area because they only want to hear a Liberal point of view.

This is the issue. For two years in the House we have heard how the government has consulted on this and consulted on that, held a round table for this, and held a round table on how to hold a round table. It holds round tables and consults, but does not actually listen. That is the problem with Bill C-48.

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•(1625)

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): We have 45 seconds left. The hon. member for Repentigny.

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, 45 seconds is not very long, considering the number of “alternative facts” in my colleague's speech.

Specifically, I would like to talk about his claim that, in Quebec, or in eastern Canada anyway, we get our oil from Saudi Arabia and Venezuela. Not one drop of oil from Venezuela has come into Quebec since 2010. Some 64% of Quebec's oil imports come from the United States.

If you believe in Canadian institutions, those figures can be found in the Statistics Canada data provided by Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada. Perhaps the member needs to check his facts.

I would also like to remind him that the International Labour Organization has said that, if we focused our efforts on the sustainable and renewable energy sector, millions of jobs could be created.

China is currently ahead of the curve when it comes to jobs in the renewable energy sector. Meanwhile, we are lagging behind because we are stuck in our oil-based mindset.

[*English*]

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Mr. Speaker, China, another beacon of democracy. It is stunning how the left always seems to worship some of the worst despots around the world.

My speech made it clear that oil was coming to the east coast, to Newfoundland, to New Brunswick, and to Quebec, not to Quebec only. However, what stuns me is how we talk about renewable energy. Banning Alberta oil and bringing it in is just creating work and wealth for despots in Saudi Arabia and Nigeria. Banning Alberta oil is not going to create a pixie dust of fantasy energy.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Brandon—Souris, Natural Resources; the hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, National Defence; the hon. member for Red Deer—Mountain View, Taxation.

[*English*]

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to talk a little about the effects that will be had by this moratorium, and obviously why this consultation is so important. I have to go back and start with the big picture.

I think the sole desire of the Prime Minister is to be like his daddy. Everything he does is centred around that. That is why we have the situation with what I would call the second version of the national energy program. That is what he has done with his changes. I will get into that in more detail.

So far we are seeing that his second version to try to be like daddy actually will result in him accomplishing what his dad did not quite

do. He almost killed the oil patch in our country. He did not quite succeed because he did not realize how resilient, tough, and strong Albertans were. However, he put them through an unbelievably difficult time. It was a situation at a time when people by the thousands were being put out of work by the combination of the interest rates being what they were and having to go to the bank and literally hand over the keys to their homes. That was what the Prime Minister's father did to my province and to the people in it. He did not quite succeed in killing us off. We came back stronger than ever. The Prime Minister is going to do whatever he can to try to finish the job. That is what he is trying to accomplish.

If we look at the situation in my province right now, it is not good. A lot of people are out of work. I had some events on the weekend. A number of people came to me and said that they had not been able to work for some time. They were wondering what could be done or was there any way to get rid of the government right now without having to wait for an election in two years. They did not see any prospects or any hope for the future with the government in place. I told them we would be fighting for them and working hard to ensure we would see that change in government. However, we did not have the leverage that could magically replace the Prime Minister right now, as much as they would like to see it.

The damage he is doing, and has already done, is immense. That is why people are concerned with the situation.

The Prime Minister has put in place this moratorium on tanker traffic off the B.C. coast, rejecting pipeline projects that could have been very beneficial for our energy industry across the country. The government continually changes the goal posts. Let us not make any mistake about it. When the goal posts are continually changing, the real goal is to try to ensure that projects do not proceed. We saw that happen, the very tangible result of that when the energy east project be pulled.

I know the Prime Minister and other Liberals will try to claim that this is somehow the result of a business decision by the proponent, TransCanada pipelines. It was a business decision, but it was based on a fact that it was in such an uncertain regulatory environment created by the government by continually changing the goal posts about how one could have a project approved, about trying to set conditions to approvals that would be impossible to meet. It made a business decision that it could not move forward with the project because the government did not want to let that happen. There is no point in throwing billions of dollars into trying to get through a process that is clearly designed to fail. That is the bottom line. That is what it is doing.

I want to get a bit more in to what the results of that mean. What I will do is start with a column I recently wrote for my local newspapers. I want to read it into the record of the House. It summarizes it quite well. Then I will expand on each of those points. I will not use the name, but what it indicates is that the “[The Prime Minister] Fails on Energy, Environment and Economy.” That is the headline.

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● (1630)

I will get into each of those points in more detail, but I will start by reading this because it is very informative. I wish a few more Liberals were in the House to hear it, but maybe the ones who are here will let their friends know and perhaps they will change course. I do not know, but let us hope. It says:

I believe in supporting Canada's energy sector. The industry creates thousands of middle-class jobs and is a major boost to our economy. The success of Canada's economy depends heavily on our energy sector. Most Albertans either work in, or have friends and family members that work in the industry.

[The Prime Minister] claims he supports Canada's energy sector and our middle-class. Yet the announcement today that the Energy East Pipeline would be cancelled is just the opposite of what the Prime Minister claims. Make no mistake: this decision by TransCanada is a result of the [Prime Minister's]...mismanagement and failure to champion our energy sector.

The Prime Minister says he supports pipelines but the reality is that he puts petty partisan politics ahead of sound economic decisions. [The Prime Minister] showed his poor judgment in 2016 when he claimed to "approve" two pipelines, but in reality it was the regulator who approved three and the Prime Minister rejected one. The rejection of Northern Gateway in 2016 was foreshadowing of the...Liberals' attitude towards our energy sector.

Under our previous Conservative government, Northern Gateway was approved and construction would have started if the Liberals had not placed a moratorium on the transportation of crude oil by B.C. tankers. Northern Gateway would have created thousands of well-paying middle-class jobs in Canada...

What would Energy East have contributed? The project would have created 15,000 well-paying middle-class jobs and put \$55 billion into the Canadian economy. Energy East also would have been more environmentally friendly, as it would have reduced Canadian dependency on foreign oil imports. All of this would have benefited the middle-class, the people that the...Liberals always claim to be trying to help, and would have made a positive impact on our environment.

The effects that Energy East would have had on our local community would have been enormous, by creating tens of thousands of well-paying jobs. Our local small businesses (the same ones that the Prime Minister and Finance Minister call tax cheats) would have benefited greatly from the increased economic activity, growing our communities and providing more opportunities for our families and friends. This is the bigger picture that the...Liberals fail to see time after time. They claim to have the best interest of middle-class Canadians but their actions do not back up their words.

As we have seen over the past two years, everything becomes a disaster the minute this Prime Minister becomes involved. We cannot depend on this government to protect or champion our vital energy sector or our economy. The [Liberal] government has failed on energy, the environment and the economy.

I want to get into that a little further and explain exactly how the Liberals have failed on energy, the environment, and the economy.

First, with regard to energy, we have oil and gas in our country in such great abundance. We have all the oil and gas we could possibly need to meet all our energy demands and to provide energy, and I will point out very environmentally friendly energy, to the world. All we need is access to other parts of our country and to tidewater and we could provide environmentally friendly energy all over the world. Is our energy perfect in terms of its environmental record? No, it is not perfect, but it is certainly far better than, I would argue, anywhere else in the world. Our energy industry always works hard to try to improve upon its environmental performance and environmental record. It always looks at ways to innovate and make that record even stronger.

● (1635)

When we compare that to some of the places we get our oil and gas from now, like Saudi Arabia, Venezuela, and other countries of that sort, is anyone going to claim that is better for meeting our energy needs? Is anyone going to claim that is somehow better for

the environment? Is it better to bring tankers into Canada rather than sending them out? I cannot imagine how anyone could reasonably and legitimately make that argument, but people do. It is unbelievable.

We are wasting the opportunity to bring our energy to other parts of the country while making sure we are feeding our own energy needs and improving environmental outcomes. How can anyone argue with that? It amazes me that we are even having this debate.

We talk about getting our energy and our oil to tidewater. We would have the opportunity to do that if the government would quit trying to prevent it. The Liberals can pretend all they want, but we know the reality. TransCanada confirmed that for us. If anyone had any doubt, TransCanada was direct evidence of it, and that is the kind of thing we are going to see under the Liberal government.

The Prime Minister might be able to succeed where his daddy could not quite get the job done. He might be able to make sure that our environment is worse off. He might be able to make sure that our energy industry is ruined. He might be able to harm our economy irreparably. That will be his record. That will be his legacy. I cannot imagine anyone being proud of it, but for some reason that seems to be the goal of the present Prime Minister.

What does the Prime Minister have to say to the thousands of people all across this country, particularly those in my province of Alberta who are out of work? I cannot imagine what he could possibly say to them to explain his actions. It is so obvious that getting our oil and gas to markets in other parts of Canada, in other parts of the world, would benefit our economy, put so many people back to work, and, in the process, help our environment. How can anyone argue against that? It is a perfect outcome. We need to be championing that. That is what should be done. Instead, we have a Prime Minister who either does not get it or does not care. It is probably both. It truly is sad, and that is the only word I have for it.

I think about the failure of our economy. Getting these products to market alone would create tens of billions of dollars in economic activity and thousands and thousands of jobs. How much impact would that in itself have on our economy? It would be immeasurable, but that does not even factor in to some of the side benefits.

When I am in my constituency, I see the effects of the many unemployed people on my local communities, on our economy. All businesses throughout a community are affected, whether they be restaurants, hotels, retail shops, anything that serves our community. All of them are suffering. I talk to restaurant owners and owners of retail shops who tell me they are struggling, that they are just trying to keep the doors open. They are lucky they say because they have been able to keep their doors open and been able to keep most employees, but it is tough. These owners are basically not taking any income for themselves. They are just trying to keep the doors open and their people employed.

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•(1640)

On a side note, what does the government do in return for those people? It calls them tax cheats. It tries to go after more of their money, grabs their wallets, and digs out every last bit in them. It tries to prevent them from reinvesting in their businesses to keep going and keep people employed. That is what the government does as a result. It says thanks so much for trying to keep people employed, people who are suffering, but then it gives them a couple of kicks while they are down, grabbing their wallets, and calling them tax cheats while they are at it. That is what the Liberal government does. However, that is as a side note.

Businesses are suffering, and I can give a number of examples. There is one business owner I know who was running a family business that was in business for years, probably longer than I have been alive in fact, and guess what. Because of the economic conditions, it had to shut its doors. That is one example, though I know there are many out there. Those are the kinds of results for local economies, particularly in my province.

Therefore, what does it mean for businesses like the one I just described, which have been great supporters of initiatives in their communities, whether it be charities, local sports teams, or local events? They are the first to step forward and contribute to causes. When they go out of business, all of the great community causes, such as local sports teams, do not get the opportunities. It is a community band, or maybe a local cadet squadron that has a trip planned to visit a site from one of the world wars where Canadians fought so courageously and gave their lives, but they cannot quite raise the funds to do it. That takes away opportunities for our youth to show their appreciation and learn. That is the result on our economy and on communities.

I also want to talk about the effect that this has on the environment. When we do not get our energy to market, not only does our economy suffer, do people in our communities suffer, not only do we lose the opportunity for our own resources to be used in Canada and all around the world, but, as a result, that does damage to our environment. We hear the Liberal government claim all the time that the energy sector, the environment and the economy, go hand in hand. I do not know if the government thinks that means it should try to make sure both of them are worse off, because that is what it seems like. When our energy products do not get to market, instead of bringing oil in from places like Saudi Arabia, Venezuela, or wherever it might be, it means that the oil we receive is less environmentally friendly than the oil we are producing right here in Canada, which we are continually trying to improve every day.

We have a government that is doing everything it can to make sure our pipeline projects cannot be built, that our energy cannot get to market and, in the process, it is harming our economy, our energy sector, our communities, and our environment. All of those things are worse off because of the Prime Minister and the Liberal government, and they are getting worse by the day. The government does not seem to care and does not seem to get it, and that is sad. That is, in fact, pathetic.

I hope that the Liberals will think twice, change their course, and realize we can do so much for our economy and the environment if we can get our energy products to market. That is why this study and

the opportunity for people to be heard on this issue are so important. For the government to shut down debate on second reading after a couple of hours and not provide an opportunity for Canadians, people in my province who are suffering and communities that are hurting, to have their say and tell the government of its terrible actions is truly an atrocity.

•(1645)

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon (Kanata—Carleton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when we spend 10 minutes or 20 minutes on a speech that is full of accusations, insults, name-calling, and derision, does the member opposite feel that is necessary to support the kind of debate we should be having in this House?

Mr. Blake Richards: Mr. Speaker, what is necessary is that we have someone stand up in this country for our energy sector, for the people who are suffering, to stand up to make sure our economy is strong, and to make sure we have a good solid environment. The Liberal government is failing at all of those things.

I will not apologize for standing in this place on behalf of my constituents who are hurting and suffering as a result of the actions of this Prime Minister and the Liberal government. I must stand up and do that. That is my job, and I will do it to the best of my abilities. I hope that the government over there is listening and will start straightening things out, so we can get our energy products to market, improve environmental outcomes, and improve our economy in the process. I really hope it is listening.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his contribution to today's debate, which deals mainly with consultations on the approval of major energy transportation projects in Canada.

In the interest of transparency, could my colleague tell the House whether he could accept the fact that an energy transportation project was rejected following an approval process, or would his ideology prevent him from doing so?

•(1650)

[*English*]

Mr. Blake Richards: Mr. Speaker, it is important that we have a process that is fair and ensures we make the right decisions. There is no question about that. Yes, the decision could be one way or it could be the other. There is no doubt about that. I firmly believe that if we have a fair process in this country, one that ensures that opportunity is given for a project to succeed if it is in fact environmentally friendly and good for our economy, then these projects would be able to move forward. I know how hard our energy industry in this country works to try to make sure that environmental outcomes are world class. There is no doubt in my mind about that.

I firmly believe that a fair process would yield those approvals and see our economy and environment improved. That is what I would hope to see.

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize the very good work that my colleague does and the passion with which he represents his constituents in the beautiful province of Alberta.

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Earlier this year, at a town hall in Peterborough, the Prime Minister suggested that Canada needs to phase out the oil sands.

Does the member agree that this is not a moratorium on oil tanker traffic but rather a moratorium on the development of our oil sands and pipeline projects?

Mr. Blake Richards: Mr. Speaker, the member raises a great point. I want to pay tribute to her work as well on this. I know how hard she works to try to make sure we are championing our economy, environment, and energy products. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for the Prime Minister. She is absolutely correct that his efforts here are all about the comments he made. He wants to see the end of oil sands and our energy industry in this country. Why that is, one cannot even begin to guess. It is a shame.

As I have said, this is a great opportunity for us to improve, not only our economy but the environment. The Prime Minister does not seem to get it. He does not seem to care. It is really sad to watch. I believe the member is right. His attempts here are not just about a moratorium on tanker traffic, they are about trying to prevent our energy industry from being able to move forward, develop, and create those great outcomes for our economy, communities, and our environment. It is sad.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, the member for Banff—Airdrie's speech was premised on many things that he may believe to be true but that are not true. There was no plan to stop importing oil from Saudi Arabia, Venezuela, Kazakhstan, Nigeria, or Norway should energy east have gone ahead, because energy east was primarily an export pipeline. There is, in fact, no refinery in eastern Canada, in New Brunswick, that has the capacity to upgrade bitumen and refine it, which puts a bit of a problem to this idea that getting it to New Brunswick was somehow going to reduce the importation of 800,000 barrels of foreign oil a day.

I would agree with my friend that it would be far preferable to refine bitumen in Canada and use it domestically and therefore not be importing foreign oil, but energy east would not have accomplished that at all. The way to accomplish that is to look to Alberta and build upgraders and refineries in Alberta to end the divisive pipeline battles we see that do Canadians no good at all, pitting Albertans against British Columbians or against people from Quebec.

The other thing that is absolutely mistaken is the notion that TransCanada cancelled because of something that was done by the current Liberal government. I would congratulate the current Liberal government if it had lived up to its promise in the election campaign to make decisions based on evidence and to look at the absolutely disastrous mess created by Bill C-38 that put the National Energy Board, for the first time, in charge of environmental assessments of pipelines. It is not working. It has not worked since it started in 2012. We have pipeline reviews that have gone completely off the rails and have taken the NEB out of its usual regulatory role. As a former practising lawyer, I used to appear before the National Energy Board. It was a reliable agency. One could appear before it and expect procedural fairness under its quasi-judicial status. Throw in environmental reviews and we have a gong show of an agency that has lost respect from the public.

Back to my friend's point that this was Liberal interference in the review process, there is a very simple explanation. It is economics. It is that there are so many pipelines now approved, two of them that would affect TransCanada's delivery on the project. With Keystone being approved, energy east did not make economic sense anymore for TransCanada. That is understood by resource economists.

If my friend thinks I am wrong, could he name a refinery in New Brunswick that has the capacity to process bitumen?

• (1655)

Mr. Blake Richards: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's lecture. I would like to say that it was informative, but I really cannot say that. I hope she satisfied her own need to provide a lecture to the House.

In some odd, convoluted way, I suppose she has a point in saying that the energy east pipeline itself would not have allowed us to serve energy needs. Of course not. However, the refinery that was being proposed would have. Unfortunately, that is the kind of thing we see dead as the result of this decision.

Yes, it was a business decision, but it was a decision based on the endless changes to the regulatory process, which were designed by the government, and I do not exaggerate in saying this, to try to prevent our oil and gas from getting to market. That is what they were designed to do. I thank the member for the opportunity to highlight that once again. I thank the member for the opportunity to highlight just how wrong she is. I thank the member for the opportunity to remind the government how wrong it is in trying to kill our energy industry and in making sure that the thousands of Albertans and Canadians who are out of work remain so, for continuing to inflict harm on our local economies and local communities as a result, and for the damage that then does to the environment as a result of our far more environmentally friendly oil.

I would challenge the member who asked the question to stand up and indicate if she believes that our oil is not more environmentally friendly than it is in places like Saudi Arabia and others. That is a question she should be answering. It is a question the government should be answering, because I cannot understand why it would want to see that oil being produced, rather than ours, to feed the world's energy needs and help the environment in the process.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it really is a pleasure for me to rise today in our House of Commons to speak in defence of Canada's energy sector, a sector that is very important to me personally and very important to my constituency. It is our energy sector that brought my grandfather to Alberta. He was there during the first national energy program. Unfortunately, now we are living through what looks very much like the second iteration of the national energy program. I will speak to that a little bit later on.

The energy sector is deeply important to me as well as to my constituency. My constituency is called Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, but it covers Canada's industrial heartland. It is a hub of energy-related manufacturing.

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It is interesting to hear some members, such as the leader of the Green Party, suggest that somehow we have to make a choice between upgrading energy-related manufacturing and pipelines, when, in fact, people in the energy sector in my region say that we can and we should look for opportunities to do more of both. We need those pipelines to export, regardless of whether we are exporting final product or an earlier-stage product. There are opportunities, as well, to develop our upgrading and refining capacity, certainly. We see those opportunities being developed in my constituency, directly in our industrial heartland.

It is the policies of the government, such as its carbon tax, its attack on small business, and the general uncertainty around the regulatory environment, that are killing not only the transportation section of the energy sector, not only the extractive sector, but also the value-added and upgrading section of the energy sector.

There was an American journalist named Michael Kinsley who once quipped that a gaffe is when a politician tells the truth. I think this is an interesting quote. That might be rephrased a little to say that a gaffe is when politicians say what they actually think.

When we look at some of the comments that have been made by ministers and by the Prime Minister about the energy sector or various other issues, oftentimes some of these one-off comments are dismissed as gaffes or mistakes, or we are told, "Don't worry, the tweet was deleted; he offered a clarification", or whatever the case may be.

However, when we start to see a pattern when comments are made, it is worth reflecting on this Kinsley quote. These are gaffes in the sense that these are cases when people are actually letting the curtain slip and are showing what their real agenda is with respect to our energy sector.

For example, we have, in this House, the Minister of Democratic Institutions, who, ironically perhaps, sits right beside the Minister of Natural Resources. She tweeted, in 2012, "It's time to landlock Alberta's tar sands."

That is pretty offensive language, but this came from someone who is now a minister in this government, saying, "It's time to landlock Alberta's tar sands." The clarification was issued. The tweet was deleted. However, now this person is sitting in cabinet, and it makes people wonder what her views are with respect to Alberta's energy sector. Actually, we do not really have to wonder, because she has told us what her views are with respect to the energy sector.

We had the Prime Minister say, more recently, that it is time to phase out Canada's oil sands. He made a comment once that he thinks Canada does not do well when we have people from my part of the country in key leadership positions.

These kinds of comments that are very derogatory towards Alberta, and in particular suggest an opposition to energy development and a desire to landlock our energy resources, are sometimes characterized as mistakes or gaffes. However, I think, actually, that they are quite revealing. They are gaffes in the sense that there are moments when the curtain slips and the Prime Minister and members of his cabinet actually say things they really, truly believe.

What was the agenda the minister in question had in mind when she said, "landlock Alberta's tar sands"? Of course, we say oil sands, but that is the quote.

● (1700)

We had two new pipeline projects within Canada, and there were other pipeline expansion projects. There was the pipeline through the United States, the Keystone XL, but two new pipeline projects to tidewater were proposed within Canada, one going west and one going east. At the time of the last election, the pipeline going west, the northern gateway pipeline, had been approved. The pipeline going east, energy east, was in process. If they were trying to do what the minister said she wanted to do, which is landlock our energy resources, I guess they would have to come up with a way of killing these two pipeline projects. The Liberals have done it. Today, one of those projects has been killed directly; one has been killed indirectly.

We have a tweet from a minister in 2012 that the objective is to "landlock Alberta's tar sands", and here we are five years later. The Liberals are in government and she is cabinet, and it has happened. We had a gaffe where the agenda was revealed, and now the agenda has come to fruition. Unfortunately, the Liberals have taken steps to landlock our energy resources. We have seen this, and it is hard to deny that this is happening.

I want to highlight a number of other examples where the Prime Minister made comments that were perhaps explained away or qualified, or referred to as a slip of the tongue or a gaffe at the time, but revealed something fundamental about the way in which he sees the world. He said in an interview during the election that, in his view, many small businesses are ways for wealthy Canadians to avoid paying taxes. That is what the Prime Minister said. I do not know how many people took that comment seriously. However, with the punitive measures that have since been proposed toward small business, it looks like the Prime Minister believes we should go after and punish small businesses because they are a way for wealthy people to avoid paying taxes. That seems to be the Prime Minister's view. He expressed that view in an interview with Peter Mansbridge during the last election, and now he is undertaking punitive measures against those businesses.

He also said that he admires China's basic dictatorship, and he has gone on to pursue policies with respect to China that concern many Canadians. He has gone on to govern this country in a particularly autocratic way, trying at every possible turn to limit the input of the opposition members. We had two opposition speakers in the traditional period allowed for this debate before Liberals shut it down. We are only now able to have further conversations about this legislation because of a motion we are putting forward on an aspect of the committee's study, and travel related to that committee's study.

In each of these cases, where these gaffes or comments from the Prime Minister or from ministers were portrayed as a mistake, they revealed something quite fundamental to what appears to be the world view of the Prime Minister and members of the government.

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Again, a comment was made by a minister saying that they wanted to landlock Alberta's energy resources, and effectively they have killed the two new pipeline projects proposed to tidewater within Canada. The bill that is being considered in terms of committee study at the moment is Bill C-48, which deals with tanker export from northern British Columbia. As soon as the government took office, Liberals instituted a ban on energy oil export from northern B.C. They have killed the northern gateway pipeline, and now they are formalizing this through legislation, which they are calling the oil tanker moratorium act.

• (1705)

Let us be quite clear, though, about what this legislation would and would not do. Once we lay it out, it will be quite obvious to members that this is only about killing off energy exports in the west. It is not fundamentally about tankers, because tankers take oil in and out of the country, and between different jurisdictions along our coast. There are oil tankers that come into the St. Lawrence. There are oil tankers that bring oil in and export oil off Canada's east coast. Certainly, if there were ever a spill from an Alaskan oil tanker carrying American oil, it would not discriminate. It would not somehow fail to touch the Canadian coast, and yet what the government is proposing would only deal with oil produced in Canada, and the ability to export it out of northern British Columbia specifically.

I would take the view that we should do everything possible to ensure good safety standards and to do away with any risks of a negative environmental impact, but ultimately recognize that by taking a leadership role and setting those standards and then benefiting from them economically through the export of Canadian oil, we really achieve a win-win situation. If the alternative is the export of other countries' oil, the non-development of our energy resources and, potentially, a greater environmental risk insofar as we are missing an opportunity for setting standards for our own oil exports, that alternative policy pursued by the current government is a lose-lose situation. It is a loss for the economy certainly, but also a loss for the environment.

At least we have to give the Liberals credit for acting directly in the case of the northern gateway pipeline. They did not seek to hide it. They said they were going to kill it and they killed it, and they are bringing in legislation that would formalize that. At least they were up front and direct. That is not much of a defence of it. It is the wrong policy. It is bad for jobs. It would kill opportunity in B.C., Alberta, and throughout the rest of the country because we are economically interconnected, but we can say that at least they have been direct about it.

They have not been so direct with the energy east pipeline. Many people in the Maritimes voted Liberal, hoping that they would see the energy east pipeline come to fruition, and many members of the Atlantic caucus would have said they were supportive of energy east. Meanwhile, we had other members—and here I refer especially to the tweet by the member for Burlington, the Minister of Democratic Institutions—talking about wanting to land-lock Alberta's energy resources. We had other members with this agenda, the Prime Minister's agenda, of phasing out the oil sands. However, because of how popular energy east was, not just in Alberta but also in Atlantic Canada and many places in-between, they realized they could not

kill it directly but would have to pursue some other strategy for achieving their objectives one at a time, which they were actually quite frank about before they deleted the tweet I mentioned.

Consequently, the Liberals introduced all kinds of regulatory hurdles and additional regulatory uncertainty and they tried to build in the idea that a project should be evaluated on prospective downstream emissions. It would not just be the direct emissions from the use of that particular piece of infrastructure, but the prospective emissions that would eventually derive from it. This is a standard that notably is not applied anywhere else. We do not force aircraft manufacturers to be accountable for the subsequent likely greenhouse gas emissions associated with the use of their aircraft in the future. We do not do this for cars. We do not do this in any kind of manufacturing. We look at the environmental footprint of the manufacturing process, but we do not say that the manufacturers have to be accountable for all of the subsequent downstream emissions. This was a unique, unusual standard, and ultimately turned out to be an impossible one for energy east.

• (1710)

The government's response to the understandable decision of the company, in this case not to proceed with energy east, is to say that it is a business decision. For one thing, it points to oil prices. Companies understand that oil prices go up and down. No company decides to build a pipeline based on the price of oil on Monday, saying the price is good so let us build that pipeline. If it is down on Tuesday, it does not know. Companies are smart and sophisticated enough to realize that oil prices go up and down over time. They have to consider the overall situation, the overall environment, the probability of getting to a yes, and being able to proceed. It is not just about what the price of oil happens to be on Monday. That is a rather ridiculous suggestion from the Minister of Natural Resources.

Then the Liberals say it is a business decision, that Sisyphus just could not push the stone all the way, that it was too heavy for him. The task was set up in a way that success was likely impossible. There certainly was no credible certainty around it. We need a government that actually is looking for ways to get to a yes, to ensure the proper consultation happens, but not set up sort of a Sisyphean task, as in one that cannot be realized. It is clear from the debate in the House that is what is envisioned by the opponents of energy development. They do not want to say that they are opposed to energy east, but they want to kill it directly by coming up with all of these ambiguous, unclear criteria that make success impossible.

It is particularly clear from the exchange I just had with the member for Beloeil—Chambly what social licence is. He said that we had to get to social licence in order to get these things done. I then asked him what social licence would look like, because it surely could not be unanimity. We are never going to get unanimity on any question. People are not even unanimous in the belief that Elvis has died. We are not going to get unanimity on any question.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: “The King” lives.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Some members of the NDP caucus seem to think Elvis is still alive, Mr. Speaker. I did not think even they were that far out, but we will see. I know they were joking.

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In all seriousness, we are never going to get unanimity on any question. Therefore, I posed this question. What did social licence mean? He said that it was not about unanimity but about respect, that people had to feel respected. Sorry, in any event, when having a controversial debate about a development project, some people are still going to be frustrated at the end of it, because they will feel like they did not get their way and they might characterize not getting their way in any number of ways. They might even characterize it as not feeling respected.

However, at the end of the day, many Canadians are very supportive of these projects. Many first nations communities are very supportive of these projects. I thought it was helpful that my colleague from Chilliwack—Hope gave voice to some of the indigenous communities that were supportive of energy development. Too often some politicians in the House suggest that indigenous communities are always against these projects when, in fact, many indigenous Canadians are not only in favour of development but are directly involved in benefiting from energy development. If this nebulous standard is created and never defined, it will always provide the means to justify indirectly killing these projects.

To sum up, a minister of the crown, before she was a minister of the crown, said that she wanted to landlock Alberta's tar sands. Now the government is pursuing policies that have realized that objective. It has directly killed the northern gateway pipeline and indirectly killed energy east. Maybe this was a gaffe by that minister, but only in the sense that a gaffe is when a politician actually reveals his or her real opinions.

• (1715)

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, long live “the King”.

As the representative from northwestern British Columbia, I would suggest that the preponderance of risk associated with a pipeline like northern gateway was weighed and felt by my constituents, who have embraced and engaged with the issue far longer than anyone in the House, with far more on the line and far more knowledge than most anyone in this place.

The member talks about social licence. I would also speak to constitutional issues that were presented by the previous government, when in the middle of the process it retroactively changed the process, stripping the National Energy Board of its powers to make the final decision. That decision was then going to be arbitrated by the cabinet. The prime minister at the time, Harper, said they wanted to make the decision non-political. I do not know what makes a decision more political than having politicians have the final say.

In the community of Kitimat, which Conservatives have long argued would benefit the most as the terminus of the potential pipeline, the community held a plebiscite on this particular initiative. In a free vote, its citizens voted against supporting the project, not to mention the other first nations broadly across British Columbia who passed resolution after resolution to that effect in the different democratic forums that first nations people have. Indeed, the Union of British Columbia Municipalities passed resolution after resolution. These are the municipal leaders of British Columbia. My point is that if a previous government had tried to get to yes, had tried to

make favourable conditions for resource development, and my region is resource rich and has long relied on resource development for our benefit going back thousands of years, doing it responsibly and democratically is an inherent measure of success.

I would suggest that the comedy and travesty of errors by the company and then the government side in not properly balancing the interests of the people I represent versus some of the interests that were closer to the government and the oil industry at the time led to the inevitable conclusion of turning people away from the project in my part of the world. They made a simple assessment of it. I think the member could agree with this. Most of the people we represent, when looking at proposals, large or small, look at the risk versus the benefit to their families, to themselves, and to their larger community. He would have to take into account in some measure all of those groups I mentioned that looked at the proposal with all of the information available, that looked at the process being used, and the eventual sham that was shown to be the review process, wherein basic issues such as whether bitumen sinks or floats was not even determined and we were not even allowed to question, and realize that the risks far outweighed the benefits.

The tanker moratorium discussed in Parliament for 40 years now can finally come about simply because we have an opportunity to do something that reflects back the interests of Canadians broadly speaking. He should support it if he wants to get to that yes, and represent all Canadians' interests.

• (1720)

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I have to say that my friend from Skeena—Bulkley Valley is very eloquent but I also have to say that there is some sleight of hand in the way the question was phrased that I think misses a number of key aspects of this.

Obviously we do not believe that a municipal plebiscite in one affected community should be the veto. Even to say that there should be unanimity in every community in the area of the pipeline, especially larger pipeline projects, would not be a practical standard. There is an approach that engages communities so they get feedback and allows for a determination to be made one way or the other in a timely manner.

The member spoke about his concern that a decision be made by cabinet as opposed to the National Energy Board. He may remember, and he did not mention this in his question, that the northern gateway project was approved by the National Energy Board with conditions and was then approved by cabinet also subject to those conditions.

In terms of this discussion of the risk benefit analysis, we have to consider the relative risk associated with different means of transporting energy resources. Say for example that the alternative to pipelines is just not to drive our cars or heat our homes anymore. That is not particularly realistic. If the alternative is rail, we all know that pipelines are safer as they involve less risk to the environment.

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The member did not address social licence at any point in his discussion. I do not think we will hear any member from any of the other parties address what they are talking about when they refer to social licence. What does that mean? What is the standard that they want to achieve?

We need to have a process through which a project is proposed, debated, input is provided, a decision is made in a timely manner, and then we proceed with that decision. In reality, we had a project that was approved by the NEB and approved by cabinet but was killed as a result of an arbitrary decision of the government. The government said it is okay to have some tankers in some places but no Canadian tankers in this particular place. That was an arbitrary decision. It was anti-development. It clearly seems to advance a hidden agenda, maybe a not-so-hidden agenda, of the government, of phasing out our energy resources, of landlocking our energy resources.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that was the second speaker in the last half hour who has tried to give a false reality. Maybe in the Conservative collective mind they think the Liberals do not want to develop energy in Alberta. All one needs to do is compare what the current Prime Minister and this Liberal government has been able to do in two years with what Stephen Harper did as prime minister in 10 years. If we were to factor in things such as infrastructure and other programs to enrich Canada's middle class and those aspiring to be a part of it, we would find that our government is tremendously supportive and I would argue more so than Stephen Harper's government.

Would the member across the way not acknowledge that we already have a process and that process has led to approvals that have generated thousands of jobs in the energy industry, something the former prime minister was unable to do? Pipelines have been approved.

What we are talking about today is whether or not a standing committee would consider going outside of Ottawa. I am wondering if the member could comment on whether or not that issue in itself has even been brought up at standing committee.

• (1725)

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I commend my friend from Winnipeg North. He has a difficult job defending the government on most days, today particularly, so I commend him to his difficult task here.

The reality is, and I think the Liberals at some point will need to correct their talking points, there were four pipelines that were not just approved but built under the previous Conservative government. They are transporting 1.25 million more barrels of oil a day through pipelines that were built under the previous Conservative government. I am fairly proud of that record.

The Liberals have succeeded in killing the northern gateway pipeline project directly and killing the energy east pipeline project indirectly. That is the record. For the member to protest and say that they are supportive of development in the energy sector is again really a sleight of hand where they say they are supportive some of the time even though sometimes the curtain slips and they admit they are not, such as comments the Prime Minister and the Minister of Democratic Institutions and others have made. Most of the time they

profess to be supportive, and yet they put all these roadblocks that make it impossible to get there. They impose new punitive taxes on our sector and they introduce measures that make getting to a yes virtually impossible, even when there is very strong community support.

The member needs to recognize that and needs to start being a little more honest in terms of what the agenda is and what the effect of their policies is.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to participate in this debate today on behalf of the official opposition. I think it is extremely important that further study be conducted on Bill C-48, the oil tanker moratorium act. Further study would also be consistent with the government's claims that they encourage wide consultation with Canadians across the country to share their ideas on how we can work together to create a stronger marine safety system and better protect our coasts.

I do want to stress the fact that this legislation is of great national importance. Bill C-48 is an act respecting the regulation of vessels that transport crude oil or persistent oil from ports or marine installations located along British Columbia's north coast. It is important to recognize that this legislation will have an impact not solely on local communities, but also nationally and certainly in my home riding of Calgary Midnapore. As a result, Canadians should have the opportunity to present their concerns, and having the transport committee engage in hearings is one way to make sure that happens.

Further to that, I want to refer back to comments my colleague from Lakeland made in her speech on Bill C-48. As she pointed out, following the general election in 2015, the Prime Minister sent a mandate letter to the Minister of Natural Resources, directing him to ensure that, "decisions are based on science, facts, and evidence, and serve the public's interest".

However, just over three weeks later, on November 13, 2015, mandate letters from the Prime Minister to at least three ministers directed them to work together to formalize a moratorium on crude oil tankers off British Columbia's north coast. As my colleague questioned, "One wonders quite reasonably how it could at all be possible that there was sufficient time in 25 days to ground this directive on the results of comprehensive assessments of existing environmental and safety records, standards, outcomes, and gaps; a comparative analysis of marine traffic rules, enforcement, and track records on all Canadian coasts and internationally; and thorough local, regional, and national economic impact studies."

The answer is that there just was not time. Clearly, there was not time to consult with stakeholders such as first nations, local communities, industry, and experts. With today's motion, we are here asking for those steps to be taken.

I want to read a portion of an email of many emails I received last week.

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A Calgary writer states that the Prime Minister has introduced Bill C-48, the oil tanker moratorium act, "...to ban oil tankers off B.C.'s northwest coast to Parliament over the objections of coastal and inland first nations. Tankers off Canada's east coast importing 759,000 barrels a day of foreign crude are apparently okay with the government and the Prime Minister, as are another 400 tankers per year through Vancouver's busy inner and outer harbours, under the Second Narrows bridges, under the Lions Gate bridge, past Stanley Park, through the Gulf Islands and narrow Haro Strait, and down the length of the Salish Sea past the provincial capital of Victoria and through the Strait of Juan de Fuca. This is all apparently okay with the Prime Minister, but not for tankers off Prince Rupert, the safest and best port on Canada's west coast!"

This bill is, of course, not really about transport standards, marine traffic, or protecting the safety and ecology of B.C.'s northern shore. It is a poorly disguised move by the Liberals to further limit Canadian oil development and transportation, and not the only instance that we have seen of this lately with the cancellation of energy east. In complete contradiction to his claims of wanting to consult Canadians, this is just one more example of the Prime Minister's own explicit goal to phase out the oil sands.

Once again, I am going to reiterate the comments made by my colleague from Lakeland earlier this month.

• (1730)

As she pointed out, "the unbiased, non-partisan Library of Parliament's legislative summary states explicitly that the debate around the tanker moratorium stems from the Conservative-approved northern gateway pipeline project". This project would have had oil transported from Bruderheim, Alberta to Kitimat, B.C. After forming government, the Liberals told the National Energy Board to cancel the project. Now, by putting in place a ban on tanker ships in this region, the Liberals will permanently prevent any other opportunities for pipelines to transport world-leading Canadian oil to the Prince Rupert and Kitimat areas. As a result, Canada will not be able to expand our customer base by taking advantage of the rapidly growing Asia-Pacific region.

As I stated at the start of my speech, Bill C-48 is not a piece of minor legislation. It will negatively impact all of Canada with future consequences for the hundreds of thousands of Canadians employed in the energy sector across the country. Energy is the biggest private sector investor in Canada's economy and oil and gas is Canada's second biggest export with 97% imported by the United States. My colleague outlined some of the direct benefits Canadian oil and gas provides across the country including 670,000 direct and indirect jobs in this country. Deliberately limiting export capacity potential and thereby putting a ceiling on production would be detrimental to the livelihoods of Canadians everywhere and certainly in my riding of Calgary Midnapore, and, as we heard from the previous speaker, Alberta as a whole

As global oil demand continues to increase in the years and decades ahead, reaching tidewater in all directions for Canada's oil and gas should be a pressing priority for the Liberals. It makes no sense to delay, hinder, or equivocate on this point from an economic, environmental, or moral perspective in the global context.

The Liberals claim they are concerned about the environment, however, similar to the small business tax suggestions, their actions prove the opposite. By taking Canada out of the equation in terms of oil, the Liberals are allowing oil- and gas-producing countries, whose standards, enforcement, and outcomes are inferior to ours, to prevail. Additionally, they are opening up the market to corrupt regimes with abysmal environmental and human rights records, where energy development benefits only a select few. The government does not seem to realize that in Canada, energy development benefits every community with jobs and with revenue for multiple levels of government.

Between 2000 and 2014, for example, on a net basis Alberta's individual and corporate taxpayers shipped an estimated \$200 billion-plus to the federal government and a major source of that revenue was from oil and gas. This money helps ensure that all Canadians have access to similar benefits and programs. To paraphrase, oil and gas revenue in Canada pays for benefits and programs for all Canadians. It is important that the members across the way hear that message. In case they want to open themselves up to even more factual evidence, a 2014 WorleyParsons study compared Alberta's environmental and regulatory systems with similarly sized oil- and gas-producing jurisdictions around the world, and found that Alberta was among the best. My province of Alberta was near the top of the list for the most stringent environmental laws and at the top for the availability of public information about the environmental performance of the oil and gas industry.

The study confirmed that Alberta is unmatched on the compliance and enforcement scale. Unfortunately, the Liberals' decisions are largely politically based, rather than being based on science, evidence, or consultations, or reaching conclusions in service of the broad national public interest.

I am again going to paraphrase my colleague, the official opposition shadow critic for natural resources, as she also pointed out in her speech that the result of the constant Liberal and leftist barrage of attacks on Canadian regulators and energy developers along with their changes to rules with new red tape and added costs is that energy investment in Canada has dropped dramatically.

• (1735)

Since the Liberals were elected, the policy uncertainty and additional hurdles during an already challenging time for prices, costs, and competitiveness have caused the biggest two-year decline in Canadian oil and gas investment...since 1947. This year alone, there is a projected 47% drop in oil and gas capital from 2016 levels.

She went on to say that one-sixth of total energy workers in Canada had lost their jobs since the Liberals formed government.

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This number is reflected in the vacancy rates out of Calgary this morning. The resulting lost investment is equivalent to the loss of about 75% of Canada's auto manufacturing and nearly the entire aerospace industry. The current government continues to make ideological decisions which hurt Canada's economy.

My Conservative colleagues and I know this tanker ban is not in the best interest of all Canadians. Nor is it necessary. Tankers have safely and regularly transported crude oil from Canada's west coast since the 1930s. There have not been any tanker navigational issues or incidents in about 50 years in the port of Vancouver. Instead of putting forward regulations to allow for the safe passage of all vessels through Canadian waters, the bill deliberately and specifically targets one industry. It is really all about Liberal politicking.

Another fact I would like the Liberal members to acknowledge is that conventional oil and gas, oil sands, and pipeline companies are among the largest private sector investors in alternative energy technologies, like wind and solar, in Canada. When one sector thrives so does the other.

We on this side of the House value the responsible development of natural resources in all sectors in all provinces to benefit all of Canada. We therefore request further input from Canadians on Bill C-48.

• (1740)

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was delighted to hear the Conservative member mention the Conservatives' support for science and evidence. I would like the member to refer to the specific science and evidence reports she referred to in her speech.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Mr. Speaker, I did make mention specifically the WorleyParsons study that took place. That is a very important consideration. It is a 2014 study that compared Alberta's environmental and regulatory systems with similarly sized oil and gas producing jurisdictions around the world. I would ask the member across the aisle to look at that one to start.

WorleyParsons is a global firm, I think a very well-respected firm, a firm that certainly would not have just placed out information into the public. It would not want to risk its corporate credibility, or spread information for the fear that it would not be respected. This would be a very good start in looking at environmental standards and considering this as a benchmark, perhaps to look at other studies potentially.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend from Calgary Midnapore should know that when pointing out that oil has been transited on the west coast of British Columbia without incident, it is important to note that from 1972 until very recently, there was a moratorium, a ban on the movement of oil in large-scale tankers that applied to the very coast that this bill will now legislate. The moratorium was honoured by provincial and federal governments over that whole period.

I also want to note that the terms "oil", "crude oil", and "bitumen" are being used interchangeably in this debate, which I am afraid leads to some assumptions that are incorrect. For instance, a previous Conservative speaker, my friend from Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, claimed that everyone knows that pipelines are safer than trains. If bitumen is being transported, the opposite is true. It is quite correct that no one should transport Bakken shale, the material

that blew up in Lac-Mégantic, by train. I do not know how safe Bakken shale is by pipeline either. It is a violently combustible, unstable material, based on fracking for oil.

However, bitumen, by train, can be transported as a solid. Virtually nothing can go wrong in moving bitumen by rail. If it falls off the track and to a great depth below, crashing open in a valley or in a river, it would be a solid blob and could be removed by a backhoe. It could not have blown up. It is not Bakken shale.

In the case of moving bitumen by pipelines, the process inherently makes a safe substance unsafe. They have to stir in about one-third of a material called diluent, which is basically fossil fuel condensate, itself toxic, and makes bitumen mixed with diluent a substance that cannot be cleaned up.

Thus, it is completely backwards to claim that moving bitumen by pipelines is safer. It is the opposite.

• (1745)

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments from the hon. member, but no incidents means no incidents.

We could look to history and to regulation for a number of situations where there have been bans or moratoriums, and there were no incidents. That does not necessarily mean no A, therefore no B. That is illogical. Sometimes B can mean A, or C can mean A. It is incorrect logic. The reality is that there were no incidents during that time.

I appreciate the alternative methods as proposed by the hon. member for transporting different forms of energy. Of course, oil and gas is very dear to me as the member of Parliament for Calgary Midnapore, as is the energy sector. I am very encouraged by the new technologies that are becoming available for the potentially safer transport of energy, for example, the pucks that are being examined at present.

This is very exciting information and potential possibilities for the future for the energy sector, and therefore for Calgary, for Alberta, and for Canada. I certainly do not think that we can neglect evaluating all different types of transport for different energy sources.

In conclusion, I simply do not buy that because there was a moratorium it means that there were no incidents. As I said, moratoriums take place all the time, bans take place all the time, and this does not conclude that there—

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport.

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when the issue that was outlined in M-103 was brought up at the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, could the hon. member tell us the response of the committee?

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The Deputy Speaker: I see the hon. member for Calgary Midnapore on her feet. I appreciate that I have just taken over presiding here at 5:30. I am not so sure that the question is relevant to the matter before the House. If the member for Calgary Midnapore wishes to respond, we will certainly let her go ahead and will not rule the question out of order.

I ask hon. members to keep their questions and comments either relevant to the question in front of the House, or, as an exception, if a member in the course of their remarks or their speech raises an issue, then members are certainly welcome to pose questions or comments relating to what they have heard members say. I am not so sure that this one is relevant to the motion before the House.

The hon. member for Calgary Midnapore.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Mr. Speaker, I think it is out of order. I would like to talk about all sorts of different things right now that are really important to my riding of Calgary Midnapore. I would like to talk about where the government has caused a lot of trouble for us, which includes the small business tax, potentially moving the National Energy Board out of the city, and energy east. I would like to talk about unicorns and lollipops. However, I am not going to, as they are not relevant. I do not think Motion No. 103 is relevant to this conversation at all.

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her wonderful speech and for her comments comparing Alberta oil to some of the oil we bring in from offshore.

I want to bring up a few facts. Researchers from California's low-carbon fuel standard have commented that compared to Alberta oil, the dirtiest oil in North America comes from the U.S. Angola is well known for its oil spills from its offshore oil drilling. The dirtiest oil in the entire world for environmental standards, again according to the California low-carbon standard, is Nigeria, from which we also bring in oil to the east coast. The two major export terminals for Venezuela's state-run company, PDVSA, are so filthy from oil spills and other problems that its ships are not allowed into a lot of countries because there is so much oil on the tankers, yet we bring Venezuelan oil to the east coast. In Saudi Arabia, oil spills are threatening the Gulf, and it has actually infilled 40% of the Persian Gulf side to accommodate its oil exports.

I wonder if my colleague from Calgary Midnapore can comment on the hypocrisy of stopping Alberta oil getting to the east coast but allowing oil from such environmentally unfriendly countries into Canada.

• (1750)

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Mr. Speaker, I would say that I, as the member of Parliament for Calgary Midnapore, in addition to my constituents, find it very insulting and disturbing on two levels.

First, we have an excellent supply of rich energy sources. We are an energy-rich province. We are an energy-rich nation. Why should we be going to other nations for different energy sources when we have such an abundant supply here? As a country, we really should be harvesting it and using it to the best of our ability and as our capacity requires it. That is the first level.

Second, we make a point of being a democratic country, a country that respects human rights, a country that wants to promote prosperity, and a country that wants to promote justice, yet we do not abide by this when choosing our products and imports. It is absolutely hypocritical not only with respect to our choices as a national consumer but as a government. What hypocrisy from the Liberal government to purport to stand for democracy and human rights when, by allowing imports from these troubled nations, with these records, it permits their products into our nation for consumption by all of our citizens, thereby making them all potentially complicit.

Mr. Jim Eglinski (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very glad to be up here tonight to speak about the crude oil tanker moratorium on B.C.'s west coast. I was asked a little while ago if I would speak on Bill C-48, and I jumped at it and said that I would like to speak about Bill C-48 and the moratorium on the tankers.

This moratorium act would not be protecting the west coast. Let us face it. It would not be protecting Canadians and would not be helping our aboriginal neighbours. If we really look at what this is all about, it is about the Prime Minister making a promise during the last election that he would stop shipment of oil from Canada and would put a moratorium on tankers on the west coast. He did a mandate letter and told his Minister of Transport to make sure to get policy out there. Thirty days later, he has come out with Bill C-48 that would stop the movement of tankers along the west coast. Who suffers? All Canadians. What we need is more debate and more consultation, especially with the aboriginal community because they have already told us that.

I want to go back a long time. I was a young lad of about five years of age, and I was staying with my grandparents as my parents were living in Edmonton. I stayed with my grandparents out on a farm in northern Alberta in a community called Two Hills. I loved being out in the field with my grandfather. I worshipped my grandfather.

I was out there running around in the field and my grandfather was working, discing I believe, if my memory is correct. He hit a big rock and it jammed between the discs, and he stopped. I was just a little five-year-old but I ran over to help, and I watched as my grandfather struggled to pull that rock from between the discs. Anybody who has been in the farming community knows what discs are. They get pretty sharp because they are turning in the ground all the time.

As he yanked on it, the rock came out, and his hand hit the disc on the other side and he put a big slash on the side of his hand. The blood gushed out. I hope nobody is queasy out here. I said, "Grandpa, look what happened." He reached down, grabbed the fresh black earth, and he pressed it into the wound on his hand. I looked at him and said to him that he could not do that because it was dirty. He stopped what he was doing, looked at me, sat on the hitch of the tractor, called me over there, and he put me on his knee. He reached down. The bleeding had stopped. He pulled the earth and said that there was nothing more pure than Mother Earth.

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Then he proceeded to tell me that the earth gave him the food that we ate. He proceeded to tell me that the jack pine at the end of the farm was where we got the lumber to build his house and barn. He told me about using common sense and only working the crop for a certain portion. He told me about selective logging that morning when I was five years old. I remember him telling me about living off the land, and the land giving him a product that he could sell to buy tobacco, because he always had a cigarette in his mouth. He received money from the grain he sold from the land. He said that the earth was energy and it gave us an opportunity to live and prosper. I always remembered that, and I love nature. I know I am kind of rambling on here. However, at that time, as a five-year-old, he told me to love nature and I have loved nature ever since.

I was very fortunate at the last election that my party assigned me to the environment and sustainable development committee, and I was given the opportunity to learn a lot more about this great country of ours. I learned about the need to protect spaces across Canada and about the Aichi agreement: 17% of our land mass by 2020 and 10% of our sea coastal waters by 2020. I do not think that they are obtainable, but they are realistic and we need to work and strive toward that.

● (1755)

I hear a lot from the government about science based, that we need to rely on the scientists to tell us what to do in our great country. In the Ukrainian language we call our grandfather “gido”. My gido was a very smart man. He knew everything that he needed to know to survive. He put it in very simple language, so I will quite often step aside from listening to the academics and go to the people on the land. Some of the smartest people on the land who I know of are our aboriginal neighbours. Many times, I have gone to different powwows and listened to the people living on the land, Petitot landing and Taylor landing, for example. These are very wise people. They have worked the land. Trappers are other people who know the land. They have spent 40 or 50 years on it. They know about the environment.

We have aboriginal equity partners in the pipeline project that was to go across northern B.C. to take oil products from Alberta to Saskatchewan and parts of B.C. They are suffering because of the government's policy to stop the pipeline. The government could not stop it because it met all of the environmental rules and regulations of the National Energy Board. The only way it could do that was to come out with a moratorium to stop any ships from going in there to pick up the oil. The aboriginal people will tell us they were not properly consulted.

I believe some may have read this before. It is not just the B.C. coast. According to the Assembly of First Nations chief, Perry Bellegarde, 500 of the 630 first nations across Canada are open to pipelines and petroleum development on their lands. Going back to the aboriginal equity partnership, a specific example was 31 first nations were equity partners and held 30% of the financial position in the northern gateway pipeline project. This was before it was cancelled due to the fact that there was no use having a pipeline if the ships could not get to the pipelines to ship the worldly products.

Communities like Prince Rupert, Terrace, Kitimat, and Smithers have struggled over the years with hard economic times. They have

had a hard time prospering, like other parts of Canada, especially Alberta, Saskatchewan, and the northeastern part of B.C.

They have seen a decline in forestry. Why? Was there a decline in the market? No, there was a decline because of the pine beetle destroying a great portion of B.C.'s pine forests. Those pine beetles wandered into Jasper National Park and Banff National Park. If people drive through the park, which is not part of my riding, they will see a great portion of the park is brown now. There are no more green trees. The pine beetles have devastated them. What is worse is the pine beetles got mad at the park and left. They are now moving into the pine forests of Alberta. In fact, the latest statistics to come out show that from last year to this year, the amount of trees being affected in Alberta is tenfold.

The communities are struggling. The northern gateway pipeline would have been good for those communities. It would have been great for their economy and it would have helped the aboriginal communities grow and prosper in the future, to give their youth new goals, ideas, and places to go. It would have helped in education. They lost billions because of the moratorium on ships. If they do not have the ships, there is no use having a pipeline to the coast.

My riding is called the Yellowhead. Oil and gas is very important to my riding. It is very important to me and to my family. My son-in-law has a small company that works directly in the oil patch. It is kind of related to fracking and other types of ventures. He employs close to 100 people. He makes a very good living from the oil patch, and the 100 people working for him make a very good living from it.

● (1800)

The proceeds of the oil patch, whether in Alberta or Saskatchewan or northern British Columbia, bring a tremendous amount of revenue to this great country of ours, Canada. A lot of that revenue is spent here in the central part of Canada.

The Yellowhead is known as a major transportation corridor. Highway 16 runs right through the centre of my riding from the east to the west. In fact, the Yellowhead Highway is known across Canada as a major transportation corridor. It goes from Prince Rupert to Winnipeg. I have travelled it from the west to the east and from the east to the west many times, and the pipeline was to follow a great portion of that highway through British Columbia. Northern gateway would have been beneficial to all Canadians if it had been built, but it was not built, because the moratorium on shipping on the west coast would not allow ships to go to a port that could have had a pipeline to it.

Routine Proceedings

I have also been to communities such as Prince Rupert, Terrace, Kitimat, Bella Bella, Bella Coola, Queen Charlottes, Masset, and Stewart. I have been to every one of those communities personally. I have been very fortunate in my working career to have lived on the west coast. I have partied and lived with the aboriginal communities on the west coast and throughout the interior of British Columbia. I have sailed from Mexico to Alaska on the west coast. I love the beauty of the west coast of Canada and the United States. I have been to the Hecate Strait, Queen Charlotte Sound, the Dixon Entrance. I am a pilot. I have flown from Mexico to Alaska. I have landed on many of the pristine coastal beaches of British Columbia. It is one of the most beautiful places in the world, and I have been so fortunate in life to have had the opportunity to travel to many of the inlets and beaches to meet many of the local people.

One thing I have learned from my travels is that, yes, we need to protect our coastal waters. It does not matter whether they are on the west coast of British Columbia or the east coast of Canada or the Arctic. We need to protect them.

As I said, I have been fortunate. I have also travelled extensively on the east coast and in the Arctic. I cherish the beauty of all of Canada and recognize that we need to protect all parts of Canada, but I also realize that Canada is country with an abundant supply of many different types of energy. Whether coal, oil or gas, our natural tree products, mining, aluminum etc., this country from coast to coast to coast is abundant in natural resources. These natural resources have been instrumental in making Canada one of the world's most economically viable countries and one of the best countries to live, bar none.

When I meet young people in my riding of Yellowhead, I ask, "You have won the lottery?" They say, "What do you mean?" I say, "You were born in Alberta. We have an abundance in Alberta. We have an abundance of oil and gas energy. We have an abundance of coal. We have an abundance of agriculture. We have an abundance of forestry, and we are a tourist location for worldwide travellers." I tell them that there are so many different fields and occupations in Alberta that they could enter and prosper in. However, that is very true of a lot of our provinces. Any member from any riding here can probably stand and brag about the quality of his or her specific riding, but it would all end up with Yellowhead being the greatest riding in Canada. I have said that a few times, though it might require a bit of debate.

● (1805)

The west coast of British Columbia is beautiful, breathtaking, but so is the east coast of Canada, the Maritimes. They are all breathtaking and beautiful. The Arctic is breathtaking and beautiful.

Bill C-48 would put a moratorium on shipping oil on the west coast of Canada. We ship oil to many other destinations. We are probably one of the few countries in the world that would not require any importing of oil to this great country of ours, because we can produce enough in house, and that is exactly what we should be doing. When we have a large, diversified country like Canada that stretches thousands of miles from coast to coast to coast, it makes one wonder why we have to import as much oil as we do.

I was astounded when I looked at a graph recently from Canada's statistics in long form. That is why it took a little while to get it here,

because it is a lot to read. I was astounded to see the amount of oil we bring into this great country of ours.

This is the daily number of barrels we bring in, and these are 2016 statistics: Saudi Arabia, 86,741 barrels; Norway, 41,858 barrels; United Kingdom, 9,861 barrels; Colombia, 5,314 barrels; Kazakhstan, 19,200 barrels; Algeria, almost 85,000 barrels; Nigeria, about 74,000 barrels; Ivory Coast, around 12,500 barrels; and the United States 265,000. That is what we import into Canada on our east coast. The ships come from the southern United States across the ocean into the St. Lawrence, on the east coast of Newfoundland and Labrador in our beautiful maritime provinces. How can we do that? It is unsafe. According to the Liberal government, it is not safe to have tankers on the west coast, but it is safe to bring in \$12.7 billion a year of oil on the east coast. Why is it safer on the east coast than it is on the west coast? I cannot fathom that logic.

Many years ago, a former prime minister, by the name of Trudeau, left Alberta. He was on a train, and I think he put his finger out to check the wind. Now we have his son who is Prime Minister, and it would almost appear that there is another testing of the wind. I hate to say that someone out there does not want to see Alberta, Saskatchewan, or even B.C. prosper from our natural resources of oil and gas. That is a shame.

Since 1985, ships have been sailing up and down the west coast of British Columbia. They have been sailing under a mutual understanding agreement to stay off the west coast shore at least 100 kilometres.

● (1810)

I have studied that route because, as a police officer, I also patrolled the west coast. I was stationed there for a number of years. If we look at the average, it is probably closer to 150 kilometres off of the west coast of British Columbia. It is under a mutual understanding and agreement. There have been no problems since the start of that agreement, and I see no need why we need a moratorium today to stop shipping on the west coast of British Columbia.

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his passionate speech. We have a lot in common. He talked about the beauty of the Arctic, the beaches, the sea, and the parks. We have a lot of common ground there. However, I have a few questions.

He said there would be no problem as long as ships are 100 kilometres off of the west coast, but I am wondering how he plans to get the oil from shore through the first 100 kilometres.

My second question is related to science. Two Conservative members have said that they support science, and that is great. I would ask him to refer to any reports related to the tankers that he is talking about with regard to science.

The member also mentioned that aboriginal people would not be helped by this, and I am wondering why so many indigenous people had a problem with this particular project.

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As well, the member talked about the beauty of the beaches. I know his riding is farther than mine and where the *Exxon Valdez* ran aground, but I know that for decades there was pollution on those beautiful beaches. He should remember that the *Exxon Valdez* went on safer waters, more like the east coast than the dangerous currents in waters around islands where this would occur.

Finally, I loved the story about his grandfather and the farm. In fact, I learned something from that, and it was great. I appreciate him telling that story. However, one can also farm in the sea. His grandfather talked about the purity of the earth, and the purity of the water and the sea provides a lot of good farming of indigenous species. Why would he want to risk that with potential pollution from something like the *Exxon Valdez*?

•(1815)

Mr. Jim Eglinski: Mr. Speaker, there were a lot of questions so, if I miss any, I would ask the member to pipe in and tell me which ones I missed.

First, I do not think we should be worried about going the 100 kilometres or 150 kilometres. I do not believe there should be a moratorium on shipping on the west coast. I believe that Canada has one of the strictest set of guidelines for shipping, which has been proven. There have been very few incidents of major tanker mishaps in Canada. However, I will be the first to say that accidents do happen.

We want to put a moratorium on the west coast of British Columbia but stop at the top end of the Dixon Entrance. It does not make any sense. It is a line on the ocean. On that side of the line, the United States can ship; on this side of the line, there can be no shipping because it is in Canada. It does not make any sense. Stewart is way up an inlet. Halfway up the inlet, there cannot be shipping by tanker. In the other half of the inlet, shipping can be by tanker. It does not make common sense. It is as simple as that.

We need to look at safety, and if the safety rules are not strong enough, then we should make them strong enough. If the ships are not safe enough, then we should make them safe enough. We can do that. However, to close one specific area off because of somebody's illogical idea and a promise in an election, very similar to making marijuana legal, it does not make a lot of sense.

I have missed some of the other points because I got carried away, but, if asked again, I will answer them.

Mr. Fin Donnelly (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague mentioned not needing a moratorium on the west coast but he also mentioned that mistakes do happen. I am wondering how the member can square that.

I want to specifically reference one mistake that happened in Bella Bella last year involving the *Nathan E. Stewart*. It was a relatively small spill of 110,000 litres of diesel fuel into the waters off Bella Bella. It took almost one month because of bad weather before anyone could get to the *Nathan E. Stewart* and address the fuel that was coming out. This affected the local nation's shellfish fishery and the marine environment. This was a relatively small spill compared to the kinds of spills that happen in the Gulf of Mexico or any other spills into the ocean.

Could the member comment on the impact of this spill on local business and the local economy? Can he imagine what a large spill of bitumen would do to the local economy?

Mr. Jim Eglinski: Mr. Speaker, I do not think we are talking about bitumen with respect to that spill. Let us take a look at the coastal community of Bella Bella. How does diesel fuel get to Bella Bella? It has to be brought there by boat. Bella Coola now has a road but I remember a time long ago when there was no road and everything was delivered by ship.

Let us take a look at the diesel fuel going to Masset, Queen Charlotte City.

We are always going to need to transport some type of fuel to coastal communities, whether they be on the west coast, the Arctic, or the east coast. None of us wants to see any mishaps, but they may happen. Do we shut down all of our economies, all of our communities because something may happen? This world was developed. This country of ours prospered. Our provinces grew. All of this happened because people ventured out and did things and modernized. We do not stop progress.

•(1820)

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Yellowhead is truly the most beautiful part of Canada outside of Edmonton West.

I received a text a couple of days ago from a friend of mine who was flying in through Calgary. He was excited to comment that the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development was on the same plane. I thought the minister had to be making a supercluster announcement, that Alberta may finally get some help from the government, but unfortunately we heard that the Alberta supercluster application, which is the clean resource innovation network made up of think tanks, universities, the provincial government, oil and gas bodies, and a consortium, was shut down. Odd. I am not sure why the minister would fly to Calgary to tell that city that it was not getting money.

The bid by the resource innovation network focused on technology for reducing water usage, reclaiming developed land, monitoring and reducing methane emissions, and researching low-emission end-uses for carbon, everything the government talks about, such as helping the environment and growing the economy, and yet the government shut it down. The minister commented that it was shut down because of an overlap between the supercluster for agriculture and mining and construction. Apparently, agriculture superclusters are going to overlap so therefore we do not need research into clean energy in Alberta.

I am wondering if my colleague from Yellowhead could comment on this snub by the Liberal government, yet another snub of Alberta.

Mr. Jim Eglinski: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Edmonton West comes from another beautiful part of Alberta. When I was a young kid, I grew up there for a little while.

He is absolutely right. Just recently I moved from the environment and sustainable development committee to the industry, science and technology committee. We were studying intellectual property. My learned friend from Alberta was also on that committee last year. One of the first things I noticed when I was reading through a new report on intellectual property was the fact the Liberal government seems to think that everything can only be written, directed, and driven by highly educated people. I see this quite often. I also saw it in the report that we are trying to write at the environment committee.

There seems to be a strong favouritism towards the major universities. The government does not seem to want to recognize the technical schools such as NAIT and SAIT, and also the Drayton Valley eco mile, where clean air technology is being studied. I have to give credit to my Liberal counterparts on the committee for changing the wording with respect to intellectual property to refer to all post-secondary institutions, rather than universities specifically. I was appalled by that oversight in the past.

As I said earlier, I would sometimes listen to a trapper well before I would listen to a biologist, and I would listen to a farmer who has been on the land for 50 years before I would listen to someone who has just got out of agricultural school and has a wealth of book knowledge but not a lot of experience. I think we need to address all avenues of education: post-secondary, technical, and everything else.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank our hon. colleagues for their speeches and their interventions in the House today, and on Bill C-48.

I listened to the debate intently, and heard it over and over again. It is very similar to what we have heard from the government time and again, whether it was on Bill C-55, which was earlier today, on the marine protected areas, or electoral reform, or the tax measures that the government proposed earlier on and is now backtracking on. It is very interesting. It comes down to consultation. It comes down to the fact that this has nothing to do with really banning tankers on the west coast, but has to do with slamming shut anything to do with a pipeline to get our product from the Alberta oil sands to the west coast and to get our product to other markets.

I should be really clear that there are approximately 4,000 ships or vessels each year that go in on the east coast, in terms of oil or petroleum-based tanker traffic. On the west coast, oil or petroleum-based tanker traffic represents less than 1% of the vessels that are arriving and departing off the west coast ports which is about 200,000 vessels each year, using 2015 numbers.

It was about 1,487 vessels total for 2015. It is interesting, and I know that other speakers have mentioned this, that it is okay for over 4,000 vessels each year, to go in through the east coast with over 600,000 barrels a day of foreign oil from some of the worst contributors of human rights violations in the world. It is okay for us to be reliant on foreign oil, but far be it for us to be self-sufficient and actually be able to get our product to market on the west coast.

This is really about shutting down the opportunity of the pipeline that was going through my riding of Cariboo—Prince George, one that had a lot of first nations' support. A lot of first nations became equity partners in this program that could have lifted some of our most vulnerable communities up. Instead what we are seeing is that

those opportunities have gone away. Just recently, the Hereditary Chiefs' Council of Lax Kw'alaams, which is a community that would have been impacted by this, came out publicly and said, and there have been many who have been mentioned as well:

....we categorically reject interference of outside environmental NGOs (especially those foreign-based) who appear to be dictating government policy in our traditional territory.

That is talking about why we are moving so quickly to implement this tanker moratorium.

Canada has the largest coastline, over 243,000 kilometres. We also have some of the most stringent safety standards. I want to talk about some of those safety standards that we have. We have marine inspectors who board oil tankers that ply Canadian waters to make sure that they have double hulls. We do that because, as has been mentioned before, of the terrible, disastrous incident that happened with the *Exxon Valdez* in 1989. After that, the global oil shipping industry made a 25-year phase-out plan that banned single-hull ships. As of 2010, there have been no single-hull ships, massive tankers that have been shipping oil, plying the waters of Canada. There have been no single-hull tankers. We have marine inspectors who go out and check that.

Again, a lot of times the *Exxon Valdez* incident is used to shut down pipelines or have tanker moratoriums. It is used to anger and facilitate a lot of opposition in these areas.

• (1825)

Interestingly, the Liberal government approved Trans Mountain or Kinder Morgan. It said that it approved it, but we have not seen anything about it. That will facilitate 900,000 barrels of oil per day to that west coast port that is right among communities, and an interior passageway, and that is okay. However, to have an economic development project in the northern part of our communities, one that was critically important and had national interest, was nixed.

I look forward to the next nine minutes or so that I have to speak the next time that this debate comes up.

• (1830)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Cariboo—Prince George will have 14 minutes remaining in his time, and another 10 minutes for questions and comments when the House next resumes debate on the question.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

Adjournment Proceedings

[English]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada is blessed with natural resources, and I am extremely proud of the thousands of Canadians who contribute to our economy through the natural resource sector. At a time when certain areas of our country are struggling, the Liberal government refused to stand up for these Canadians and take a clear position in favour of energy east.

From across our great country, there are thousands of people, through their employment, who are either directly or indirectly impacted by our oil and gas sector. Even in my own constituency of Brandon—Souris in southwest Manitoba, there are many who work in our oil patch. These are reasonably high-paying jobs. These are jobs that support our local businesses and provide the necessary income to raise a family. We cannot forget about the billions of dollars generated from the oil and gas sector that helps pay for the social services we hold so dear in our country.

It was a sad day to find out recently that TransCanada decided to terminate the energy east project. This important pipeline was projected to create over 14,000 jobs during a nine-year construction phase. It would have provided highly paid, skilled manufacturing jobs and economic opportunities, not just in the west, as I have said, but across the entire country of Canada. There is something terribly wrong when it is easier to import Saudi Arabian oil than to transport Canadian oil to New Brunswick.

It is clear that political interference by the Liberal government with the National Energy Board review process is putting the future of our energy sector at a clear disadvantage. It is also clear that due to the political interference by the Liberal government, Canada will continue to import foreign oil.

Over the past two years, the Liberals have introduced new regulations on Canadian energy projects and forced Canadian oil companies to comply with standards that are not required for foreign companies. Previously the National Energy Board process only included emissions caused from building and operating a pipeline, but now they have added upstream and downstream emissions. This is a completely new standard, which will only deepen Canada's reliance on foreign oil and put the interests of foreign countries ahead of Canadian interests. Why is it that the Liberals are interested in putting Canadians out of work?

I have two very important questions that I would like the Liberal government to answer. One is, will the Liberal government finally commit to supporting pipeline projects that transport Canadian oil from western provinces to refineries in Atlantic Canada? Two, will it stop politicizing the National Energy Board review process and stop giving Saudi Arabian oil executives a reason to cheer?

Ms. Kim Rudd (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Brandon—Souris for his question and allowing me to respond.

His comments remind us that there are still those who see resource development as an either/or proposition, a choice between either growing the economy or protecting the environment.

His remarks also remind us that some people do not understand that climate action can be a competitive advantage, or that when a business makes a decision it is called a “business decision” for a reason. It was a business decision when the TransCanada Corporation decided not to proceed with the energy east project.

However, since the project was initiated in 2014, there has been a fundamental shift in global markets resulting from the shale oil revolution, including a 60% decline in oil and gas prices, and a 50% drop in capital investment. Were both the revival of the Keystone XL pipeline earlier this year and our government's approval of the Trans Mountain expansion and Line 3 replacement pipelines last November also contributing factors? None of these projects were certainties at the time the energy east project was proposed.

Finally, we do not know if the C.D. Howe Institute is onto something regarding the changing economics behind energy east after TransCanada received regulatory approval to slash the price it charges to move western natural gas to Ontario. All we know is that according to the institute, natural gas producers have been signing up in droves with TransCanada ever since. Therefore, to suggest that a \$15.7 billion investment hinged on the National Energy Board's decision to review the downstream emissions from the energy east pipeline suggests a profound ignorance of the myriad of factors that go into a business decision. It also ignores our government's very clear response to the NEB's decision to expand the scope of its review.

First, we offered to conduct the upstream and downstream GHG assessments within the legislated timeline to avoid added costs and delays to the proponent.

Second, we made it clear that our government would ultimately use the same criteria, our January 2016 interim principles, that we applied to our reviews of other major energy projects, including the Trans Mountain expansion and Line 3 pipelines. As the Minister of Natural Resources has said repeatedly, nothing has changed from our perspective.

Our approval of the Trans Mountain expansion and Line 3 pipelines was based on solid science, meaningful consultations, and the best interests of Canada. Our approach to the energy east proposal would have been the same—nothing more and nothing less.

• (1835)

Mr. Larry Maguire: Mr. Speaker, it is truly outlandish that Canada imports oil from countries such as Saudi Arabia and Venezuela and has continued to rely on them. I am still seeing ignorance on this.

The Liberals still do not get it. They have never lived in an oil field to understand how clean and operative this industry can be and is. It provides a very significant portion of energy for the development of things like our auto industry, airline industry, and other industries in Canada. That is why I say it impacts everyone.

Adjournment Proceedings

It is unacceptable for the Liberals to have politicized the National Energy Board's process. Of course, they did not even answer, or come close to answering, the two questions I asked.

This bill will only ensure that oil tankers from the Middle East continue to ship their oil to be refined in Canada.

Energy east was supported by numerous provincial governments, such as Alberta, Ontario, Saskatchewan and New Brunswick. Liberal, NDP, and Conservative provincial governments set aside their political differences and heavily backed this nation-building project.

I ask the Liberals once again, will they stop politicizing the NEB and stop putting the interests of foreign companies ahead of Canadian workers?

Ms. Kim Rudd: Mr. Speaker, it is telling that the opposition members still equate measuring greenhouse gas emissions with killing economic growth. They still live in a world where the choice is a stark one between economic prosperity and environmental protection. They cannot imagine how climate action can be turned into a competitive advantage. They simply cannot understand that when a business makes a decision, it is precisely that, a business decision. That is what TransCanada did when it chose to cancel its energy east proposal. It made a business decision.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a question I originally asked on May 8 in regard to comments the Minister of National Defence made on April 18, when he was in India. He gave a speech and embellished the facts when he said, “On my first deployment to Kandahar in 2006...I [was] the architect of...Operation Medusa, where we removed 1,500 fighters, Taliban fighters, off the battlefield”. On May 8, I asked if the minister could honestly explain whether he has any integrity left.

It comes back to the National Defence code of ethics he was bound by, not only as the Minister of National Defence but as a former member of the Canadian Armed Forces. It says that “being a person of integrity calls for honesty, [and] the avoidance of deception”. It requires the “pursuit of truth regardless of personal consequences”.

If we look at the minister's behaviour, I know he apologized for his comments. He has made it more than once. It also appeared in a video in 2015, and I believe he understands the consequences of his actions, but it also brings into question all the other things that have changed under his direction as Minister of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces, because there is a real lack of transparency.

The Conservatives used to provide all sorts of briefings and updates and explained to Canadians what our armed forces were doing in things like Operation Impact, and now we never get any briefings on what our troops are doing in the battle against ISIS in Iraq or in Syria. We know there have been changes, because the media have reported on them, but there have not been briefings offered to us as parliamentarians. There have not been technical briefings offered to reporters and Canadians in general to find out exactly where our troops are off to.

The rules of engagement have actually just changed again in the last few weeks. We now know that our special operations forces have expanded what they are doing in dealing with unexploded ordnances and going out and assisting the peshmerga as well as Iraqi security forces in taking the offensive in the last few holds ISIS still has.

If we go beyond that and look at what the Prime Minister's code of ethics states, it says that ministers must act with honesty. We are going through this whole process where the Minister of Finance has been caught and has not been practising the code the Prime Minister laid out to make sure that they are honest. According to the code of ethics, parliamentary secretaries and ministers of the crown are given 60 days to respond to the issue of making sure they put all their assets out there. He did not talk about his villa for two years, not 60 days. He did not put his assets into a blind trust, which everyone else had to. I put my farm in a blind trust when I was parliamentary secretary.

I want to come back to how the minister has not been honest in how he has dealt with the replacement of our CF-18s. The minister has made a circus of the replacement of our fleet of fighter jets here in Canada, and that goes from when the Prime Minister first said he would not buy the F-35 because he did not think it worked. Then the Liberals invented an imaginary capability gap, despite what we heard from all sorts of experts and former commanders of the Royal Canadian Air Force. Then they were going to sole source Super Hornets but then were in a fight between Bombardier and Boeing, and the circus continues. Now they are not going to buy the Super Hornets but are going to buy used, worn out fighter jets from Australia. It is a circus. There is no integrity. We ask for some clarity, transparency, and integrity from the Minister of National Defence.

• (1840)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean Rioux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for the question he asked more than five months ago.

As the parliamentary secretary, I have the privilege of working with the Minister of National Defence every day. I can attest to his honesty, integrity, and determination in carrying out his mandate. The minister has the support of the military, his colleagues, and the Prime Minister.

The primary responsibility of the minister and the government is to ensure that the Canadian Armed Forces have the training and equipment they need. That is the goal towards which the Minister of National Defence has been striving with singular determination for almost two years now. He is working to discharge his mandate with the greatest respect for our men and women in uniform.

Adjournment Proceedings

The minister is a proud Canadian with 26 years' experience in the Canadian Army Reserve, during which time he served his country with honour and distinction in four overseas missions. He served on an extraordinary team of Canadian, American, and Afghani soldiers who made Operation Medusa a success.

His commanding officer in Afghanistan, General Fraser, considered him to be one of the best intelligence officers he had ever worked with. He said:

He was the best single Canadian intelligence asset in theatre, and his hard work, personal bravery, and dogged determination undoubtedly saved a multitude of Coalition lives. Through his courage and dedication, [the minister] has single-handedly changed the face of intelligence gathering and analysis in Afghanistan.

Retired British Army colonel, Chris Vernon, said:

[W]ithout [the defence minister's] input as a critical player, major player, a pivotal player I'd say, Medusa wouldn't have happened. We wouldn't have the intelligence and the tribal picture to put the thing together.

The Minister of National Defence made a major contribution in his deployments as a reservist and he is making an even greater contribution within our government. He oversaw the most ambitious defence policy review of the past 20 years. He is now overseeing the implementation of more than a hundred initiatives that will ensure that the Canadian Armed Forces are fully able to meet current and future challenges.

He has established solid and effective contacts with all of our allies, including within NATO, and especially with our American neighbours, our most important military and economic partner. With the help of his cabinet colleagues, he has made major improvements to the procurement process.

I am proud of what he has accomplished. I am happy to work by his side, and I am convinced that, thanks to his vision, leadership, and hard work, our government will continue to ensure that the Canadian Armed Forces have the tools they need to serve Canada for many years to come.

• (1845)

[English]

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, I know what the minister did in uniform, and we are all proud of the work he did. We are not questioning that work; we are questioning his integrity, the embellishment of what he did, what they call "stolen valour", by taking full credit for an operation on which he had to backtrack.

More important, the parliamentary secretary has failed to mention how the Liberals have created a complete circus out of replacing our tired CF-18 fighter fleet and how they have gone from one extreme, saying they will not buy the F-35 to they might have an open and fair competition, which we need to have happen right now. They invented the idea of an imaginary capability gap. Again, that has nothing to do with the actual requirements of the Canadian Armed Forces for the last 30 years and how we fulfill our NATO and NORAD responsibilities in the protection of Canadian sovereignty.

He failed to mention that the Liberals were not planning to buy the Super Hornets now because of the Boeing-Bombardier fiasco they created and the war of rhetoric going on back and forth between them, Bombardier, and Boeing. He fails to recognize that buying used legacy Hornets from Australia is a waste of time and money

when we should be investing right now in an open and fair competition to find the right plane for our pilots, for our aerospace industry, and for the protection of Canadians.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean Rioux: Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to be the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Defence. I see him as a model to us all.

His missions as a reservist in Bosnia and his three tours in Afghanistan make him an example to us all. We all know he helped fight Daesh. We have seen the praise he received.

The most important thing to keep in mind about the minister is that he has drawn on his experience and held cross-Canada consultations to find out what our soldiers need. Canadians asked us to look after these men and their families during and after their service. They want us to make sure our troops are well trained and have the equipment they need. That is what we are doing.

We have announced new equipment purchases. We will have 88 new fighters and 15 new frigates. Contrary to what the Conservative government did, this equipment will be funded. We will be able to carry out our missions at home and abroad.

• (1850)

[English]

TAXATION

Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC): Mr. Speaker, two weeks ago, I asked the finance minister about his misguided plans designed to unfairly target Canadian family farms. While Conservatives welcome the Liberals' decision to follow the work of the previous Conservative government, as it announced today that it will bring back their legislation that will lower the small business tax, we are concerned that it is not being clear with its entire plan for Canadian small businesses and family farms.

The Liberals' original unfair tax proposals included draft legislation aimed at discouraging the conversion of dividends into lower-taxed capital gains and measures that would restrict income distribution to family members through an incorporated small business, unless the payments meet a new and vague reasonableness test from the CRA. While the Liberal government suggests that it may not be moving forward with its proposed changes to limit access to the lifetime capital gains exemption, it will still be sticking with its plan to restrict income distribution, conveniently leaving out any detail that would establish how CRA will be able to accommodate for spouses and children genuinely contributing to the family farm or small business.

Adjournment Proceedings

This morning, I was proud to speak on behalf of Canada's farmers and ranchers during the debate on Motion No. 108, initiated by my colleague from Bow River, that recognized the contributions of Canadian farmers and ranchers and the incredible promise of the next generation of farmers and ranchers. Farming is truly a family-run business, with farmers and their families putting everything they have into the family farm. Children who grow up on farms participate from an early age, and I know this because I was one of them. These young, aspiring farmers are some of the hardest-working and most innovative young Canadians one will ever meet.

The Liberals have treated farmers like tax cheats and young farmers as though they are spoiled trust fund kids, like the Prime Minister and the finance minister. Sorry, it is actually worse. If there will be no clarifications from the Liberal government, it will eventually create an arbitrary system with an unfair tax regime that will slap unnecessary barriers on farmers, small businesses, and their families.

Why do we worry? On July 18, the announcement was made that there were going to be 75 days of consultations. It was just two days later that I was able to speak with some tax advisers and tax lawyers, who talked about the three themes and the same concerns they have. However, what is important is that as two, three, and four weeks went by, they started to look at the all of the different levels and concerns, and that is where all the frustration took place. It was not just the three main things they were discussing; it was all of the different layers associated with the new tax procedures the government had in mind.

How will the Liberals clarify the new rules for income distribution for family-run farms and how can farmers feel confident when it is, indeed, the bureaucrats from CRA who will determine what is and what is not reasonable criteria? This is all so arbitrary. How will the Liberals make sure that their new changes will not, in fact, discourage the next generation of young farmers from being involved with family businesses?

Mrs. Alaina Lockhart (Parliamentary Secretary for Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise in the House on Small Business Week, as we celebrate the hard work of all of Canada's entrepreneurs and small business owners, including farmers. I thank the member opposite for this opportunity to discuss tax fairness.

Our government knows that when we have an economy that works for the middle class, we have a country that works for everyone. That is why two years ago, after we were elected, our government took the first steps to building a stronger middle class by lowering taxes for middle-class Canadians. We also introduced the new Canada child benefit that is simpler, tax free, more generous, and better targeted to those who need it the most. There are nine out of 10 Canadian families who are receiving higher benefits, and hundreds of thousands of children have been lifted out of poverty.

Earlier today, the Prime Minister announced the next steps in our plan for a stronger middle class. Our government intends to lower the small business tax rate to 10% effective January 1, 2018, and to 9% effective January 1, 2019. To support this change, the government will take steps to ensure that Canadian-controlled private corporation status is not used to reduce personal income tax

obligations for high-income earners rather than supporting small businesses. We are committed to ensuring that unintended advantages are not being used by high-income and wealthy individuals to pay less than their fair share of taxes. Based on what we have heard from Canadians in a series of country-wide consultations on tax planning using private corporations, the government will this week set out its approach to better target strategies used by the relatively small number of high-income individuals who have the biggest advantage from the existing tax rules.

In addition to announcing its plan to lower the small business tax rate to 9% by 2019, the government announced earlier today its intention to simplify its proposal to limit the ability of owners of private corporations to lower their personal taxes by sprinkling their income to family members. The government is taking into account feedback from Canadians and is adjusting its approach to limit red tape and not interfere with genuine family business arrangements. In addition, in response to the comments we have received, the government will not be moving forward with measures that would limit access to lifetime capital gains exemptions. We would like to thank the tens of thousands of Canadians who took the time to share their views, their concerns, and their expertise.

We want to encourage people to invest in their businesses. Small businesses are a critical part of our economy, and the government is taking action to help them grow, invest, and create good, well-paying jobs. The government has listened to small business owners, professionals, and experts during the consultation on tax planning using private corporations, and will act on what it has heard.

The Minister of Finance and other members of the government will continue to meet with people in every region of this country, as we provide more details on the way forward for fairness, a strong middle class, and a thriving business community. Fairness in the tax system allows the government to keep taxes low while ensuring programs and services for all Canadians. Moving forward, changes to the tax treatment of private corporations will be informed by the many Canadians who contributed to these consultations.

● (1855)

Mr. Earl Dreeshen: Mr. Speaker, there is very little comfort in hearing some of the stories we have continually heard from the members opposite. Of course, about the only thing they have done is to say they realize they have made so many mistakes that the one thing they will do is go back to the Conservative plan of reducing the small business tax rate. That is an important point.

It is suggested that it was the Liberals who were listening to the tens of thousands of people who were up in arms about the way in which this was presented, and 75 days was the timeframe they would have to discuss it. The last time that major changes of this severity took place was about 50 years ago, and they took six years to sort out. To suggest that we should be able to manage this because we can manage it politically in 75 days does not mean that is what is happening as far as the economy is concerned.

Adjournment Proceedings

Billionaire families like the finance minister's get a pass under the Liberal government while family farms and local professionals may be subject to ridiculous amounts of bureaucratic paperwork to prove in what ways their families contribute to the family business. We know that all Canadians work hard. They think they can assure Canadians with this announcement. Instead, what we see is the growing concern among farming families about this proposed tax change. It continues to be extremely frustrating for each and every one of them.

Mrs. Alaina Lockhart: Mr. Speaker, we have listened to Canadians who lent their voice to this discussion on tax planning using private corporations. That is why we are bringing forward measures that will demonstrate we are focusing on supporting the

middle class, those working hard to join the middle class, and helping small businesses.

Throughout the consultation period, we heard from Canadians who agreed with the principle that we needed a fairer tax system. Today's announcement is good news for our economy, for small businesses and for middle-class Canadians.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:59 p.m.)

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