



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
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CANADA

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Tuesday, February 13, 2018**

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**Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, February 13, 2018

The House met at 10 a.m.

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*Prayer*

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

● (1005)

[*English*]

### SURVIVOR PENSION BENEFITS ACT

**Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-397, an act to amend certain acts in relation to survivor pension benefits.

She said: Mr. Speaker, it is my great pleasure to introduce a bill to amend several acts that discriminate against seniors.

The federal government currently denies surviving spouse pensions to the military, members of Parliament, judges, employees of crown corporations, public servants, and employees of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police if the retiree entered into a spousal relationship after age 60. The so-called “gold-digger” legislation is archaic and unfair, especially given that these men and women have devoted their lives to Canadian public service in different capacities. This bill would eliminate legislation that denies surviving spouses a pension.

The legislation disproportionately affects women. The burden of caregiving often falls on spouses and most often on women. It is disgraceful that after caring for their partners, when their ailing partners die, some caregivers are denied a pension. In the case of the Canadian Forces Superannuation Act, legislation was enacted at the turn of the 20th century to prevent deathbed marriages or gold-digging, when women were accused of marrying veterans in order to get their pensions. The policy has not changed in 100 years and continues to have repercussions on families today.

The amendment I wish to make concerns income equality, health issues, and women’s issues. With the current legislation, the families of veterans, judges, members of Parliament, public servants, employees of crown corporations and the RCMP are at risk of living in poverty. I wish to change all of that with this amendment.

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

## PETITIONS

### RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

**Mr. Dave MacKenzie (Oxford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition signed by hundreds of Ontarians, many of whom are from my riding. The petition calls on the House of Commons to permit Christians to robustly exercise their religious beliefs, both in private and public acts, without coercion, constraint or discrimination.

### EATING DISORDERS

**Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table petitions which note that eating disorders, such as anorexia and bulimia, have the highest mortality rate of all mental illnesses. Children as young as seven are being diagnosed and hospitalized with eating disorders. More than a million Canadians have been negatively affected by their own struggles with eating disorders or those of their loved ones. The petitioners want parliamentarians to understand that the sooner people receive the treatment they need, the better their chances of recovery.

[*Translation*]

That is why the petitioners are asking the government to support Motion No. 117 and initiate discussions with the provincial and territorial health ministers and all stakeholders to develop a comprehensive pan-Canadian eating disorder strategy to facilitate prevention, diagnosis, treatment, support, and research.

### SHARK FINNING

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise this morning to present a petition.

[*English*]

This petition, which is from constituents of Saanich—Gulf Islands, Mayne Island, Saturna, Victoria area, and North Saanich, calls upon the House assembled to take action to prevent the trade, distribution, and sale of shark fin. It is understood globally, by scientific opinion universally, that shark species around the world are endangered. The practice of finning of sharks is not allowed in Canadian waters, but the sale and distribution of shark fins is. The petitioners would like the practice to end.

*Government Orders*

[Translation]

**QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER**

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

**The Speaker:** Is it agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[English]

**FISHERIES ACT**

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.)** moved that Bill C-68, an act to amend the Fisheries Act and other acts in consequence, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is a great privilege for me to speak in the House of Commons on this important legislation. You, Mr. Speaker, are a former minister of fisheries and oceans yourself and will understand the significance of the Fisheries Act in communities like the ones you and I represent, so it is a privilege for me to have this opportunity to stand in the House.

Canada is uniquely blessed with an abundance of freshwater and marine coastal areas that are both ecologically significant and linked to the economic prosperity of Canadians. Our government knows that we have a responsibility to steward these resources for future generations while maintaining economic opportunities for many people and communities who depend on them.

● (1010)

[Translation]

In my mandate letter, the Prime Minister asked me to restore lost protections and incorporate modern safeguards into the Fisheries Act. In 2012, the government got rid of a number of fish habitat protection measures without engaging indigenous peoples, fishers, scientists, conservation groups, coastal communities, or the general public in any meaningful way and without their support. What made that decision even more unacceptable was the fact that the changes were buried in a 430-page omnibus bill in the hope they would slip by unnoticed. Canadians definitely noticed.

[English]

Indigenous and environmental groups were especially concerned with changes made to the act and rightly perceived those amendments as weakening what should be of shared concern for Canadians: the protection of fish and fish habitat. Industry partners were thrust into uncertainty with regard to their responsibilities under the act.

Our government has worked and consulted with a broad range of Canadians, and we encouraged everyone to be part of this important conversation. Provinces, environmental groups, fishers associations, indigenous groups, and thousands of Canadians helped shape the amendments currently before the House of Commons.

The proposed amendments to Bill C-68 are part of the government's broader strategy to review environmental and regulatory processes and cover several key themes, including partnership with indigenous peoples; supporting planning and integrated management; enhancing regulation and enforcement; improving partnerships and collaboration, including with industry; and monitoring and reporting back to Canadians.

[Translation]

The Fisheries Act is one of Canada's oldest pieces of legislation. It was enacted shortly after Confederation. It has been amended very little since that time, which is why it needs to be updated and modernized. To that effect, Bill C-68 adds new provisions dealing with the objectives and considerations that must be examined in the decision-making process under the act. The proposed objectives seek to create a proper management and control framework for fisheries and the conservation and protection of fish and fish habitat, particularly through pollution prevention.

[English]

The new considerations under these amendments are designed to clearly guide the responsibility of a minister of fisheries and oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard when making decisions under the act. Bill C-68 proposes amendments that would restore protections for fish and fish habitat to ensure that these protections apply to all fish. We are reintroducing the prohibition against the harmful alteration, disruption, or destruction of fish habitat, as well as the prohibition against the death of fish by means other than fishing.

We are also introducing measures that would allow for the better management of projects that may be harmful to fish or fish habitat through a new permitting scheme for big projects and codes of practice for smaller ones, so that industry partners, as well as everyday Canadians, can be certain about their responsibilities but not unreasonably burdened when undertaking small, local projects.

[Translation]

In the past, uncertainty in the act has caused some uncertainty among project proponents with respect to their obligations and responsibilities. The proposed amendments create regulatory authorities that will make it possible to establish a list of designated projects, including the commitments and activities that will still require a licence.

● (1015)

[English]

Our goal is to streamline these processes, and we will be engaging with provinces and territories as well as indigenous peoples and stakeholders to decide which kinds of projects should be on the designated project list.

We are also formalizing the creation of a proponent-led habitat banking regime. Habitat banking is an international best practice for offsetting project impacts where a freshwater or marine area is created, restored, or enhanced by working to improve fish habitat in advance of a project's impact.

*Government Orders*

Habitat loss and degradation as well as changes to fish passage and flow are all contributing to the decline of freshwater and marine fish habitats in Canada today. It is imperative that Canada restore degraded fish habitats. That is why amendments to the Fisheries Act propose requiring the consideration of restoration as part of project decision-making.

These amendments provide clearer, stronger, and easier rules to establish and manage ecologically significant areas and provide stand-alone regulations to protect sensitive or important fish habitats. Given the important ecological characteristics of sensitive areas, certain types of work and activities may be prohibited and others may be identified as being subject to a special information gathering under a new authorization regime.

[*Translation*]

During the review of the 2012 changes to the Fisheries Act, we heard over and over again about the need to improve access to information on government activities related to the protection of fish and fish habitat. Indigenous communities, industry associations, environmental groups, universities, and my colleagues on the House of Commons standing committee all talked about the importance of transparency in the decision-making process under the act.

[*English*]

In order to re-establish public confidence, we are proposing amendments to establish a public registry, which would be available online. By enabling greater transparency, the registry would allow Canadians to hold the government to account in its federal decision-making with regard to fish and their habitat.

Fisheries resources and aquatic habitats have important social, cultural, and economic significance for many indigenous peoples. The respect for the rights of indigenous peoples as well as taking into account their unique interests and aspirations in fisheries-related economic opportunities and the protection of fish and fish habitat are important means of renewing our relationship with indigenous peoples.

[*Translation*]

For instance, the Fisheries Act is being amended to require the minister to consider any potential adverse effects resulting from decisions the minister might make in accordance with the rights of Canada's indigenous peoples, as set out in section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982.

In addition, our government recognizes the importance of the traditional knowledge of Canada's indigenous peoples in sound decision-making regarding fish and fish habitat.

[*English*]

Indigenous peoples across Canada, and other Canadians from coast to coast to coast, can rest assured that the government will act to protect the confidential traditional knowledge that indigenous people would share with the government under the provisions of this legislation.

Many indigenous communities are in close proximity to areas where projects that may affect fish and fish habitat are proposed, and many communities see new roles for themselves in how these decisions are made.

We have proposed long-overdue amendments that would provide for the making of agreements with indigenous governing bodies to further the purposes of the act, as we have done in the past with provinces and territories.

There are currently no legislative or regulatory requirements in place with respect to the rebuilding of depleted fish stocks.

The commissioner of environment and sustainable development, as well as our colleagues on the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, have recommended that any revisions to the Fisheries Act should include direction for the restoration and recovery of fish habitat and fish stocks.

Environmental groups have also called on the government to adopt measures aimed at the rebuilding of depleted fish stocks within the Fisheries Act. This is why we are proposing amendments that would require decisions affecting a stock in the critical zone to consider whether there are measures in place aimed at rebuilding that stock, and, when a minister is of the opinion that habitat degradation is a cause of the decline of the stock, whether measures are in place to restore such habitat.

This positive obligation on governments and greater transparency, we believe are essential to strengthening the Fisheries Act.

• (1020)

[*Translation*]

We also heard Canadians' views on other important issues related to the Fisheries Act. Although the number of aquariums that keep cetaceans in captivity for public display has fallen overall, this is still a sensitive issue that Canadians are deeply concerned about.

[*English*]

Our government recognizes that it is now wrong to capture these magnificent creatures for public display. Consequently, we are proposing amendments to the Fisheries Act that would prohibit the capture of a cetacean when the intent is to bring it into captivity, except in circumstances where the cetacean is injured, in distress, or in need of rehabilitation.

The Senate has, for a long time, done good work in respect to this important issue. I want to salute former Senator Wilfred Moore of Nova Scotia and others in the Senate who have continued to press this important issue in the minds of Canadians.

Some 72,000 Canadians make their living from fishing and fishing-related activities. Most of them, including self-employed inshore harvesters, are part of Canada's growing middle class. In many places across Atlantic Canada and Quebec, the fishery is the economic, social, and cultural heart of communities. As the fisheries minister, one of my duties is to ensure that these important traditions endure. However, threats remain to this way of life. Fish harvesters, particularly in Atlantic Canada and Quebec, have told us time and again that they need greater protection for their economic security, and they need help to ensure their economic independence.

*Government Orders*

It was clear to me that these important policies, like the owner-operator and fleet separation policies, were being circumvented by controlling agreements, which threaten the independence of the inshore and midshore fleets by removing the control of licences from individual harvesters to larger corporate interests. The amendments we are proposing would entrench existing inshore policies into law, with all the legal enforcement power required to protect small coastal communities and independent inshore harvesters.

I stand firm in supporting the economic and cultural fabric of these coastal communities. Our government has recognized that a licensing regime that supports independent inshore harvesters is critical to the economic livelihood of these communities and the families and Canadians who depend on them.

[*Translation*]

As I said, we looked at ways to strengthen the independence of the inshore sector and enforce the act more robustly. That is why we are proposing amendments that enshrine a specific power in the Fisheries Act, rather than a policy, in order to develop regulations that support the independence of inshore commercial licence holders. The amendments proposed today would entrench into law the power to make regulations on owner-operator and fleet separation policies in Atlantic Canada and Quebec.

[*English*]

In so doing, this act helps to protect middle-class jobs in our coastal communities by ensuring that present and future fisheries and oceans ministers may consider the preservation and promotion of the independence of licence-holders in commercial inshore fisheries in the decision-making process.

I want to thank a number of organizations that have played a key role in these amendments with respect to owner-operator and fleet separation. The FFAW, the Maritime Fishermen's Union, le Regroupement des pêcheurs professionnels de homard du sud de la Gaspésie, the Gulf Nova Scotia Fleet Planning Board, the Prince Edward Island Fishermen's Association, and the Canadian Independent Fish Harvester's Federation have been instrumental in this important work.

• (1025)

[*Translation*]

Fishing can be a dangerous occupation, involving many risks not only for fish harvesters, but for the marine environment as well.

[*English*]

With the unprecedented death of 12 North Atlantic right whales in the Gulf of St. Lawrence from June to September last year, we know that Canadians expect prompt and urgent action by their government. This is why we are proposing amendments to the Fisheries Act that provide a new fisheries management order power to establish quick and targeted fisheries management measures. These measures will be used for 45-day increments where there is a recognizable threat to the conservation and protection of our marine ecosystems. The proposed fisheries management order power is meant to address emerging issues when a fishery is already under way and when time-sensitive and targeted measures are also paramount.

In my mandate letter, I was asked by the Prime Minister to increase the proportion of Canada's marine and coastal areas that are protected to 5% by the end of 2017, and to 10% by 2020, which is the target we are now on track to achieve. I am pleased to report to the House that we have not only achieved our 2017 target, but we will continue to work diligently to ensure that we surpass the 10% commitment through the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity.

To help us fulfill these international commitments and obligations, we are proposing amendments to the Fisheries Act that provide ministerial authority to make regulations to establish long-term spatial restrictions to fishing activities under the act specifically for the purpose of conserving and protecting marine biodiversity.

[*Translation*]

We are also proposing amendments that will strengthen the act. During the many public engagement sessions that were held, Canadians made it clear that they wanted to see more fishery officers, conservation officers, and patrols, as well as more offenders being caught and punished.

To incorporate modern protection mechanisms into the act, some amendments are being proposed to clarify, strengthen, and modernize enforcement powers under the act, for example by empowering fishery officers to intercept any vessel or vehicle and require it to be moved to a place where an inspection can be carried out.

[*English*]

The proposed amendments also seek to increase the authority of the courts with respect to seizure and forfeiture under the act, and allow the use of alternative measure agreements to address certain contraventions.

[*Translation*]

As I mentioned earlier, the Fisheries Act is one of the oldest and most important environmental laws in Canada. It was passed in 1868, just one year after Confederation, and did not change much until the late 1970s, when habitat protection provisions were first added by one of my predecessors, who, coincidentally, was my father, Roméo LeBlanc.

[*English*]

Then, as now, the act remains a model among Canada's environmental laws. That is why we have ensured the amendments we have introduced to the Fisheries Act include updated and modern tools that are the hallmarks found in other environmental legislation. We are proposing modern provisions such as the power to create advisory panels, fee-setting authorities, and provisions respecting the collection of information.

I consider myself privileged to stand in this House, as my father did in 1977, to introduce amendments to the Fisheries Act that served his generation. I hope that this new modernized act will live up to my father's legacy and do for our generation what he and the previous Parliament did for theirs.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC):** Madam Speaker, in reverting to the old way of doing things under the old Fisheries Act, as the minister is doing, I want to remind the minister of the 2009 report of the commissioner of the environment and sustainable development. She concluded that Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Environment Canada cannot demonstrate that fish habitat are being adequately protected, as the Fisheries Act requires. Therefore, the minister is clearly going back to a failed model.

In response to the new Fisheries Act, the Canadian Electricity Association had this to say, “In practical terms, this means that virtually any action, without prior authorization, could be construed as being in contravention of this Act. Consequently, the reinstatement of these measures will result in greater uncertainties for existing and new facilities, and unduly delay and/or discourage investment in energy projects that directly support Canada’s clean growth agenda..”.

As a result of all of these things that the Liberals are doing to lengthen and make our processes more complicated, Steve Williams, the Suncor CEO, said that Suncor would shun major new projects amid Canada’s difficult regulatory environment.

Why is the minister using this act to kill middle-class jobs?

• (1030)

[Translation]

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:** Madam Speaker, it will come as no surprise that I do not share my hon. colleague’s opinion that the government is trying to kill middle-class jobs.

[English]

In fact, we believe that these amendments will support the Canadian economy, by first of all protecting jobs that are dependent on inshore and midshore fisheries in Atlantic Canada and Quebec. It is a critical part of ensuring that the economy of that part of the country is protected.

With respect to the specific comments my colleague made, precisely because we want to ensure that Canadians are able to fulfill their obligations under the Fisheries Act, we have decided to have a code of best practice policy for the kind of projects my colleague referred to, such as with the electrical associations. These Canadians have told us they want to comply with the Fisheries Act, want to ensure they are not damaging fish and fish habitat, but they want a regime that allows them to be compliant and does not overly burden them like some of the scare tactics we have heard in the past. Our policy achieves exactly that balance.

**Mr. Fin Donnelly (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the minister and his team for bringing this overdue legislation to the Fisheries Act and modernizing it. One of the concerns I have is that this was not brought forward sooner. It was promised in the last election, and we wanted to see that soon after the 2015 election. However, two years later, we are here.

I am also very pleased to see that there is a focus on rebuilding plans in this act. This is a very positive move forward. We hope it is followed up with strong regulations to ensure that those plans have the needed teeth.

One thing we are disappointed to see, on the NDP side, is that salmon aquaculture is left with that conflicting mandate of conservation, and promotion of that industry that is harming our wild salmon. As well, there is no inclusion of environmental flows for fish. The minister mentioned strengthening owner-operator provisions for the inshore fleet on the east coast and Quebec, but was there any consideration for bringing that same focus on the west coast of British Columbia in Canada?

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Port Moody—Coquitlam for the work he and colleagues did on the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans. We think that the 32 recommendations they made are largely incorporated into the amendments we are proposing in this legislation. We obviously look forward to working with him and other colleagues on the committee.

I share his sense of impatience. I wish we had been at this stage some months ago. However, we thought it was important to consult with Canadians and listen carefully to what people had to say in order to benefit from the best advice we could get from partners, provinces, indigenous and environmental groups, and associations representing fishers. We took time to get it right. I look forward to working with my colleague from Port Moody—Coquitlam and other members, if they think there are ways to improve, amend, or strengthen the legislation. We would obviously welcome those suggestions and look forward to that process.

He referred to the owner-operator circumstance on the west coast. We understand that this is a permissive part of the legislation. In Atlantic Canada, these policies have existed successfully for a long time. I have heard people on the west coast say they want to have that conversation, and we would obviously be open to talking to the industry and harvesters on the west coast to see how these successful policies could also benefit communities there.

• (1035)

**Mr. Robert Morrissey (Egmont, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, this new Fisheries Act has been well received on the east coast by fishers, particularly the protection it will afford to the owner-operator, which goes to the heart of our inshore fishery in Atlantic Canada.

One of the issues there is concern on is that there is a hint of rescinding or transferring licences to new holders after a fixed period of time. Inshore fishers work for years to pay off the debt attached to their vessels, licences, and gear. They rightly see those assets as their only pension plan for their future.

Could the minister elaborate on whether he is anticipating any changes that would impact on the ability of those inshore fishers to transfer their licences and receive remuneration for that?

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Egmont for his question, and also for his understanding and his advocacy in this important work.

*Government Orders*

The Prince Edward Island Fishermen's Association has spoken to me a number of times about how lucky it is to have an advocate of his experience standing up for fishers and for that industry, which is so important in his province and for Atlantic Canada. It is a privilege to work with my colleague.

I had made some comments at a speech in Nova Scotia last summer. Some particular interests have distorted those comments in the subsequent period. In no way is there a plan or a desire on the part of the government to prevent the transfer of these licences that, as my colleague has noted, have successfully allowed for retirement planning, financial planning, and intergenerational transfers amongst harvesters. This is something we want to encourage.

What I did ask last summer, and I feel that we need to have this conversation, was how we could work with these harvesters and these communities to help support this intergenerational transfer. The cost of these licences in some cases is becoming prohibitive. Are there financing mechanisms that can be looked at, where the independence of these harvesters can be preserved, while at the same time encouraging this important transfer that my colleague referred to?

I will do anything I can to work with harvesters to support that.

**Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the minister, particularly for his evoking the memory of Roméo LeBlanc. I am proud to have his signature on my commission as an officer in the Canadian Forces in my office, and he is welcome to come see it. I had the privilege of serving on some fishery patrols when I was in the air force and on HMCS *St. John's*.

My question for the minister is on fishery patrols. In light of the fact that Canada lost its auxiliary oiler replenishment vessels, the *Preserver* and the *Protecteur*, we do not have the ability to replenish at sea for our navy or our Coast Guard vessels involved in fishery.

Fortunately, a plan to fix that gap was planned with the *Asterix* ship out of the Davie shipyard in Quebec. The minister has been rather silent with respect to the importance of this deal. The *Asterix* is now in sea trials.

Could the minister speak about how important it is for us to replenish our Coast Guard and our navy ships at sea to make sure we patrol the Flemish Cap and all our fishing zones in Canada?

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his kind comments, particularly with respect to my father. That is obviously of significance for me, and I thank him.

We recognize that Canadians expect a rigorous level of enforcement, both close to shore, on the wharf, on the rivers, and also on the high seas. I have been extraordinarily proud of the remarkable work done by the men and women of the Royal Canadian Navy and of the Canadian Coast Guard in this important endeavour.

Global partners have told me that they want Canada to be more present in global enforcement with respect to illegal, unreported fishing activities. We intend to invest considerably, as we have done in the last two years, in this effort. Nobody should think for a minute that we will not be prepared to take our important responsibility to enforce this legislation in every part of our coastal waters.

**Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC):**

Madam Speaker, it is a great pleasure to stand in the House and speak about the new Fisheries Act. I have had numerous interactions with the minister over my time in Parliament and I know his heart is in the right place. I do have some issues with the new Fisheries Act, however. My background is in fisheries. I have a graduate degree in fisheries biology and have been active in the field of fisheries science for over 20 years.

I also sat on the fisheries and oceans committee in the previous government and for two years of the current government and was involved in the hearings regarding the new Fisheries Act.

The Fisheries Act was written in 1868 and had three fundamental functions: the proper management and control of fisheries, the conservation and protection of fish, and the protection of fish habitat and the prevention of pollution. It was considered one of the strongest pieces of environmental legislation that Canada had, but it evolved over the years to such a point that when we were in government we had to make some changes to the old Fisheries Act.

The courts had determined that what was considered fish habitat was expanded and expanded so that almost all of Canada became fish habitat. Therefore, the act became quite unwieldy and these were some of the problems with the act. This is from a paper that I wrote in 2001 for the Frontier Centre for Public Policy where we looked at the current Fisheries Act. That was about the time when, what we called back home, the "fish cops" descended on prairie Canada and wanted to inspect every drainage ditch that every producer had put in place. The old Fisheries Act created a lot of uncertainty and created more uncertainty in the development process in prairie Canada, especially for rural communities. It was very unclear as to who had jurisdiction over natural resource development.

It had a wide scope. The definition of fish habitat under the old act included entire watersheds and extended the reach of the federal government to policy areas such as watershed and land use planning, areas where DFO clearly lacked expertise. Again, we are going back to this old regime. The program removed any regulatory discretion since all fish habitat was considered important. There was no ranking of significant fish habitat versus habitats that were less significant.

Canada is a very large place. In my province of Manitoba, for example, we have 100,000 lakes and no one can know everything about all these water bodies. I think Ontario has 250,000 lakes. We look at our coastlines, and the amount of fish habitat and fisheries water in Canada is absolutely enormous. Most of these fish populations are fairly poorly studied, and because of that, all water bodies are presumed to be fish habitat until proven otherwise.



*Government Orders*

Under the old act and again with the new act, the costs of compliance are not considered and for poorer rural municipalities the costs of compliance under the old act and probably under the new act will add a major burden. It also adds to the regulatory burden. The new act is layered on top of other regulations and I am going to return to this very important point later.

Ironically, the old Fisheries Act actually threatened existing conservation programs. There are many angling groups that work very hard to enhance and improve fish habitat. When a fish habitat is enhanced and improved, I guess that is an alteration. For example, in my constituency the walleye is considered the most valuable fish. One way to enhance walleye populations is to take trucks on the ice in the middle of winter, put gravel on the ice, and when the ice melts the gravel sinks and voila, there is a new walleye spawning area and it increases the population of walleye. One wonders if that is an alteration of fish habitat. I guess it is, but again, this will inhibit very important conservation programs. Again, we think that the new act would have these same attributes.

As I said in my question for the minister, in 2009 the commissioner of the environment and sustainable development conducted an audit under the old Fisheries Act. Again this is the regime we are going back to and this is what the auditor found in 2009:

● (1040)

Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Environment Canada cannot demonstrate that fish habitat is being adequately protected as the Fisheries Act requires. In the 23 years since the Habitat Policy was adopted, many parts of the Policy have been implemented only partially by Fisheries and Oceans Canada or not at all. The Department does not measure habitat loss or gain. It has limited information on the state of fish habitat across Canada—that is, on fish stocks, the amount and quality of fish habitat, contaminants in fish, and overall water quality. Fisheries and Oceans Canada still cannot determine the extent to which it is progressing toward the Policy's long-term objective of a net gain in fish habitat.

The auditor went on to point out, "There has been little progress since 2001, when we last reported on this matter." Therefore, the old way of doing business clearly failed.

We are going back to the old definition of fish habitat. Bill C-68 says that fish habitat means spawning grounds and any other areas, including "nursery, rearing, food supply and migration areas, on which fish depend directly or indirectly in order to carry out their life processes."

The key word is "indirectly". Ultimately, every drop of water, unless it is evapotranspired, flows into a smaller waterway, then to a larger waterway, and then eventually to an area where fish exist. The word "indirectly" means that basically all of Canada would become fish habitat. The lawn on Parliament Hill would be fish habitat. Therefore, clearly, such a wide definition of fish habitat would give great licence to fisheries officers or as we call them back home "fish cops" and could cause some grave difficulties for communities and municipalities.

This wide definition of fish habitat was emphasized over and over by witnesses at the fisheries and oceans committee, of which I was a part of. I sat through every single meeting during the revisions to the Fisheries Act that the government was proposing.

The Canadian Federation of Agriculture is the largest farm group in Canada. Mr. Ron Bonnett is the president and also an active

farmer in Ontario, and these are his comments regarding the pre-2012 Fisheries Act:

The experience that many farmers had with the Fisheries Act, unfortunately, was not a positive one. It was characterized by lengthy bureaucratic applications for permitting and authorizations, and a focus on enforcement and compliance measures taken by officials....

Many farmers were then relieved when the changes that were made just a few years ago [by the Conservative government] drastically improved the timeliness and cost of conducting regular maintenance and improvement activities to their farms as well as lifting the threat of being deemed out of compliance.

Mr. Bonnett went on to point out:

There are also many accounts of inconsistency in enforcement, monitoring, and compliance across Canada with different empowered organizations, which led to a confusion and indiscriminate approaches to enforcement and implementation. Even at the individual level, there were different interpretations of the act based on one's familiarity with agriculture....

It is CFA's position that a complete revert to reinstate all provisions of the Fisheries Act as they were would be unproductive, would re-establish the same problems for farmers, and would provide little improvement in outcome for the protection and improvement of fish habitat. Human-made water bodies such as drainage ditches simply should not be treated as fish habitat.

He went on to talk about the Fisheries Act of 2012 that we put in. He said:

The current streamlined approach is working far better for all and efforts should continue this approach....

Overall, any changes to the current Fisheries Act [2012] should be considered as to how they will support outcomes-based conservation rather than a process-oriented approach.

This is a very important point. Here is a farmer saying that the old Fisheries Act actually inhibited conservation projects that the agriculture community wanted to implement on their own land. The old act, which sounds like the new proposed act, was process and process, and enforcement and enforcement. If we really want to improve fish habitat, then we should get out there and improve it, but it is going to be very problematic whether projects like these will be allowed to continue.

Again, regarding the changes that the Conservatives made, Mr. Bonnett said, "There are still some challenges when you have multiple jurisdictions working on that", but again, he says the Conservatives Fisheries Act 2012 "has improved dramatically from what it was."

Regarding the old act, Mr. Bonnett had this to say:

...we saw a lot of inconsistency, depending on the DFO office. One would come in and say, no, there's no problem, go ahead. Another one would come in and it would be a whole bureaucratic process that you had to go through. I guess that would be the caution about just putting HADD back in place without having some clear and enforceable guidelines that spell out how you treat a municipal drain.

● (1045)

It is important to talk about the issues agriculture had with the old Fisheries Act. I and many others on this side of the House represent agricultural communities. I saw first-hand, prior to my becoming a member of Parliament, the problems the act created.

*Government Orders*

What did we do to modify the former Fisheries Act? In the old Fisheries Act, there was equal consideration of all fish species and all fish habitat. We focused on the sustainability and ongoing productivity of commercial, recreational, and aboriginal fisheries and on effective management of key threats, such as aquatic invasive species.

Going back to the old act, all projects were reviewed for any impacts on fish and fish habitat, and advice was provided on a project-by-project basis. We went to the effective management of projects linked to fisheries of commercial, recreational, and aboriginal importance through the adoption of tools.

In the old act, there was duplication and overlap between federal and provincial review processes. Our act, the Fisheries Act from 2012, relied on best place delivery and partnerships with third parties.

As I said, it goes back to the old way of doing business. Interestingly, in 1986, the department wrote "Policy for the Management of Fish Habitat". I gather that it is still DFO's fish habitat policy. It is a great piece of work, done when Mr. Tom Siddon was the minister.

The 1986 fish habitat policy talks about the national application of the Fisheries Act. It says:

The policy applies to those habitats directly or indirectly supporting those fish stocks or populations that sustain commercial, recreational or Native fishing activities of benefit to Canadians.

That was the vernacular in 1986. Fisheries and Oceans Canada recognized its responsibility to protect and increase fish stocks. That first sentence is interesting. Our act, the Fisheries Act from 2012, is directly in line with the fish habitat policy in 1986, which talked about specific fisheries being protected through the protection of their habitat.

It goes on:

In addition, Fisheries and Oceans recognizes its responsibility to protect and increase fish stocks and their habitats that have either a demonstrated potential themselves to sustain fishing activities, or a demonstrated ecological support function for the fisheries resources. In accordance with this philosophy, the policy will not necessarily be applied to all places where fish are found in Canada, but it will be applied as required in support of fisheries resource conservation.

Our Fisheries Act of 2012 was actually in line with current departmental policy. This is why the act, as we wrote it, was well received by industry groups, rural communities, farm groups, angling groups across the country, and many others.

When we held our hearings at the fisheries committee, we asked a clear question of many of the witnesses who were obviously not in support of the Fisheries Act, 2012. We asked them if they could prove that there were any impacts on fish populations in Canada as a result of the changes made by the Fisheries Act, 2012. Naturally, there was a lot of hemming and hawing and saying they did not have enough information and that there was not enough time. On and on it went, but not a single witness could point to any fish population in Canada that was negatively affected by the changes embedded in the Fisheries Act of 2012.

● (1050)

Again, I am going to talk about the pros of the Conservative approach to fisheries conservation. We much prefer the direct approach to enhancing fish habitat. We created a program that was actually enabled by the Fisheries Act of 2012, called the recreational fisheries conservation partnerships program, through which we partnered with fisheries conservation groups across the country. They provided half the funds for the work and the RFCPP provided the other half. Well over 800 fisheries enhancement projects were undertaken and successfully completed across the country.

I would note that the recreational fisheries conservation partnerships program is being sunsetted by the current Liberal government. Is "sunset" not a nice word? It implies sitting on the beach with a cool one and watching the sun go down. Actually, this program has been shot down and is going down in flames. There are hundreds of angry groups across Canada whose mission is to do direct conservation and enhancement of fisheries across the country that will now not be provided with support.

I would point out something about Atlantic salmon, a fish that is obviously near and dear to the minister's heart, I would hope. Our fisheries and oceans committee did a major study on Atlantic salmon, and not a single recommendation from that study has been implemented. We recommended a seal reduction program. We recommended a significant increase in the striped bass harvest. We also recommended that diplomatic action be taken against Greenland for overfishing our Atlantic salmon. Nothing has been done.

Here is a clear case of the minister talking a good game about caring for fish, but there is a fish right in his backyard, the Atlantic salmon, of importance to thousands of anglers and businesses in his region, and nothing is being done to help that particular fish species.

However, over \$200,000 or \$300,000 is going to the fish cops. I would rather see direct programming that would help Atlantic salmon stocks, and other stocks across the country, to rebuild.

I am pleased that there is a provision in the proposed act to talk about rebuilding stocks. I like the habitat banking portion. Hopefully the government will be open to some amendments on that and open to some ideas on how it could be done, because a number of us have a few thoughts on that. Again, all that money is going to enforcement when there are groups, like the Miramichi Salmon Association, which I belong to, and the Atlantic Salmon Federation, that do things like create cold water refuges for Atlantic salmon so the fish can summer better and survive better than they would otherwise. We hope that projects like that could go on.

*Government Orders*

Bill C-68 is part of the Liberal plan to kill development. The Prime Minister's principal secretary, Mr. Gerald Butts, once said: "The real alternative is not an alternative route, it's an alternative economy. We don't think there ought to be a carbon-based energy industry by the middle of the century." I am sure the thousands and thousands of middle-class Canadians who work in the energy industry will be very disappointed to know that this is the thinking in the Prime Minister's Office. The ultimate agenda is to severely restrict Canada's energy industry.

I want to quote the Canadian Electricity Association. It is headed by the hon. Sergio Marchi, who said:

In practical terms, this means that virtually any action, without prior authorization, could be construed as being in contravention of this Act. Consequently, the reinstatement of these measures will result in greater uncertainties for existing and new facilities, and unduly delay and/or discourage investment in energy projects that directly support Canada's clean growth agenda and realize its climate change objectives.

Of course, the other shoe to drop is how investment is leaving Canada. Suncor CEO Steve Williams said, in a headline that reported what Suncor's activities will be, "Suncor to shun major new projects amid Canada's 'difficult' regulatory environment".

I had the honour of working in the oil sands in 2009-10. I lived in a camp for an oil sands project. There were people from all walks of life. People talk about the industry as if it were some kind of bad word. The industry is workers and people. There was a young dad saving for his child's education, a young couple saving for a down payment on a house, and a senior couple saving for a dignified retirement. These are the kinds of people who work in the energy industry. These are the kinds of people who will be hurt by this excessive regulatory process that is killing energy and natural resources jobs across the country. I am afraid the new Fisheries Act is just part of that, so I will be unable to support it.

•(1055)

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, this is an important discussion for the House to have. I look forward to hearing from many colleagues on this important debate and to working with colleagues in the Senate and our colleagues on the House of Commons standing committee.

It will not surprise members that I do not necessarily share the pessimistic view my colleague advanced on these improvements and the strengthening of the Fisheries Act. Farmers, small community work projects, and small municipalities across the country, many in constituencies like mine and those of colleagues in the House of Commons, have told us of the importance of being in compliance with the Fisheries Act.

Canadians want to know that the practices they are undertaking are not harming, altering, or damaging fish or fish habitat. However, there was a reasonable sense in the past that perhaps the burden had become such that people did not know if they were in compliance or what their obligations were. We think that one way to answer the very real concerns of people in the agricultural community, for example, is to have these codes of practice. If one followed a code of practice, it would be well understood that one was in compliance with the act.

I am wondering if my colleague would offer a view on whether he supports the strengthening of the owner-operator and fleet separation policies in Atlantic Canada and Quebec, which are important for the jobs he talked about earlier of middle-class Canadians.

•(1100)

**Mr. Robert Sopuck:** Madam Speaker, coming from the Prairies, I feel very inadequate discussing marine fisheries.

I would like to focus on the minister's comments about codes of practice. I like codes of practice a lot. As a regional fisheries biologist up at The Pas, I saw some horrific examples of culverts that were placed too high on logging roads. People just dropped culverts in.

I do not want the minister to misconstrue anything I have said as meaning that I do not care about fish habitat. I have been involved with monitoring fish habitat for a long time. To my point about culverts in fish-bearing streams, there could be a code of practice that the bottom of a culvert is below the stream bed, where the water velocities are good. I would welcome that approach of codes of practice and standards.

However, we do not need the fish cops coming around every second week asking what is going on, because the level of uncertainty that creates causes great difficulties.

I would suspect that the industry would welcome standards and codes of practice as well. I would be pleased to work with the minister and the department to help develop codes of practice for some aspects of fisheries management.

**Mr. Fin Donnelly (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the intervention by my colleague from Manitoba. We were on the fisheries and oceans standing committee for a number of years, until his recent departure.

As we know, the Fisheries Act does not address salmon aquaculture and the dual mandate it shares. I wonder if my colleague could comment on how, if the industry were to modernize and move to a new technology, such as closed containment, which is the leading technology in the world, RAS, that would affect the Prairies. For instance, could the Prairies be a player in that type of industry if it were to modernize?

**Mr. Robert Sopuck:** Madam Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's question. I very much appreciate working with him on areas of fish conservation. His knowledge is almost unsurpassed.

I have actually done a little informal study myself on the potential of closed containment aquaculture in the Prairies in Canada, and it is really quite significant. For example, Manitoba has groundwater resources that the rest of the world simply does not have. We have access to markets in the U.S. Midwest. I am not going to comment on the environmental conservation aspects of marine net-pen aquaculture. I just know that an expansion of closed containment aquaculture in inland areas could have real potential for rural economic development. That is something I will be following up on over the next little while.

*Government Orders*

**Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank my friend, the MP for Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa. There is perhaps nobody in this House who has his track record personally and in knowledge of conservation. I have learned a lot from the member.

He referenced the recreational fisheries community partnership program, which was an initiative of the Harper government that I saw the benefit of, in my riding of Durham, in the streams and in and around Lake Ontario. The changes the minister has introduced today, contrasted with the approach of the former Conservative government, show the philosophical differences: an Ottawa-knows-best, paternalistic, office-tower mentality from Ottawa; or partnering with conservation groups, recreational fisheries, and indigenous peoples on the ground that know their communities and their water sources, streams, and oceans better.

Could the member talk about the benefits of partnerships as opposed to an Ottawa-knows-best approach, which tends to be the Liberal way?

• (1105)

**Mr. Robert Sopuck:** Madam Speaker, I am a fly fisherman. We fly fishermen say that fly fishing it is not a matter of life and death; it is more important than that. As avid anglers, we have a passion for conservation. Few feelings are as good as looking at a degraded stream, or a river that is dirty, filthy, and full of debris, or a lakeshore where the trees have fallen in, or degrading fish habitat and rolling up our sleeves, getting in there, and fixing the problems. Humans are capable of some great things in conservation. Our angling groups are not only knowledgeable, they know fishery science well. They are keen, they are motivated, and they want to see the world a better place.

Our recreational fisheries conservation partnerships program provided some means to catalyze that kind of action by Canada's angling groups. Some two million square metres of spawning habitat and about 200 kilometres of river were improved. I go back to the project in the Miramichi where springs were dug out to cool the water down and improve summering habitat for Atlantic salmon.

I talked to the proponents of those projects. The deep satisfaction that one gets from helping nature out in a very gentle way cannot be overestimated. I know members of the DFO staff liked being part of this program. Instead of sending emails to each other, they were out there with client groups doing good and positive conservation work. That is the Conservative approach.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Speaker, I remember clearly the debates that we used to have here as Bill C-38, the omnibus budget bill of spring 2012, barrelled toward us.

It was interesting to hear the member reference Tom Siddon in his speech. I recall clearly when the former fisheries minister Tom Siddon, Progressive Conservative, joined with former fisheries minister John Fraser, also Conservative, as well as two former Liberal fisheries ministers, David Anderson and Herb Dhaliwal, and condemned what Harper was doing to the Fisheries Act. In fact, Tom Siddon was quoted in *The Globe* as saying, "They are totally watering down and emasculating the Fisheries Act...They are really taking the guts out of the Fisheries Act..."

It is the first chance I have to take the floor on this debate. I want to thank the Minister of Fisheries from the bottom of my heart for restoring lost protections, restoring habitat, and putting a focus back on fish and its habitat, as the Fisheries Act must do.

How did the hon. member for Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa end up so far away from the great Conservative fisheries ministers of the past?

**Mr. Robert Sopuck:** Madam Speaker, when I refer to the previous prime minister, I say prime minister Stephen Harper because I deeply respected him and his government. I would recommend that the member do so also.

I, as an elected official and a rural resident even before I became an elected official, saw the problems of the old Fisheries Act. Municipalities were forced into a compliance mode that cost them hundreds of thousands of dollars for very little benefit to fisheries.

The issues across the wide swath of Canada are very different than on the coasts. Habitat definition under the old act meant that all of Canada was considered fisheries habitat. I quoted from the farm community, the leader of Canada's largest farm organization.

The member for Saanich—Gulf Islands may want to put farmers in rural communities out of business, and the way she operates it looks like that is what she wants to do. However, members on this side of the House and this member of Parliament care deeply about the future and fate of rural communities. By the way, I might add that the conservation work that is done by farmers, ranchers, and hunters and trappers in my constituency and my communities is second to none. I would stack that up against any that she would ever do.

**Mr. Fin Donnelly (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise to speak in favour of Bill C-68, an act to amend the Fisheries Act and other Acts in consequence.

I would like to point out at the onset that we welcome the legislation to restore HADD, harmful alteration, disruption or destruction of fish habitat, to the act. We believe the Liberals should have done this immediately following the last federal election. There is no excuse for waiting.

Back in 2012, when the Conservative government gutted habitat protection from the act, 600 scientists and four former fisheries ministers, including two Conservatives, wrote to the government, stating that the changes in the act "would be a most unwise action, which would jeopardize many important fish stocks and the lakes, estuaries and rivers that support them." They were right.

Over the past six years since these changes, the number of charges relating to a violation of the new section 35 under the weakened Fisheries Act legislation was zero. That means since 2012, there have been no charges. This, despite the fact that according to documents obtained by the *Vancouver Sun* in 2016, there were almost 1,900 complaints.

*Government Orders*

The vague language in the Conservative bill made it impossible to prove that a project would kill fish. Once habitat protections were restored to the act, we believed a thorough review to improve and modernize the Fisheries Act would engage Canadians, would be based on science, indigenous, and community knowledge, and the precautionary principle would have been undertaken, immediately after the 2015 election. That would have been the responsible thing to do, but here we are today, two years later, and finally we have this legislation.

The Fisheries Act is the key federal law for fish habitat protection and one of the key laws for marine biodiversity, and is an essential part of Canada's environmental safety net.

When announcing this legislation, the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard said that he was open to amendments that would strengthen the bill. Therefore, we will be proposing amendments for consideration.

In Bill C-68, the definition of fish habitat is improved by referring to the water fish need for survival. However, the proposed amendments do not include explicit legal protection for environmental flows, the amount and type of water needed for fish and aquatic ecosystems to flourish.

What are environmental flows? The Brisbane Declaration provides the most widely accepted and applied definition. It says, "Environmental flows describe the quantity, timing, and quality of water flows required to sustain freshwater and estuarine ecosystems and the human livelihoods and well-being that depend on these ecosystems." Another document, which discussed the Brisbane Declaration, stated, "environmental flows are essential for providing both direct and indirect benefits on which current and future generations rely."

We heard from Linda Nowlan of West Coast Environmental Law about the importance of protecting environmental flows at fisheries committee. She testified:

...the act must protect key elements of fish habitat, including environmental flows. The Fisheries Act should provide a legally binding national flow standard to conserve the quantity, timing, and quality of water flows, also known as environmental flows.

CSAS scientists point to this issue as a deficiency in the current regime and say that a national standard is needed. The act should define conditions of flow alteration that constitute HADD based on science advice from the Canadian Science Advisory Secretariat and used by DFO. Our brief contains more information on that. These are key changes, and if enacted, they will demonstrate the government's commitment to modernize the act.

I certainly agree with her, and on this would encourage the government to review West Coast Environmental Law Association's brief, "Habitat 2.0: A New Approach to Canada's Fisheries Act", which includes an entire section on the importance of environmental flows.

One of the greatest disappointments of the legislation is that it would not remove the promotion of unsafe salmon farming practices and farmed salmon as a product from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans mandate, which in turn would lower impacts to wild salmon.

● (1110)

The government should be commended, however, for its commitment to the precautionary principle but it needs to show it with action.

The precautionary principle recognizes that in the absence of scientific certainty, conservation measures can and should be taken when there is a lack of knowledge of a risk of serious or irreversible harm to the environment and/or resources using the best available information. Under this principle, the trigger for government action to protect wild salmon is for science to demonstrate the existence of more than a minimal risk.

In my province of British Columbia, the evidence has been piling up. Graphic videos have surfaced of virus-laden bloody discharge from farmed salmon processors spewing directly into the ocean, where wild salmon migrate, blood which has been confirmed to be infected with the highly infectious virus piscine reovirus, or PRV.

CTV's *W5* covered first nations' occupation of open-net salmon farms on the west coast, as the minister knows. It showed footage that contained graphic images of deformed farmed salmon and spoke about the disastrous effects of spreading disease, which, on an industrial scale, has an impact on our wild salmon population.

The documentary relayed the struggle of environmental activists to remove open-net salmon farms from wild salmon migration routes, highlighted how the farms were spreading dangerous viruses like PRV to wild salmon, and how their expansion had correlated to the dramatic decline of B.C.'s wild salmon fishery. Further, the documentary showed how the salmon farm industry colluded with government to deny what DFO had already confirmed, and that is that PRV is present in farmed salmon and is spreading to wild salmon.

In British Columbia, Gary Marty, the head scientist-veterinarian in charge of testing for disease also co-authors industry-boosting papers with Marine Harvest, the largest player in the B.C. industry.

Clearly, the federal government is in conflict because the department's mandate contains a provision to promote the salmon aquaculture industry. This goes against the Cohen Commission recommendations, specifically recommendation 3, which says, "The Government of Canada should remove from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans' mandate the promotion of salmon farming as an industry and farmed salmon as a product."

*Government Orders*

In the *W5* documentary, the minister said that the government was committed to not expanding the industry until the science was settled. Even the department's own scientists have shown PRV and HSMI have entered the wild in the Pacific Ocean. How much more risk do we need to demonstrate before it takes action? Clearly, this industry presents more than a minimal risk. It is time to get these diseased-ridden farms off of the wild salmon migration routes.

Last week, I was copied on a letter to the Prime Minister from Chief Ernest Alfred of the 'Namgis First Nation. He wants the Prime Minister to know why they walked out of his town hall meeting in Nanaimo. It is an important message that everyone in government needs to hear. I would like to read it onto the record. It states:

Open letter to the Government of Canada

Dear Mr. [Prime Minister],

I've been asked to provide an explanation as to why our People walked out of the Town Hall in Nanaimo. Important statements needed to be made to your Government, and on behalf of our People, I'd like to strongly express our total frustration for not getting the chance to address our serious concerns.

Representatives of numerous First Nations can be clearly seen seated in front of the giant Canadian flag. I am dressed in a Peace Dance Headdress. One that we use to show our peaceful welcome, and resolve. I am also wearing a woven cedar bark tunic used in war. My peace headdress was quickly removed after we left the building. A symbolic act to show the total lack of respect being shown our Nations. In our territorial waters off the Broughton Archipelago, war has been declared against us, and the livelihoods of our coastal People.

● (1115)

168 days ago, we started Occupations on the fish farms in our territories. Our mission has been to peacefully record, report and protest the illegal practices in our waters. This mission is not a new one. Our People have been demanding the removal of these feedlots for over 30 years. Until now, we have never had an investigation into fish farm operations in this manner before. This self-regulated industry cannot be trusted with such important information. To be very frank, we have become more than frustrated and impatient. During the last 168 days, we've seen Fisheries Officers only twice. There is no problem with Piscine Reovirus, and that is because the Department of Fisheries and Oceans has been trying to hide it. [The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans] has teamed up with Marine Harvest and is fighting us in Court. It seems to me that the Government of Canada is attempting to reconcile with Norway but using our territory to do that. That is wrong! Our waters have never been surrendered, neither has our lands and our hereditary rights to oversee them.

The very status of fish farms in the Broughton Archipelago have come into serious question. A Norwegian Invasion has taken place in our waters and we have been forced to act to defend our investments in wild salmon. Eviction notices have been given, heavy RCMP involvement, arrests, B.C. Supreme Court proceedings, lost aquaculture industry status and reputation, Government reviews and investigations have had little or no influence on the reckless practices of the aquaculture industry, within our territories. In fact, the companies have restocked almost all the fish farms in our waters, against numerous warnings of serious consequences. We have had enough!

First Nations People, environmental groups, ecotourism organizations, and countless wild salmon economy contributors, from one end of the Province to the other, have shown us their full support and solidarity. Emails of support continue to pour in from all over the world. It seems as if British Columbia's fish farm industry has the world's attention. Meanwhile, I find it troubling, sad and embarrassing that we do not have the attention of the Federal Government of Canada. We are all saying the same thing.

Our wild salmon economy must be protected. The jobs that fish farms provide will still be there when the farms are moved to shore using closed containment technology. The economy that is so important to your government will return along the west coast. Fish farms do not create jobs - Fish farms have killed jobs along the coast!

The Federal Government must remove the open net fish farms in the Broughton Archipelago that have remained in the territories of 6 allied Nations without the consent or consultation for over 30 years. Immediate action is required if the Federal Government has any hopes of reconciliation in our territories.

With all due respect, stand with us!

Sincerely, Kwakwabalas

Chief Ernest Alfred

Swanson Island Occupation—'Namgis First Nation

Clearly, first nations have had enough. How can a government that purports a true nation-to-nation government relationship with first nations ignore these pleas for action? It is shameful. I implore the government to listen. No more studies, no more words, it is time for action. Please meet with them.

In 2017, the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans studied the Fisheries Act. The New Democratic Party of Canada submitted recommendations to be incorporated into the Fisheries Act in order to fully modernize it. We recommend that in order to advance the nation-to-nation relationship with first nations, a new modernized fisheries act should: one, recognize indigenous rights in the act; two, move beyond delegation to work with first nations as full partners in fisheries management; three, recognize first nations' right to commercial trade and barter opportunities; four, include guiding principles of reconciliation that allow for and promote consent-based shared decision-making processes, for example, co-management or co-governance with first nations, and that have the flexibility to reconcile pre-existing sovereignty and first nations jurisdictional authority; five, expand factors considered in decision-making to include principles of sustainability, including ecological integrity and cultural sustainability, indigenous law, protection of inherent aboriginal rights, and the principles found in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; and finally, ensure meaningful consultation, accommodation, and a consent-seeking process with first nations to build new regulations.

● (1120)

I hope those recommendations can be incorporated into Bill C-68 at the committee stage.

Another concern we have is that Bill C-68 gives the minister too much arbitrary power to authorize harmful development and industrial projects. I hope the government will consider amendments to update language in the bill to require decisions based on scientific evidence rather than the minister's opinion. Let us put science in and keep the politics out.

Martin Olszynski, an assistant professor in law at the University of Calgary, an expert in fishery law, agrees. He is quoted in *DeSmog Canada* as saying:

[T]here's an unfortunate use of "discretionary language, meaning that many components of the proposed legislation are basically up to the opinion of the minister —and requiring no specific evidence.

He went on to say:

For example, there's a section about implementing measures to manage the decline of fish stocks. The newly amended legislation includes the phrase "if the Minister is of the opinion that a fish stock that has declined to its limit reference point or that is below that point would be impacted." That's not satisfactory for some.

*Government Orders*

In the same article, Brett Favaro, research scientist at the Fisheries and Marine Institute of Memorial University said:

I was hoping for a line that was not “if the minister is of the opinion that a fish stock has declined”, but “if the fish stock has declined as determined by the best available evidence then there should be measures in place aimed at rebuilding the stock.”

I am hopeful that we will be able to clean up some of these language issues at committee.

Bill C-68 also enacts the NDP recommendation to the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans on rebuilding. We recommended that in order to prioritize the protection of fish and fish habitat, a new modernized Fisheries Act should mandate rebuilding fish stocks when they have fallen below healthy levels and mandate a report annually to Parliament on the status of Canada's fish stocks and the management decisions made for stocks in critical zones.

In October 2017, Oceana Canada released a comprehensive review of the state of Canada's fisheries and the first annual assessment of how the government is managing them. The results were alarming. They revealed that Canadian fisheries are in serious trouble with only one-third of stocks considered healthy and 13% of those in critical condition. Further, 36% could not be determined due to insufficient information.

Although the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada reported 19 Canadian marine stocks in critical condition, Oceana found 26 in its analysis using the same sources of information. At the time of the report, Dr. Robert Rangeley, director of science, Oceana Canada stated, “What's more concerning is that there are only three plans in place to rebuild these 26 dangerously depleted populations.”

It is shameful that Canada lags behind international standards of sustainable fisheries management. In countries where governments are legally obligated to rebuild, fish populations have bounced back. The numbers are impressive. Mandatory rebuilding in the United States has meant that in the last 20 years, 43 stocks have been rebuilt. Those stocks now generate on average 50% more revenue than when they were overfished.

This is the first time rebuilding of depleted fish stocks has been included in Canada's Fisheries Act; however, details on rebuilding will be in the regulations. This does concern me, but if those regulations are strong, with timelines and targets, and if they consider the impacts of climate change and species interactions, we will be on a path to success.

• (1125)

I will finish with a quote by Susanna Fuller from the Ecology Action Centre, who agrees. She stated:

We will continue to advocate that the regulations require timelines and targets as well as an ecosystem approach to rebuilding, taking into account impacts of climate change and species interactions.

I am—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I did allow for a little more time to finish the quote, and I am sure the member will be able to add to it in the question and comment period.

Questions and comments, the hon. Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

• (1130)

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Port Moody—Coquitlam for his comments and for the New Democratic Party's support of this legislation.

I take the member's comments that he and his party do not think the bill is perfect. We do not pretend that it is; however, we think it is a significant improvement, and we would be happy to work with him and other colleagues in the House of Commons in the committee process, obviously, on ways to strengthen it.

I took note of the member's comments with respect to the issue of environmental flow. He is right that the West Coast Environmental Law group has done terrific work on this. It inspired some of our thinking on this important issue. I would work happily with him and other colleagues on that important issue and on ways to strengthen it.

I take his comments with respect to regulations as well. It is something that has to be done in a rigorous and transparent way. We would again welcome suggestions to make sure that we get that part right.

My colleague referred to this in a question following my remarks. He is from the province of British Columbia, and I think he may have an interesting insight into how policies like owner-operator and fleet separation could in fact improve the economic security of the harvesters on the west coast. I wonder if he has suggestions on how we could take some of the benefit of these policies and see an improvement in the economic circumstances of people he and my colleagues would represent on the west coast.

**Mr. Fin Donnelly:** Madam Speaker, I know it is a very difficult challenge to try to bring what is now entrenched in Atlantic Canada and Quebec over to the west coast, which has a very different regime that has been developed over the years. However, I think it is done with consultation, working with the industry, working with a commitment to see things differently, and looking at how we benefit coastal communities that are impacted by modernization and changes.

We have dramatically seen a change over the years of losing our fish processors, and so we have to find a better way to include and ensure that our coastal communities benefit. We have to look at adjacency policies and how we incorporate what has worked in Atlantic Canada and Quebec into the west coast approach, which is definitely far advanced in terms of ITQs. We also need to look at what is best and how we can incorporate best practices, obviously, with the fish unions, those who are involved in processing and with fishing, and the commercial fishing sector, and listen to how that can change.

I would implore the minister to meet with Chief Ernest Alfred, and take the content of his letter to heart.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his very important speech and his comments to the government which really does not listen.

I wonder if the member could comment on a statement by the Hon. Sergio Marchi from the Canadian Electricity Association. He is a previous Liberal cabinet minister. He said that Bill C-68 “represents one step forward but two steps back”. He went on to say:

In practical terms, this means that virtually any action, without prior authorization, could be construed as being in contravention of this Act...will result in greater uncertainties for existing and new facilities, and unduly delay and/or discourage investment in energy projects that directly support Canada’s clean growth agenda and realize its climate change objectives.

Here we have a government that is not listening to the conservation side of things, first nations, and is not listening to the business side of things.

I wonder if the member could comment on how much work has to be done in committee to get the bill right.

**Mr. Fin Donnelly:** Madam Speaker, in this instance on the Fisheries Act, I do believe that the government did listen. It heard very clearly from Canadians in the 2015 election that they wanted these environmental protections, like the Fisheries Act, restored. I believe the government did listen.

Through the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans we provided input. In fact, the NDP provided a dissenting report. We felt that some of our recommendations did not make it into the committee's report, but many of those recommendations we found were actually in the Fisheries Act. Therefore, we do feel that the government listened to the NDP on this. We commend the government for making those changes. Our concern was that it was not implemented quickly enough, which was a promise made in the last election.

It is clear that the Fisheries Act was gutted in 2012, and that is what Canadians spoke out on. They did not want to see that happen. The Conservative government went too far in its amendments to the Fisheries Act. Scientists and many others, including former Conservative fisheries ministers, spoke out against those changes.

• (1135)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his very informative speech. It did however worry me a bit, because he mentioned that the salmon farming industry does not care that the salmon carry viruses and continue to infect other wild salmon. The industry seems to be self-regulating and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans is aware of what is happening, but the government is not taking any real action.

What impact might this have on marine biodiversity, on fisheries in general, and on human health? Why has there been no intervention, as recommended in the Cohen report?

I am deeply concerned about this, and there seems to be no action from the federal government. Protecting marine biodiversity should be part of its mandate. I think that the bill is a step in that direction. I would like the hon. member to elaborate on the ins and outs.

[*English*]

**Mr. Fin Donnelly:** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Quebec, who is a very diligent and passionate member of Parliament, and very concerned about the environment, including the impact on marine ecosystems like our fisheries.

Obviously, salmon aquaculture on the west coast is a major concern. It was a big part of my presentation to the House.

My colleague raised an excellent point about the department knowing about the impact of viruses and disease in our waters. We farm Atlantic salmon on the west coast in open net pens. Feces and materials associated with farms go directly into the ocean. As farmers know, disease is directly related to waste management, and how we deal with that waste and how we contain disease are critical. It is even more difficult to deal with when it goes directly into the ocean.

The department has been studying this problem. It knows that viruses and the disease exist, and it knows their impact on our fisheries. Once that waste is let out into the open ocean, it is difficult to get that genie back into the bottle.

We need to prevent that. The Fisheries Act needs to prevent pollution and disease from entering wild fishery habitat.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam, who has been a tireless champion in fighting toxic fish factories, which is what they really are. They are not fish farms. There is nothing friendly or nice associated with them, as the word farm would imply. These facilities are found all along our coastline, and they are destroying our wild salmon, as my colleague has accurately described.

There is another aspect involved here. I want to see officials in the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the minister turn their attention to tight regulation and ending the conflict of interest here.

I am also wondering if the hon. member has any views on the need to regulate seismic testing. Canada does not regulate seismic testing, and offshore boards have approved seismic testing in the habitat of endangered whales.

**Mr. Fin Donnelly:** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the intervention by my colleague in the Green Party about not only salmon aquaculture but also our southern resident killer whales.

It is critically important that we study not only seismic activity, but ship noise and other things that impact salmon on the west coast. More science is needed so that we can protect these whales and do it right. We also have to protect their food, which is the chinook salmon that they feed on.

We have to look at more science. We have to look at the impact of fish farms on chinook and wild sockeye salmon. We also definitely need to investigate how we can avoid noise that impacts whales.



*Government Orders*

•(1140)

**Mr. Sean Fraser (Central Nova, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon.

I am very proud to take my spot today in the House of Commons to bring the voice of my constituents to Ottawa and speak to the proposed amendments to the Fisheries Act. There are several substantive reforms, and I would like to take the opportunity to speak about many of them. However, realistically in the time allotted, I would like to spend my time on one major issue, and that is the protection of the independent inshore fishery that is contained in the proposed revisions to the act. In particular, I would like to share some of my thoughts on the economic security that this measure would provide to rural communities like the ones I grew up in.

Madam Speaker, I hope you will afford me a bit of latitude to provide context that I believe is very necessary to explain the significance of the bill to my constituents at home in Central Nova.

I am from a community called Merigomish. It is a small community on the Northumberland Strait in Nova Scotia. I grew up in a family with six kids. I have five sisters. My parents were teachers. My parents stressed that we should get an education so we could bolster our careers in the future. I am happy that my sisters and I all took advantage of their advice and made that investment. That investment in time and resources is something I was very pleased and prepared to make. What I do not think I was adequately prepared for, and I would suggest the same would be true of my family members, was that on the back end of our education, when we were looking to join the workforce, we were not necessarily prepared to leave the place where we were raised to make a living.

If I rewind the clock to a year before I made the decision to run for office at what my family was doing, I had two sisters, both professionals in the medical industry, who moved to Ontario to find work. I became a lawyer and found a job that I absolutely loved in Calgary, Alberta. I have two younger sisters who both became teachers, one of whom moved from Nova Scotia to New Brunswick to find a job at a private school. The other was raising her daughter full time while her husband flew in and out of the Middle East so he could make a living for their household. My youngest sister was finishing up her studies at StFX and has since moved to the city of Halifax to find a job with a great accounting firm there.

If someone had asked us 10 years before what we wanted to do with our lives, I do not know that we would have had the answer, but I expect we would have said we wanted to be around home. The reality in many small towns and communities is that is not an option. I am thankful for the mobility we have as young people and professionals in Canada, but the opportunity to make a living in the community where we were raised is not a reality for far too many people.

However, there is a glowing example of an industry that allows people from the community where I was raised to stay in the community where they grew up and make a good living there. That is the fishery. If I look at my community now and go down to the wharf in Lismore, I can find Kelly, a classmate of mine from grade 2, who is still working in the fishery today. A former baseball

teammate, Ryan, is a fisherman on the Northumberland Strait as well.

I was engaged in a back and forth with a constituent recently, whose husband is the owner and operator of a lobster fishing vessel. What she told me demonstrates the importance of the fishery to local communities. His annual expenditures, before he catches a single fish, were \$82,000, and 90% of the expenses he incurred were spent in Pictou County alone, which is a small part of Nova Scotia. The remaining 10% were incurred with other businesses within the province. If fishermen are guilty of anything, it is of spending money in their own communities and supporting their neighbours, so they can stay in their communities as well.

The economic benefits of the fishery are perhaps obvious but worth stating. We now export over 100 different species in seafood alone. Last year, we had a record-setting \$6.6 billion in seafood exports. We are pursuing trade deals with Europe, for example, through CETA, which has knocked down tariffs for the seafood sector, particularly shellfish, which will help drive the price up for seafood.

•(1145)

There are 72,000 Canadians who make a living in the fisheries or fishing-related activities. However, it is one thing to share these stats and talk in terms of contribution to GDP and billions of dollars, but it is more difficult to ensure that the benefits of this growth accrue, not only to the wealthiest Canadians who may have some sort of a corporate interest in the fishery, but to people who are doing work on the ground or, in this case, in our waters. This is why this bill before the House of Commons is so important. It is going to help bolster the economic security not just of fishermen but of rural communities, and allow them to stay alive.

If I look at measures contained in the bill that are going to help protect the economic security of rural communities, I have a lot of hope. My hope comes not just from the words in the legislation, but from my conversations with the minister. This is a project that I have been advocating for and working on for two years. This is a project that I have been seeking advice on from local fishermen, to ensure that their voices are not just represented in the House of Commons but embedded in the legislation we are looking at today.

Upon the passage of this bill, the minister would have the authority to consider economic, social, and cultural factors when making decisions about licensing. The minister would specifically have the authority to consider the need to protect and preserve an independent inshore fishery.

It is incredibly important for the communities I represent that the licence-holders retain the benefit of their licence. It is incredibly important that the licence-holders are the ones who are actually fishing.

*Government Orders*

The bill also contains measures that prohibit certain kinds of corporations from owning a fishing licence. This is not some sort of anti-corporate tirade; there is a very real danger posed to rural communities by some of the commercial relationships that exist in the fishery today. There are large corporations who have the ability to snap up a number of different licences, so to speak. What they might try to do is buy out 50 fishermen. The fishermen can still fish, but the benefits of their licence are going to come to those who have a large facility, where they can add value to the product. That can be a good thing, but over time there could be practical implications for the captain of a fishing vessel who has been supporting his family, and perhaps his parents before him were supporting their family. That captain who is making a good living today could become a minimum wage employee in the future. That does not sit well with me.

It is one thing to take my word for it, but in speaking with my constituents, they had something to say. I would like to share a statement from the Northumberland Fishermen's Association and someone I have incredible respect for, Ronnie Heighton, who is a strong advocate not just for the fishery but for the rural economies more generally. This letter says, "It is vital to the core industry that individual fishermen be required to fish their licence personally. The fleet separation policy is crucial to ensure that those that generate an income from fishing are not a processor but instead an individual licence-holder. The importance of supporting middle-class jobs by keeping these benefits from individual fishing within our communities is essential to the local economy."

I thank Ronnie for sharing this information with me, for the education, and for being someone I can lean on when I need advice on how to best represent the interests of fishing communities here in the House of Commons.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the minister, who has been a fabulous partner to work with on this file. His father, perhaps decades before, started a project, and his son, the hon. minister, is now finishing the job.

I am proud to see this legislation go forward, and I am proud to be a representative for my communities. I campaigned in 2015 to be a voice for my constituents in Ottawa and not the other way around. Seeing the words that my constituents have spoken to me embedded into legislation, knowing it is going to enhance the economic security of rural communities and rural coastal communities throughout Atlantic Canada, makes me extraordinarily proud to stand in this House today.

**Mr. Fin Donnelly (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP):** Madam Speaker, the member spoke about the economic impact to the fishery. He also spoke about the importance of protecting a way of life that he described. As members know, Canada's fisheries industry employs more than 72,000 Canadians and exports more than \$6-billion worth of seafood a year, which the member touched on. One critical thing that this act does is to rebuild fish stocks. It sets in motion the importance of ensuring that rebuilding fish stocks is included in the Fisheries Act.

We know what is critical is that there be strong regulations, with timelines and targets, that ensure these rebuilding plans will be taken seriously by the department. Will my colleague commit to ensuring

that these strong regulations will follow, with timelines and targets, with these rebuilding plans?

• (1150)

**Mr. Sean Fraser:** Madam Speaker, before addressing this question, I would like to say that there is important work already happening under the government to restore fish stocks. I know of projects in my own riding to rebuild salmon populations in the West River in Sheet Harbour and the St. Mary's River in Sherbrooke.

Of course it is extraordinarily important that Canadians have faith that when we talk about rebuilding fish stocks, it is not simply an opportunity to have niceties. We have to have a process in place that they are going to have faith in. We have to have a rigorous and very transparent consultation when we are developing regulations to demonstrate that, on a timeline, we are going to be able to provide the work that we need to do to ensure that the fish are going to be there, so that the rural communities that I want to defend today have an opportunity to fish, not just today but for generations to come.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am actually fairly encouraged that we have legislation before us that is really going to have an impact on fish habitat going forward.

I know the Atlantic caucus and the B.C. caucus are fairly excited about the fact that we do have legislation, legislation that we have been waiting for. I wonder if my colleague could share his thoughts on the importance of bringing forward this legislation today. We know there has been a great deal of discussion amongst caucus members who want to see action on this front. We have a minister responsible who has really led the charge in ensuring that we are in fact protecting fish habitat, looking at ways we can expand protection and the quality and quantity of fish going forward.

**Mr. Sean Fraser:** Madam Speaker, I will take that a step further and say that the importance of the legislation is not just something that the caucuses care deeply about, but in fact something the people we represent care deeply about.

The movement towards this legislation has been an incredible exercise in democracy. What I have seen in our Atlantic caucus is people speaking passionately about conversations they have actually had with constituents, who said, on December 5, 2012, that they were disheartened to see that all the protections afforded for Canadian rivers, lakes, and waterways had been reduced to a limited number. I believe the number was 159 that were on the schedule to be protected.

When I see the measures restoring lost protections that were erased in a 2012 omnibus budget bill, I know our Atlantic caucus colleagues are thrilled because they have been listened to, but more importantly because we are able to stand here, take our place, and bring the voices of our constituents to the House of Commons.

[Translation]

**Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP):** Madam Speaker, does my colleague think that the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans should not have too much discretionary power and should instead make decisions based on facts and science?

*Government Orders*

In the previous Parliament, we had problems when the government muzzled scientists. Now, this government is saying that it is important to make science-based decisions, but there is nothing in the wording of the bill to say that the decisions must be based on science. Rather, the bill says that the minister may make decisions based on his own opinion. I think this should be fixed.

What does my colleague think?

[*English*]

**Mr. Sean Fraser:** Madam Speaker, this is extraordinarily important. The measures that the minister takes should be based on facts, science, and evidence in all cases.

I am of the view that discretion in certain aspects of decision-making can be a positive thing, so long as the public has faith that the decisions being made when that discretion is exercised are done so in a very public and transparent way. It cannot be done to cater to some sort of private interest. It has to be done in the public interest.

Of course when science is available, we should use it for the decision-making process, but when there is a unique, particularly social or economic concern, discretion is not always a bad thing.

• (1155)

**Mr. Jati Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am proud to support the proposed changes to the Fisheries Act, which would restore lost protections and modernize safeguards to protect fish and fish habitat. The proposed amendments are the result of extensive consultations over the past two years. Canadians have spoken, this government has listened, and now we are acting.

I would like to review the elements of the proposed act that address monitoring and enforcement, two areas that were seriously affected after the previous changes in 2012 and 2013. I will begin with the area of monitoring.

Throughout consultations for the proposed amendments, indigenous groups and stakeholders expressed interest in better monitoring on several levels. For example, they want to see increased reporting and transparency regarding the habitat protection provisions of the act that are being reintroduced. I am pleased to say that the government has responded to this call for action.

In line with our commitment to transparency, the act would allow the development of an online registry. This would provide information on permit and authorization decisions, as well as codes of practice and standards. Significantly, the registry would also improve the department's ability to monitor compliance with the act. Indigenous peoples and stakeholders also want to see clear standards for how proponents monitor the impacts of a project on fish and fish habitat. The proposed amendments would address these concerns by making monitoring information more accessible via the public registry.

Let me turn now to the question of improved enforcement. As we know, fishery officers are responsible for ensuring compliance with all aspects of the Fisheries Act, including provisions to protect fish and their habitats. The Fisheries Act, in 2012, reduced habitat protections, and it is no surprise that habitat-related enforcement dropped by 80% between 2004 and 2016. The proposed Fisheries

Act before the House today would go beyond restoring lost protections. It would also strengthen and modernize the enforcement powers of fishery officers. I would like to highlight the specific changes.

Throughout consultations and public engagement sessions for this bill, Canadians have been very clear that they want more fishery officers on patrol and more offenders caught and held accountable. I am pleased to say that amendments are proposed to clarify, strengthen, and modernize enforcement of the act. For example, fishery officers would be granted three new powers.

First, they could require that any vessel or vehicle be stopped and moved to a place that is suitable for inspection. This would enable an officer to order a vessel back to port or order a vehicle to a safe inspection site. Second, fishery officers could exercise their powers in relation to any Canadian fishing vessels in the waters and territories of other countries, provided the countries agree. Third, fishery officers would not be liable for contraventions of the act if done in the performance of their duties, and this exemption from liability would also apply to any person accompanying them.

• (1200)

Other amendments under the new act would modernize the powers of courts with four new elements. First, certificates signed by an analyst could be used in court as evidence that the substance, product, or fish has been analyzed or tested by an analyst; as evidence of the results of those tests; and as evidence of the accuracy of instruments used by fishery officers. Second, courts could authorize the forfeiture of illegal fishing gear found in Canadian fisheries waters. Third, courts could authorize further extension of seizures beyond the initial 90-day period, and fourth, courts could authorize forfeiture of fish or other things that would be illegal to possess, even if no charges were laid.

Another enforcement-related amendment would provide authority for the minister to suspend or cancel a licence where a licence holder is in default of payment of a fine related to a fisheries violation.

Not all offenders should end up in the courts, which can be costly for all parties and time-consuming. Amendments would enable the use of alternative measures agreements. These agreements focus on problem solving and addressing the root cause of the contravention. They are a cost-effective alternative to the criminal justice system and have been shown to reduce relapse. The proposed amendments would extend the use of alternative measures for some offences related to fish and fish habitat when the offender has recognized his or her responsibility.

*Government Orders*

To sum up, the proposed Fisheries Act would introduce measures to strengthen monitoring and to modernize safeguards for fish and fish habitats. The department has also identified the need for more strategic planning of monitoring activities. With respect to enforcement, the amendments would strengthen and modernize the enforcement powers of fishery officers. It would give the courts new powers, while expanding the use of alternative measures.

I am proud to get behind this bill. These measures would restore lost protections and modernize our approach to safeguarding our fisheries. At the same time, they would go a long way to restoring public faith in the department's conservation and restoration efforts.

I call on all hon. members to support the proposed amendments and give it speedy passage through the House.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, according to the Cohen Commission's third recommendation, Fisheries and Oceans Canada is violating its mandate and should stop promoting salmon farming as an industry, since viruses are contaminating the fish, which then contaminate wild salmon, which then contaminate the entire food chain and destroy marine biodiversity.

Does my colleague agree that promoting this industry should not be part of Fisheries and Oceans Canada's mandate, since the industry contaminates our fish stocks?

[*English*]

**Mr. Jati Sidhu:** Mr. Speaker, one thing we need to understand is that we have consulted Canadians on all aspects of change. There are 2,063 Canadians who registered online, and almost 5,500 who completed an e-questionnaire. Therefore, I am very confident that the changes with respect to the concern the member brought up have been taken into consideration.

• (1205)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, at the heart of this, the government is attempting to repair the damaged legislation that was brought forward by the previous government. There is a real strong sense of our environmental responsibilities, in particular as it relates to our fisheries and oceans in this matter.

Could the member expand on where we were with the previous government and what it did in 2012 compared to where we are now, and exactly what that will do to further strengthen our commitment to the environment?

**Mr. Jati Sidhu:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for giving me the opportunity to expand on this.

Our government promised to not just return to the previous version of the Fisheries Act but to make the law even better than before. Our government is delivering on its important promise made to Canadians.

We are introducing the amendment to the Fisheries Act, which when passed, will restore and protect our fish and fish habitat. This was lost under the previous Conservative government. The proposed changes to the Fisheries Act will contribute to the advancing of reconciliation with first nations, Métis, and Inuit people, and a

renewed nation-to-nation relationship, which is a priority for our government. These amendments would make it requirement to consider and protect the indigenous traditional knowledge when making certain decisions under the Fisheries Act.

**Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman.

First, I would like to highlight a comment made by my colleague from the Lower Mainland. He said that they wanted to make the act even better than it was before. I agree with him. It was pretty good. Back in 2012, the changes we made under our previous government were substantive.

Being the parliamentary outdoor caucus co-chair, we deal a lot with fishing, specifically recreational fishing. If people were lucky enough to get out last weekend to do some ice fishing, good for them. I did not have time. However, a lot of the time we have as families together, we do exactly that.

However, it always seems a little disingenuous of the Liberals across the way when they cannot just say that they are doing something good for fisheries or they are doing something positive in Bill C-68 without giving us a shot. I would like to argue about that and defend our record.

We started a very substantive program, the recreational fisheries conservation partnerships program. We provided millions of dollars to basically local organizations to help people who were interested in seeing their own rivers and tributaries have a sustainable fishery for recreational fishers.

An article from 2015, which references the OFAH, a non-partisan group, states:

...the largest the largest non-profit charitable fish and wildlife conservation organization in Ontario, applauds the federal government's decision to substantially increase the funding to the highly successful Recreational Fisheries Conservation Partnership Program by providing an additional \$15 million over two years.

When it mentions the federal government, it is referring to the Conservative government. This is just one announcement of many. The article goes on to say, "Ours was one of 96 projects from across Canada funded in the first year of the program." We are talking about millions of dollars.

Some people think that just the odd person goes out and fishes on a weekend, but recreational fishing generates over \$8 billion in annual economic activity. Frankly, we like the heritage part of it. Personally, I like going out to fish. However, the economic activity is something to support, and that is what we did in the previous government.

For the Liberals to say that Bill C-68 is a great saviour of recreational fishing in Canada is a stretch. A lot was done before. Can a lot be done? Absolutely. We are all concerned about the numbers of fish we see in certain tributaries off the west coast and east coast, and we want to do all we can. The Conservatives and Liberals can agree upon that. To say that the previous government did nothing is not true.

I want to speak a little about Bill C-68 and what it seeks to do. This is where the previous government had it right.

*Government Orders*

The Liberals always seem to want to increase bureaucracy. They are talking about funding different groups to study what is normally done by volunteers right now. A group in Valemount does a great job of establishing salmon and fish habitat in the rivers and doing what it can to build fish ladders, etc. A lot of it is done by volunteers. It is done by local people who are interested in fishing or who just want to see a healthy fish habitat in their local community of Valemount.

However, the Liberal government is now seeking to dump a bunch of money into funding different target and study groups, spending money on what is already being done by volunteers today. Again, I would question its logic of funding things that work quite well on their own right now, being driven by volunteers. Volunteers are a good thing. They are there because they are interested and want to make our rivers and streams a better place for fish. Again, why are the Liberals throwing more money at a situation, which does not always make it better?

● (1210)

We see a number of challenges with returning stocks, depending on the rivers. We see efforts needing to be made. With Bill C-68, the Liberal government is maybe trying to do something that is better, but building a bigger bureaucracy will not help one fish in one river, especially in my home province of British Columbia.

We support a strong conservation effort generally. I know the member who will speak after me is an avid fisherman. Most of our speakers grab a rod and reel, so we really do care about preserving the numbers, especially the returning fish. We absolutely support any efforts that would substantively increase the numbers returning and substantially help recreational fishers access particular lands.

One item of concern, which is not really related to Bill C-68 but does relate to recreational fishing in Canada, is marine protection areas that the current government is seeking to challenge for recreational fishers in the province of B.C.

The Liberals say that they are for fisheries, et cetera, but fisheries are meant to be used by the people. Any kind of restriction of that fishery is a concern for Conservative members on this side of the House. We are definitely concerned for the long-term future of recreational fishing, the history that it brings, and all the great experience families have. We fished a couple of years ago with my kids and they all caught a fish. It was a great experience. It was one of those memorable moments of our summer of 2016.

I wish the government would spend money where money is well-received, which is literally by the fish in streams. Back in the mid-1990s, I had the pleasure to work as a carpenter on a fish ladder in a fish creek area to the north of where I live. I saw the effort that went into that by people who cared about the stream and having a sustainable fishery. A lot of that effort was done by people who were volunteering and doing it out of the goodness of their hearts, not just for a paycheck.

The government should look at what works in the current system with conservation groups in British Columbia, my home province, in Atlantic Canada, and across the Prairies. In whatever province, there are people who like to fish. I would look at what is already working. The government should do more of that as opposed to trying to change the whole regime. I do not think that is a great way to spend

money and it is not a great way to have a sustained fishery in our country.

The goal for everybody in here is to try to achieve a sustainable fishery so our kids, our grandkids, and our great-grandkids can fish well into the future. I know that is the goal of our members and I know it is the goal of some across the way. Again, we want to ensure that when the government spends taxpayer dollars, it spends them wisely, not just throwing dollars at a problem expecting them to stick, and not fix it.

● (1215)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's comment with respect to fishing with his family and children. My son and our next door neighbour pick up their fishing rods, walk down the street to the lake, and fish in the summertime as well. This legislation is exactly about that. It is about protecting the ability to do that into future. Sometimes we need regulation around different activities so we can ensure that future generations, our children, grandchildren, and their children, can continue this activity that so many of us have come to love.

Could the member comment on whether some legislation and regulations are necessary to ensure we have the ability to continue to do this into the future?

**Mr. Bob Zimmer:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the fact that the member's kids fish. That is a great example of why we want to keep fishing a viable thing in Canada and ensure we can have it for our future generations.

There is a key part to this conversation on Bill C-68 and that this great legislation will be a fix-all of all the problems. I have been reading multiple articles, but one article said that it was not a matter of legislation; it was a matter of implementation. If we need to fix our implementation to ensure that better results will ensue, we need to look a bit closer at what that would look like, rather than throw money at a completely different group, do something completely different, expecting to have a great result. Implementation is the issue here and we need to get to the bottom of how to implement a good process in Canada.

**Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I certainly appreciate the member's contribution to this debate, and also his work as the B.C. caucus chair.

The member raised a very good point that regulations are important but measures have to be there that send a signal to the wider audience, particularly in British Columbia, that they are important and that the government is thinking of them.

The government gave \$400 million, in last year's budget, to the east coast for innovation in aquaculture and for innovations in fishing off the shore of the east coast. In British Columbia, what did it do? It tried to cancel a popular salmon process fund to restock our rivers and streams with salmon.

*Government Orders*

First, does the member believe that the government is treating British Columbia, on the issues of fisheries, fairly? Second, does he think this legislation does anything to change the image that I have in my mind?

● (1220)

**Mr. Bob Zimmer:** Mr. Speaker, again, the previous government, which the member was a part of, as was I, as members of the British Columbia caucus, saw great rollouts in the salmon foundation and other really great initiatives.

Then we see where politics enters the fray. When we have something that is understood to work, where we have volunteers on the ground making this thing work in British Columbia, Bill C-68 and the rationale behind Bill C-68 should be to fund it some more, because it is going to work so let us keep it going. We have seen the opposite happen with the Liberal government retracting funding for things that do work. It is a strange thing that is hard for British Columbians in general to understand.

Does the current government understand what recreational fishing is, and not just recreational fishing but preserving fish, and not so that nobody can ever fish again? Again, we are getting concerned with marine protected areas that actually protect areas from people fishing. That is not what our goal should be. Our goal should be to protect the fish so we can go fishing, not the opposite.

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to rise on Bill C-68 today to talk about the changes to the Fisheries Act.

People are probably wondering why a prairie boy from Manitoba is getting up to talk about fisheries. I want to remind everyone here that I am the proud representative of Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, which is home to Lake Winnipeg, Lake Manitoba, the Winnipeg River, Lake St. Martin, and the communities around them.

I represent over 1,000 commercial fishers, fishing families that make their living off that freshwater fishery. Lake Winnipeg is a three-season fishery. Fishers are on the ice in the winter, spring, and fall. Those families depend on the fishery. There are 23 small craft harbours on Lake Winnipeg alone. This is a great natural resource that deserves protection.

That is why Conservatives, I in particular, support protecting fish habitat and we support protecting the commercial fishery and the recreational fishery, which are also important to my riding. People come from all over the world to enjoy catching trophy walleye and northern pike. Some of the best channel catfishing in the world takes place in the north Red River in my riding. We are quite proud of the area. It is a fishery that we want to protect.

I have grave concerns with what the Liberal government is proposing. The Liberals have gone back to the future, to the old days when it was going to use a stick to hammer users of the land, hammer communities, to hammer down and whack-a-mole, so to say, any farmer, any municipality that was trying to do any improvement or developments.

The Liberals are also going to penalize clean energy like hydroelectric power. In my almost 15 years as a parliamentarian we have been dealing with the impact on protected fish habitat of

doing hydroelectric generation in the development of those dams and the impact of federal regulations on them.

It is a stick here rather than a carrot. When the Conservatives were in government, we were proud to work with stakeholders, recreational fishers and commercial fishers. We were proud to work alongside municipalities to adopt best practices and to provide the enhancement dollars needed to protect fish habitat. We saw the greatest benefits using a carrot rather than a stick to reward good behaviour, to enhance fishery protection, and to protect natural ecosystems. That generated results.

The Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard announced \$284 million for enforcement, for putting more fisheries and oceans inspectors out across the Prairies to tell municipalities they cannot do this, to stop farmers from draining their flooded fields, and to try to protect some fish habitat in the bottom of a ditch.

That did not work back in the nineties. It did not work in the early 2000s, and that is why the Conservative government put those enforcement officers where they were needed the most, where we saw overfishing, where we saw destruction of habitat, especially in British Columbia, where they enforced the legislation the way it should have been enforced, not by harassing municipalities, farmers, and other resource users.

We do not need more bureaucratic red tape. What we need is a government that understands the needs of all stakeholders and that wants to work together collaboratively to provide the best habitat and the best environment to protect our fishery.

The Liberals may have introduced more dollars for bureaucratic red tape but they cut spending from existing habitat protection programs. The member for Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa and others in our caucus worked long and hard to bring about the recreational fish habitat protection program, a program that provided dollars to little wildlife organizations to protect habitat, mainly for angling, and a lot of it happened in our little lakes and estuaries along the bigger waterways. That program benefited both the commercial fishery and the aboriginal fishery. They were able to capitalize on the increased fish stocks and the habitat protection that happened, the natural groins going into our lakes, rivers, and oceans that allow that nutrient load to be soaked up through the marshlands and the swamp.

● (1225)

The Liberal government killed the wetland conservation program, which was really important, not just from the standpoint of fish habitat protection and protecting the habitat for upland game birds and wetland game birds like geese, ducks, and prairie chickens, but it also provided dollars to encourage land-use owners to keep those wetlands, because they are not just the kidneys but the main reciprocals for aquifers across this country, to feed the groundwater and build it up. It is shameful that the government is virtue signalling, telling people it is going to do more to protect fish habitat, when, in actuality, it has killed programs, reduced the dollars available to enhance and protect fish habitat, and will be spending more taxpayers' dollars on more red tape and bureaucracy.

*Government Orders*

There would be regulations, but we do not know what those regulations are going to look like yet. We have a case where the government is going to place more rules and regulations on municipalities, rural communities, first nations, and resource users, including clean energy producers like hydroelectric power, and in Manitoba, Manitoba Hydro, rather than adopt best practices. That is what Conservatives encouraged when we were in government. If municipalities were going to have to clean ditches, they would be told this is the time of year to do it and this is how to do it. They did not have to file a whole bunch of paperwork and hire engineers or environmental consultants to do these environmental assessments to get through the DFO checklist.

We also know that there are going to be more costs on municipalities. Every project they have to do would require them to do duplicative work and provide background documentation to the federal and provincial governments. There is no clarity in the bill as to how to get rid of the redundancy and all of the costs that are going to be borne by the municipalities, cash-strapped municipalities trying to serve their ratepayers.

I am an agriculture producer and my son-in-law is a grain farmer and one of the greatest things we deal with in my riding of Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman is flooding, excess precipitation, whether it is from snow runoff, excessive rain, or downstream flooding coming down the Red and Assiniboine Rivers from the United States and western Canada. We are at the bottom of the Lake Winnipeg basin, so we have to deal with this excess moisture. Farmers have to have the ability to drain their lands, do flood mitigation, and stop the harm and damage that happens.

We lived through this in the 1990s under the Chrétien government. When farmers tried to dig drains to draw the excess moisture away from their fields, which was drowning their crops and livelihoods and that could possibly bankrupt them, DFO was there to hammer them over the head with a big stick telling them they could not do it. They were fined and penalized and their projects were stopped. We have to adopt best practices to ensure that people can live on the land. I am scared that this is just another Liberal policy that is anti-farmer and anti-rural municipalities.

Finally, fishers have not asked for these changes. We already know that under the old system, we saw no results, the system the Liberals had back in the 1990s and early 2000s. We are going back to the future, where this is not resolved. My friend just said that there are no metrics on how to manage the actual result. If there are no results, then how would this benefit commercial fishers? How would this benefit aboriginal fishers and commercial fishers who enjoy angling and our waterways?

I ask the government to look at this in detail to ensure that it is not being overly bureaucratic, that it is not adding more red tape to an already very onerous system, and to ensure that rural Canadians and communities, whether they be aboriginal, agriculture producers, or fishers, are all able to benefit from this, and that extra costs are not being layered upon municipalities and provincial governments, so there can be drainage, flood mitigation, and flood protection unhampered by an overzealous federal government.

● (1230)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):**

Mr. Speaker, in good part the legislation we have before us today reflects some of the changes that were required because of the previous administration's changes that it brought in, I believe within budget legislation. We are looking at restoring the lost protection, for example, to fish habitat. The bill also provides that the government modernize the legislation a little more by bringing in some additional protections. Along with this, there are a substantial amount of financial resources that would be made available.

Looking at the importance of the industry, not only for today but into the future, I wonder if my colleague would not agree that investing in and protecting fish habitat is the right thing to do. My friend and colleague talked about how wonderful the industry is in our home province of Manitoba, and I concur. There is so much potential, but there is an expectation that we do what we can in terms of the protection of habitat, as an example. This proposed legislation is going to go a long way in giving the power to the minister to take such actions, so that in the long run we will have a healthier fish stock and healthier environment.

**Mr. James Bezan:** Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, the member is misinformed. There is no call for this proposed legislation. It will not increase protection. All it would do is increase regulatory barriers. All it would do is provide more enforcement and more Fisheries and Oceans officers running around the province of Manitoba, and anywhere else in this country, stopping farmers, fishers, and industry from moving ahead.

The big problem is that the Liberals do not seem to understand that we had the right mechanisms in place already. They might want to virtue signal that they are trying to do something to protect fish habitat and for environmental purposes, but they are undermining rural communities, industry, and fishers. They have been working so hard for so long to enhance habitat to make sure we protect our wetlands and that we increase fish stocks.

By working in a collaborative approach, we can do more in adapting best practices to ensure that projects such as building new ditches, repairing a bridge, or putting in place a new culvert are done without having to go through all the red tape that the Liberals want to force upon our municipalities and our citizens.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as a former Penticton city councillor, I have experienced this first-hand. There was a developer who put aside tens of thousands of dollars to have access through a new stairway to Campbell Mountain, which was highly desired by the area. Our planners asked for clarification from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. However, the site was within a certain proximity to a creek. The reason we were told we could not go ahead was because there was a body of water adjacent to the proposed stairs. It was an old water hole of a golf course. Therefore, when the member cites that the people in Ottawa or in far-reaching areas are pushing buttons and demanding that people do something in the rural areas, he is exactly right.

In my area of British Columbia, I have met with stakeholders. They are specifically asking for action on the Cohen commission and not for this kind of legislation. Does the member agree that the government should be more focused on the priorities of stakeholders, whether it be in my area or his own?

• (1235)

**Mr. James Bezan:** Mr. Speaker, as a municipal councillor, the member has lived through the horrors, the cost, and the headaches of having to deal with DFO over things as ridiculous as a water hole on a golf course. I experienced that myself in my riding, where farmers who were flooded all of a sudden had carp swimming out of Lake Manitoba across their fields. Now, is that fish habitat? It has fish on it. The legislation would give power to the government to say that it is fish habitat and it cannot be touched.

We have white mullet, which we call sucker fish back home, that swim up the ditches every spring in the runoff to spawn. Does that stop the cleaning out of the ditch in the fall when there are no fish in it? I do not think it should, but the powers given to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans would give him the type of capability to stop regular planning and resource use on the prairies.

**Ms. Karen Ludwig (New Brunswick Southwest, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge.

It is a privilege for me to speak in the House on two important elements of the proposed Fisheries Act amendments. Both of these new elements would support conservation of marine biodiversity, and address threats to the conservation and protection of our marine resources and the proper management and control of our fisheries in a nimble and flexible way.

To develop our proposed amendments to the Fisheries Act, we closely considered recommendations from the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, and we consulted broadly with Canadians, partners, indigenous groups, and stakeholders. In parallel to this important work, we have been advancing efforts to achieve Canada's marine conservation targets, surpassing our government's commitment to protecting 5% of our marine areas by 2017, and moving forward to protect 10% by 2010.

The first of the new proposals under the amended Fisheries Act that I will speak about today responds directly to a need that we identified as part of our marine conservation targets engagement session, while simultaneously contributing to the modernization of the Fisheries Act.

Our government announced on December 21, 2017 that we have conserved 7.75% of Canada's marine space. We worked very closely with our partners at Parks Canada and Environment and Climate Change Canada, provincial, territorial, and indigenous governments, and other indigenous partners and stakeholders to achieve this significant marine conservation milestone.

We continue to do so, as work under our ambitious five-point plan to meet the marine conservation targets continues. This plan includes, one, completing marine protected area establishment processes that were already under way before Canada established its interim 5% target and reaffirmed its 10% objective; two, protecting large offshore areas; three, protecting areas under pressure; four, pursuing legislative amendments that are now known as Bill C-55; and five, most relevant to the discussion at hand, advancing other effective area-based conservation measures.

The term "other effective area-based conservation measures" may sound complicated, and even hard to say, but the concept is simple. It is well recognized and used in international forums. The term refers to managed areas other than marine protected areas that offer real protection to marine biodiversity.

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans developed rigorous science-based criteria for identifying these areas and have used these criteria to evaluate existing fisheries area closures for their contributions to marine biodiversity conservation. Fisheries and Oceans managers and scientists also adhere closely to these criteria when establishing new fisheries area closures that contribute to biodiversity conservation. Using this approach, I proudly recognize the current 51 fisheries area closures as marine refuges that play an important role in conserving Canada's precious marine biodiversity from coast to coast to coast.

Canada's marine refuges include the recently announced offshore Pacific seamounts and vents closure, which protects hydrothermal vents and rare and regionally unique seamounts on Canada's west coast. Off the coast of Nova Scotia, the Emerald basin and Sambro bank sponge conservation areas protect globally unique concentrations of species of glass sponge, known as "Russian hat" sponges.

In Canada's eastern Arctic, the Disko Fan conservation area protects overwintering habitat for narwhal and concentrations of corals. The coral species found there include the bamboo coral, which is one of the slowest-growing and longest-lived coral species in Canada, and which has not been found anywhere else in the world to date.

This is a small sampling of the marine refuges that help to safeguard our unique and valuable marine ecosystems on all three of Canada's oceans.



Currently, marine refuges are established through licence conditions and variation orders made under the Fisheries Act. These tools have an important place in fisheries management, but although they can be for long-term periods, they are not specifically designed to address long-term biodiversity objectives. As we have engaged with our partners and stakeholders on our approach to meeting Canada's marine conservation targets, they have raised this concern, and we have listened.

● (1240)

Under the amended Fisheries Act, a new authority has been proposed, which would allow for regulations to be put in place to restrict specified fishing activities for the purposes of conserving and protecting marine biodiversity. This regulatory tool will be complementary to our marine protected area tool under the Oceans Act legislation. Both tools are used to protect important species, habitats, and features. The main difference between the two tools is that the new regulatory authority under the Fisheries Act would be used in cases where fishing activities pose a specific threat to the important elements of biodiversity that have been identified in an area; whereas a marine protected area under the Oceans Act can be applied to a variety of human uses as needed.

The new proposed authority would provide us with additional flexibility to develop prohibitions that are tailor made to address the protection needs of a particular area. The government would apply this new regulation-making authority to our existing marine refuges, and in doing so would replace the current approach of outlining these fishing-related prohibitions or restrictions in licence conditions and variation orders.

This new approach would secure the biodiversity protections afforded by these marine refuges over the long term. These regulations could also be developed for any new marine refuges moving forward. We take our 2020 marine conservation commitment seriously, but this new regulatory tool would do much more than help us to meet our 10% target.

Marine refuges established under this authority would support our broader marine conservation work, ensuring that our oceans continue to be rich in marine biodiversity and support sustainable use for future generations of Canadians. Marine refuges will play an important role in the marine protected networks which are being developed on all three of Canada's coasts. Their establishment will also support implementation of the policy for managing the impacts of fishing on sensitive benthic areas over the long term.

This targeted regulatory tool to establish marine refuges for the purpose of biodiversity protection would help to modernize the Fisheries Act. It would make it very clear which management measures are contributing to long-term biodiversity protection and, in doing so, would enhance transparency and effectiveness of fisheries management.

I would now like to talk about the purpose of another proposed provision that could be used, among other things, to enhance biodiversity protection. This other amendment would enable my staff to respond quickly and effectively to urgent and unexpected threats to the conservation and protection of fish that may arise in our oceans and put some of our most treasured marine life in jeopardy.

### *Government Orders*

Top of mind for me and many Canadians, when we think about our ocean conservation needs, is the unexpected movement of the North Atlantic right whale population into the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and the unexpected and unprecedented losses of that endangered species that have occurred over the past year. A new proposed tool under the Fisheries Act would allow the minister to put in place targeted short-term fisheries management measures quickly and effectively to respond to urgent threats such as those being faced by the North Atlantic right whale.

When a threat to the conservation and protection of fish arises during the fishing season, we currently issue amendments to the licence conditions and make variation orders. However, just as these tools are ill suited to addressing long-term biodiversity objectives, they are also not designed to be put in place for immediate actions to address all urgent and unanticipated threats. These tools are meant to address issues related to the sustainable use and proper management of fisheries resources. Also, the process to implement a change in licence condition is burdensome, often takes time, and variation orders are limited in scope by the regulations.

Changes to the act would allow us to introduce targeted restrictions to fishing activity in urgent situations. Some of the threats that the North Atlantic right whale faced in 2017 are examples of urgent issues that could be addressed by this tool.

I will conclude by saying that the new proposed tools under the amended Fisheries Act would allow us to respond effectively and flexibly to our long-term marine conservation needs, as well as to unexpected, short term, and urgent threats. These are two pieces of the broader Fisheries Act amendments that I have the pleasure to support today. This is a concrete way to incorporate modern safeguards into a strengthened Fisheries Act.

● (1245)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to come back to a question that one of my colleagues asked the member for Central Nova with regard to the minister's discretionary powers.

Under the bill, decisions can be based on the minister's opinions and not necessarily on scientific evidence. The member for Central Nova answered that such discretion could be a positive thing as long as the public has faith in the minister and decisions are made in a transparent way.

However, what happens if a new party takes power, if the new minister's personality is completely different, if there is not as much transparency, and if the public does not have as much confidence in that minister?

Does the member think that the law should clearly stipulate that decisions must be based strictly on scientific evidence?

*Government Orders*

[English]

**Ms. Karen Ludwig:** Mr. Speaker, representing a coastal and rural riding, I can say that many of the stakeholders on the fisheries side have been very supportive of the Fisheries Act and the changes that are being proposed. For example, Melanie Sonnenberg, the president of the Canadian Independent Fish Harvesters Federation, said, “This is quite pivotal for us.... It means stability for our community as we go forward.”

We are a government that firmly puts science and evidence in every decision we make and we think that is absolutely critical. Even when there is a change of government, Canadians expect that all governments would make policy decisions based on scientific evidence, but also in deep collaboration with key stakeholders, whether they be indigenous stakeholders, the fishers, the municipalities, or members in coastal communities. That is what has been done in the development of this Fisheries Act because I have heard that from many people, not only in my riding of New Brunswick Southwest but at different annual general meetings.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this legislation is really about a balancing act, respecting the fact that we want to encourage and promote activities such as fishing, but at the same time, making sure that we have legislation in place to protect the environment and to protect future generations to be able to continue to use this environment that we have now.

I am wondering if the member could speak to how important it is to achieve that balance and where we have come from, with what the Conservatives did in 2012, to where we are today with this legislation.

**Ms. Karen Ludwig:** Mr. Speaker, from the comments I have heard in my riding, certainly the cuts made by the Harper government were not supported. One of our campaign promises was to look at the Fisheries Act. Recently I have been blessed with a new granddaughter and I believe that there has to be a balance between the environment and the economy, and also working closely with stakeholders. I can say that I am very proud of so many of the fisheries groups in New Brunswick Southwest and elsewhere that do so much work on their own to maintain and respect the long-term resource of our marine protected areas.

I would also like to comment on the North Atlantic right whale in terms of a balance. Clearly, after the 17 deaths that we saw in 2017, there is an imbalance there. Canadians from coast to coast and citizens around the world are looking for us to show leadership on the prevention and the protection and recovery of North Atlantic right whales. That is a balance and is something that we have to consider very seriously.

From the work that has been done by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans through the minister, much work has been done with round tables regarding the North Atlantic right whale and at those discussions there has been the topic of the Fisheries Act and the importance of it for protecting the long-term recovery of the North Atlantic right whale, where we have less than 450 surviving today.

• (1250)

**Mr. Dan Ruimy (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, since being elected as the member of Parliament for Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, I have had the opportunity to meet with

many organizations and individuals that the Fisheries Act directly impacts.

This includes organizations such as Watershed Watch, Alouette River Management Society, Kanaka Education and Environmental Partnership Society, the Katzie First Nation, local stream keepers, municipal governments in both Pitt Meadows and Maple Ridge, and individuals such as Jack Emberly, who is a local author and environmentalist, and Julie Porter, who studied ecological restoration at Simon Fraser University.

My riding is a watershed community that is home to many passionate, hard-working people who are trying to protect our environment and water systems. They were all eager to educate me on fish and fish habitats in various instances such as the many roundtables I hosted, cleaning up the Katzie slough, or counting fish with stream keepers. I will never forget trying to canoe in our local waters where the invasive species of plants and algae were so dense we could barely paddle through.

In all of these consultations, common expressions of sadness, disappointment, and even anger were apparent. The Fisheries Act had been gutted entirely, and left these groups with little support or good, clear legislation. It is time to change this and to fix the Fisheries Act.

In June 2016, the hon. Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard announced a comprehensive review of the Fisheries Act, and this gave my community hope for better legislation. After hearing and engaging with constituents on fish policy at large, I submitted a report with recommendations to the minister. Fish and fish habitat are part of the livelihood and identity of Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge. Therefore, fish and fish protection policy directly impact both the environment and prosperity of my community.

I rise today in support of the proposed Fisheries Act amendments, which would introduce key measures to ensure our fishery resources are available for generations of Canadians yet to come. Today, through proposed amendments to the act, the government is moving to restore lost measures that would protect fish and their habitat, and to modernize safeguards for the challenges we face in the 21st century.

More than protecting further loss of these resources, we are also introducing measures that would help restore them. These actions would help maintain biodiversity and would also generate positive economic spin-offs for the fisheries. Such dual benefits reflect the goal of sustainable development, a healthy environment, a prosperous economy, and a vibrant society for current and future generations.

*Government Orders*

All told, the fisheries sector is valued at \$13 billion, and employs some 72,000 Canadians. Our fisheries are an economic driver in rural communities on all three coasts, including in many indigenous communities. That is why the Department of Fisheries and Oceans supports an economically prosperous fishery, while retaining conservation as its top priority.

The cultural impact of the fisheries may be harder to measure in dollars and cents, but is no less important. For some families in coastal communities, fishing has been a way of life for generations. Indeed, for many indigenous peoples, fishing traditions extend back millennia.

In developing the Fisheries Act, the government understood that the fisheries contribute to rural and indigenous communities in both tangible and intangible ways. In keeping with the principles of sustainable development, we sought to achieve a balance between environmental, economic, and social imperatives. In this way, we could help preserve the integrity of the fisheries in the years ahead.

There is no single threat to the sustainability and productivity of our fisheries. Damage and loss of habitat, aquatic invasive species, and changes to freshwater flow all contribute to the decline of freshwater and marine fisheries. Indeed, restoring habitat provides an opportunity to redress past negative impacts.

The proposed Fisheries Act identifies four key areas that would require consideration of fish and habitat restoration measures: stock rebuilding; factors to consider when issuing permits and authorizations; ecologically significant areas; and the making of regulations. Let me take them one by one, starting with fish stocks.

• (1255)

The proposed act will support the restoration of degraded fish habitats. Of course, the department already works to repair past impacts and help restore depleted fish stocks. However, these activities are not integrated into key areas of its mandate. The new act would address this gap. Under the proposed amendments, when making decisions that would impact a depleted stock, the minister would need to consider whether measures are in place to rebuild that fish stock. In addition, the minister shall take into account whether these measures are in place to restore degraded fish habitat where the minister is of the opinion that the loss or degradation of fish habitat has contributed to a stock's decline.

The second area for consideration of fish habitat restoration is the list of factors the minister must review before making decisions about permits, authorizations, or regulations. The proposed amendments add a new factor for the minister to consider: do the planned offsetting activities give priority to the restoration of degraded fish habitat?

The third area for consideration of fish habitat restoration is the creation of ecologically significant areas. These areas are intended to protect sensitive and important fish habitats by prohibiting certain types of activities. The proposed amendments would make provisions for these sensitive areas clearer, stronger, and easier to implement. I will give an example of how that process might work.

Working with partners, including indigenous groups, the department would identify potentially ecologically significant areas. Together, they would identify the best way to protect fish habitat

and what activities the minister could approve. If the minister believes that habitat restoration is required to meet prescribed objectives for conservation and protection in ecologically significant areas, then a fish habitat restoration plan must be published on the public registry. Not only would this approach go a long way in restoring habitat, it would also promote greater engagement with partners, as well as greater transparency with Canadians around the entire decision-making process.

The fourth and final area relates to the authority for making regulations for the restoration of fish habitat. This regulation-making authority can be exercised when it supports the conservation and protection of fish. These amendments help the department pursue the overall policy objective of restoring the ecological integrity of degraded or damaged aquatic habitats. Collectively, they give the department legislative authority to advance restoration planning, regulate harm to aquatic habitats from proposed development projects, guide habitat offsetting efforts, and work with multiple partners to achieve these objectives.

Together, these proposed changes to the act would help achieve three important results. First, they would help protect biodiversity in aquatic ecosystems, which leads to more stable and resilient biological systems that can better withstand impacts related to development projects. Second, they would help build healthier and more abundant fish stocks, which in turn would make fisheries more resilient and lead to greater potential long-term economic gains. Third, the proposed changes would contribute to the sustainability of the fish stock and continued economic prosperity in Canada's fishing communities.

Coming from my riding, which is a watershed community, my constituents have spoken to me loud and clear. This is something that is not only wanted but is needed in my community and communities across this great nation. I urge all hon. members to join with me in supporting these much-needed amendments.

• (1300)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have asked my Liberal colleagues the same question several times.

The third recommendation in Commissioner Cohen's report indicates that the Government of Canada should remove from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans' mandate the promotion of salmon farming, because when farmed salmon are discharged into the ocean, they infect wild salmon with a virus and end up harming marine biodiversity.

It is worrisome that the Department of Fisheries and Oceans is turning a blind eye to Commissioner Cohen's recommendation, even though it is aware of the situation. Is it not rather odd and even irresponsible that the government is not following up on this recommendation, especially since it is seeking to reinstate the legislation on fish and fish habitat protection?

If the government supports marine biodiversity, why is it giving the department the mandate to protect our waters and fish while it continues to promote this toxic industry?

*Government Orders**[English]*

**Mr. Dan Ruimy:** Mr. Speaker, we are here today. It did not happen overnight. This is a by-product of decades of perhaps not paying attention to our environment, not paying attention to the things that matter in our communities. The first step, which is very clear to me, starts with the Fisheries Act. Communities need to be able to understand exactly the impact the Fisheries Act can have in helping a community and helping a municipal department determine the course of action, for example, in future developments. It is understanding that we have to be able to move forward. We cannot do that if we do not have a strong Fisheries Act. This is just the first step to make that happen.

**Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, last year in the budget the government decided to put \$400 million into fishery innovation on the east coast. How much was there for British Columbia? There was zero. Last year as well the government tried to cancel a very popular salmon restocking fund. Again the outcry from British Columbians was incredible—I am sure the member heard about it—and the government reversed the decision. When I talk to stakeholders, they are more concerned about the government's lack of action and progress and even reporting on whether there was any progress on the Cohen commission.

With all of these other measures affecting British Columbia, does the member think this is the best way he can advance the level of fisheries in British Columbia, or does he believe the government needs to work on these other elements which are gravely wanted in British Columbia?

**Mr. Dan Ruimy:** Mr. Speaker, last year, the federal government introduced a \$1.5-billion oceans protection plan. That is just one part of the puzzle here. What I heard clearly in meeting after meeting, round table after round table, going out and counting salmon, going out and counting fish and looking at the connected waterways that were not connected, was that to move forward they have to have a strong Fisheries Act. This is the first step. We cannot move forward if people can do what they want with the Fisheries Act. We have to be able to support our partners across the country to ensure that the Fisheries Act allows for strong protections for fish environment. If we do not do that, our fishery will fall apart. That is why we need to have a strong Fisheries Act.

• (1305)

**Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to speak to Bill C-68, an act to amend the Fisheries Act and other acts in consequence.

I would first like to extend my best wishes to the fisheries minister. It is good to see him here in the chamber as he perseveres through the health challenges of life. Even though we may exchange barbs and strong differences at times, at the beginning and end of each day, we are all Canadians with families, friends, and loved ones. I wish him well.

I would also be remiss if I did not also wish my good friend and colleague, the member for Cariboo—Prince George, a speedy recovery. We all know his determination will drive his recovery as he continues to advocate for his constituents and all Canadians.

Much of what is in Bill C-68 is aimed at one objective for the Liberal government, the perpetuation of the idea of lost protections. I propose that this idea is based on false and unsubstantiated claims, and I will speak today to how those claims have not been proven or substantiated.

The Fisheries Act is one of the oldest federal statutes in Canada dating back almost 100 years. Amendments have been made to the act from time to time, and whether the act actually included a purposes section or not, the overall principle of the act has been to manage and protect our fisheries.

As we know, Canada is a vast country with coastlines and fisheries on three different oceans covering a multitude of species, some sedentary and others very migratory. Canada also has a vast array of fisheries, varying from small local clam beds to fisheries for cod and salmon extending over hundreds of thousands of square kilometres. Managing all those fisheries is complicated by the very fact that some of the most sought after species are very migratory. Some fulfill their life cycle over vast expanses of oceans, while others migrate from freshwater to marine environments and back again.

Over the years, federal governments have taken different strategies on managing Canada's fisheries. Some management strategies have been successful, while the failure of others has been self-evident. What has been consistent is that successive governments have attempted to maintain the health of our fisheries so they are all conserved and managed in ways that allow perpetual value to be drawn from our oceans and fisheries resources. Our prosperity as Canadians depends on the sustainable management of these resources to support fishers, harvesters, and the communities that depend on them for the benefits of their subsistence.

Changes made to the Fisheries Act in 2012 and amendments in 2013 were developed to address long-standing weaknesses evidenced by the inconsistent interpretation and application of the pre-2012 Fisheries Act. In studying the 2012 changes to the Fisheries Act, the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans heard from Canadians that the pre-2012 act required amendments to modernize it and make it more relevant and functional for those who live under the act every day.

Input from Ducks Unlimited Canada stated that under the previous Fisheries Act, many of its conservation projects and activities that sought Fisheries Act changes to restore, enhance, or manage wetland habitat were deemed to be “fish habitat destruction” by DFO. In other words, these projects that could have improved our habitat and fisheries were not allowed under the pre-2012 definition. As such, the effect of the previous Fisheries Act limited this conservation organization's ability to “deliver new conservation programming designed to protect and conserve habitat that is essential to waterfowl and other wetland-dependent species, including fish.”

*Government Orders*

• (1310)

This is the reality of the previous prohibitions of the Fisheries Act. These are prohibitions that the government is seeking to restore in the bill. What we are presented with in Bill C-68 are proposals to amend the Fisheries Act, including some seeking to restore the previous elements of the act that had proven to be dysfunctional. The bill has a significant number of proposals. In fact, there are 58 pages of proposed amendments, not including the 13 pages of explanatory notes and revisions.

In poring over the bill over the past week, many questions have come up, which will likely take time to be answered by the ministry, by the minister, or eventually by the courts.

As parliamentarians, we are provided technical briefings on bills that come before the House. It is a privilege that we do not take lightly. These technical briefings are meant to provide us as legislators answers to some of the difficult questions that are hidden within draft legislation.

I must say that after attending a technical briefing on Bill C-68 earlier this week, there are more questions than answers received. I have heard from stakeholders, Canadians who live under the Fisheries Act across Canada, who also have a significant number of questions, and as a result, reasonable concerns related to the bill.

How will habitat banks be established? There seem to be no parameters. Much of this is left to be within regulations that no one has seen any drafting of at this point. How will those habitat banks be monitored and validated? Again, there is nothing specific in the proposed act, and it is all left open to what it might be down the road. There are many questions but so few answers.

What class of projects will qualify as designated projects, meaning which ones will or will not have prior approval? There are no answers.

What is the definition of an “ecologically significant” area? I found the definition within Bill C-68 to be very vague. There was no specific direction as to what might or might not be considered an ecologically significant area. Would this be an area that may hold a few goldfish or would it be a key component to a spawning area for some of our precious salmon stocks? There are no definitions within the act.

What information factored into ministerial decisions will the minister be able to withhold from Canadians with a direct interest in the decisions? We see portions of the proposed act that say information to the minister may be held confidential and not released. What about the proponent whose project is held up and has no access to know what information or what area of information might be withheld from them?

Who will be able to establish laws over fisheries and oceans? How will consistency be ensured to ensure that a patchwork of legal regimes is not created across Canada? There were provisions in the previous act where laws regarding fisheries were shared with the provinces under agreements. We also see this now as a possibility with first nations. We welcome the involvement of first nations in the management of our fisheries, but with the multitude of different first nations across the country, there are questions from people who may

potentially be impacted by this as to how they would monitor these new laws that might be in place. Who would oversee them in general?

Again, on the new laws that may come into place, who will enforce laws of the various jurisdictions that the bill proposes to recognize? We do not know whether that would be under the laws of Canada, under the laws of the provinces, or under the laws of other bodies that may be created to create laws, which the bill would enable them to do.

• (1315)

Again, how will those laws be applied and enforced beyond Canada's 200-mile economic zone to the entire continental shelf? I do not know if anyone has addressed that point in the debate on Bill C-68. It proposes that the Fisheries Act apply to all waters on the continental shelf, beyond Canada's 200-mile economic zone. These are the types of questions that may only be determined through committee work and the further development of regulations, but this may eventually end up in the courts, and it could be years down the road before we have answers.

There are many proposals in this bill related to indigenous communities and their participation in the management and conservation of fisheries. The Conservative Party of Canada's policy declaration clearly supports the economic sustainability of indigenous communities. I believe that the fisheries could be a driving factor in sustaining those indigenous communities. However, the ambiguity of this bill's provisions for indigenous communities is not helpful. In fact, it may be counterproductive.

First nations, harvesters, and processors all need certainty of access to the resource to retain investments and to remain competitive in what is an ever more competitive world market. I have been meeting with stakeholders over the past few months, and their biggest concern is certainty of access to the market, but more so, certainty of access to the product, whether it is fish products, finfish fisheries, aquaculture, or other types.

Already I am hearing from indigenous organizations that work in fisheries that this bill is deficient in defining the essential details of what it proposes for indigenous communities. It is safe to say that the government's response will be something along the lines of, “Just trust us.” We have seen what the government does when we agree to just trust it. It has a Prime Minister who has been found guilty of breaking Canadian law four times, yet there are no consequences.

A significant number of indigenous governments and fisheries organizations have valid reasons for doubting the sincerity of the government. I will share with the House one example of how the government undermined the trust of indigenous peoples in the review process that led to this bill.

*Government Orders*

In 2016, the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard directed the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans to undertake a study to review the 2012 changes to the Fisheries Act and to table a report early in 2017. As such, a motion was passed to undertake a study and to table the report by January 30, 2017. Once the study was under way, it became very clear that the deadline imposed by the government was insufficient for the task at hand or for the process of consultation created by the government. The minister's office even put out a news release stating that feedback from public consultations would be provided to the committee for consideration in its report. That news release was revised a second and third time, but the original said that all feedback would be provided to the committee.

Opposition members of the committee tried repeatedly to pass motions for an extension of the study deadline. The government members on the committee eventually agreed to add four meetings, or two weeks, to the deadline. Indigenous fishery stakeholders were invited to participate in consultation sessions and to submit briefs for the committee's review of the Fisheries Act. In fact, through a participant funding program alone, 54 different indigenous groups received funding to assist in the preparation of their submissions to the committee. These 54 groups received over \$900,000 to produce their briefs. What happened to their input? How did the government treat their consultations? Sadly, due to the government's refusal to extend the committee study deadline, these 54 briefs arrived after the committee held its last meeting for the study on December 12, 2016.

● (1320)

This is how the government has undermined the relationship with indigenous communities in the review process that led up to this bill. Indigenous Canadians deserve better. The government has repeatedly stated that this bill is necessary to restore so-called lost protections. I have asked the government for proof of harm resulting from these so-called lost protections numerous times. In response to one particular Order Paper question, the government indicated that it could not produce any proof, because the department did not have the resources or the mandate to make that determination. There we have it. This bill is meant to restore something the government cannot produce any proof of.

The minister made claims of face-to-face consultations when he appeared at the committee on November 2, 2016, yet an Order Paper question response, dated March 22, 2017, months after the minister stated that he was having face-to-face consultations, contradicted this, stating that no face-to-face consultations had taken place. So much for consultation, transparency, and accountability, a trend we see with the Liberal government.

Why should Canadians, indigenous or non-indigenous, trust the government's motivations in this bill? The proposed alternative measure section states:

No admission, confession or statement accepting responsibility for a given act or omission made by an alleged offender as a condition of being dealt with by alternative measures is admissible in evidence against them in any civil or criminal proceedings.

This is an absolute disconnect with accountability. The minister or ministerial staff do not have to disclose information or consequences to proponents. This is a case of a law being implemented with no consequences for breaking the law. Tie this to the fact that the Prime

Minister has been found guilty of breaking the law on four counts, yet there are no consequences laid out in the law.

I also have concerns about the establishment of advisory panels, which would be remunerated and paid expenses. This sounds like typical Liberalism: creating additional layers of bureaucracy with no stipulations developed regarding membership, frequency and location of meetings, remuneration amounts, or any of the usual measures put in place to avoid runaway spending and lack of accountability.

Proposed subsection 8(1) of the bill sets out the establishment of fees for quotas, and proposed section 14 establishes the setting out of fees for conferral. In other words, more fees would be passed on to permit or authorization holders. Proposed section 14 would also create the ability to have fees for regulatory processes, with no parameters given as to who may be charged and how much. Proponents should open their wallets, because the government wants to empty them before anyone starts.

There are significant sections in the 2012 revisions to the act that gave the minister the ability to designate ecologically significant areas. This section has been retained. Many pieces of the 2012 legislation have been retained in this act. However, it will take more time to flesh them out and see what was done in 2012 that has been retained and is recognized as good work.

Sections 4.1 to 4.3 of the 2012 revisions provide the legal framework to guide future agreements with provinces to further the purposes of the act. They also allow the Governor in Council to declare that certain provisions of the act or its regulations do not apply in a province if a federal-provincial agreement provides that a provincial law is equivalent to the provisions of the federal regulations. This segment is retained in Bill C-68 and would be further extended to situations where there is an agreement with a recognized indigenous governing body.

● (1325)

The standing committee also heard from the Mining Association of Canada on the changes made to the act in 2012. I quote from Justyna Laurie-Lean, of the Mining Association, who said that the changes in 2012 have, "in practice, broadened the circumstances in which the section 35 prohibitions apply and increased the circumstances in which an authorization and offsets are required."

These are only some examples of why I say that claims of lost protections are false and unsubstantiated. Many of the recommendations of the standing committee have been implemented. One of them, recommendation no. 3, was that the original definition of HAAD be revised before being reinserted.

As members can see, there are many more questions about this bill. I look forward to questions from my colleagues and to furthering this document in committee.

*Government Orders*

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I note that my hon. colleague mentioned technical briefings to understand Bill C-68. I assure him that I did not need a technical briefing. I was so relieved to read legislation that made sense again.

When I was in this House in 2012, when Bill C-38 was tabled at first reading, it was over 440 pages long and changed 70 different pieces of legislation. We were never offered a technical briefing. There was a rush to push it through. Former fisheries ministers, two former Conservative fisheries ministers and two former Liberal fisheries ministers, ministers Fraser, Siddon, Dhaliwal, and Anderson, were united in saying that what was happening was the gutting of the Fisheries Act.

I would ask my hon. colleague to reflect that perhaps this legislation coming forward to re-establish the protection of fish habitat and to re-establish fundamental notions that we protect our fisheries and fish, regardless of whether they are destined for human consumption, would be an improvement in Canada's ability to steward the natural environment. We, as Canadians, hold an obligation to take care of these living marine resources far better than we have in the past.

**Mr. Mel Arnold:** Mr. Speaker, not being part of the previous government, I cannot speak directly to how that act was brought in. What I noted in my presentation today is that portions of that 2012 act remain. I have not had the full amount of time to determine exactly how many of those 2012 changes are there, but we see this act as possibly furthering them. The questions I have pointed out are the big concerns we have with this act.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government went through two rounds of online public consultations. There were over 100 meetings with stakeholders, including indigenous groups and many other interested stakeholders. The overwhelming consensus seemed to be that there needs to be protection of fish habitat and fish.

Former prime minister Stephen Harper, in the changes referenced earlier, took away a lot of that protection. The essence of this bill, at least in part, is to look at replacing. It would fulfill a commitment by this government during the campaign to put back in place these protective measures.

Does the member not agree that the whole idea of coming up with protective habitat for fish and protecting fish in the long run is better for all of us here in Canada?

**Mr. Mel Arnold:** Mr. Speaker, I certainly agree that protection of fish and the sustainability of our fisheries is of utmost importance to all Canadians. However, what I pointed out in my intervention earlier was that the claims of lost protections simply are not substantiated. They are not true. I posed the question in an Order Paper question, giving the Liberals a full opportunity to point out where those protections had been lost or where harm had been caused. The answer that came back was zero, absolute zero. The protections were not lost. The government is using this again as a campaign speech to say that it has restored those loss protections, which were not lost in the first place.

• (1330)

**Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, when I speak with Rick Simpson, who is a big advocate in my area for fisheries and protection of fish, we talk about the steelhead and the extinction-like level crisis there. This legislation will not touch that. The legislation, as far as I can see, will not implement any of the recommendations by the Cohen Commission.

Last year, the Liberal government tried to cancel a very popular salmon restocking fund that helped local groups look after our iconic salmon. Last, it gave \$400 million to the east coast to help fishers innovate, but zero for British Columbia.

What is in the bill that is good for British Columbia or is this again just electoral campaigning for the Liberals?

**Mr. Mel Arnold:** Mr. Speaker, I am familiar with Mr. Simpson. He is a great advocate and a solid worker on behalf of the fisheries.

Right now nothing in the bill will make a difference for our steelhead stocks in British Columbia. They have continued to slide, especially under the current government, to the point now where there is pressure to designate them as a severely endangered species.

I have heard from stakeholders that the government has invested over \$7 million in acoustic equipment to listen to whales. That might be an admirable expenditure, but it only put \$1.2 million into restoring fish stocks. Without fish stocks for southern resident killer whales to feed on, those acoustic devices are not going to hear anything. That is the typical poorly directed spending of the government, which is not addressed in the bill.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I want to go back to the last part of my question. I reflect on the days when I was in opposition, and the then prime minister and the budget. The leader of the Green Party made reference to the budget bill that proposed changes to around 70 pieces of legislation. One was to stop providing protection for fish and fish habitat. This caused a fairly significant reaction outside the House of Commons. Many concerned Canadians wanted to see that protection remain in place. I will not talk about the omnibus nature of how it was brought in, but it went against what people wanted, whether it was stakeholders or the average Canadian who were familiar with this. That was why our party campaigned on rectifying it.

Does the member not believe we should have listened to Canadians? After all, they see it as an important issue and, in good part, that is why we have brought forward the legislation.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Mel Arnold:** Mr. Speaker, I will comment on what we found as fact when we started to look at the proposed changes. I am not denying that Canadians are concerned with fisheries and the protection of them and fish habitat. I gave the government full opportunity to prove what was being said and the members could not. There was no proof of loss of harm. It was a campaign stunt that worked. I give the Liberals credit for that, but that was all it was, a campaign issue. No proof of lost protection has ever been presented to me when I asked an Order Paper question or to the committee when we asked the question multiple times of multiple witnesses. When they were questioned, they were not able to provide any proof of loss of protection.

• (1335)

**Mrs. Bernadette Jordan (South Shore—St. Margarets, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with my hon. colleague from Winnipeg North.

For countless generations, our fisheries have been an indelible part of a rural and coastal life, including in certain indigenous communities, and in my community of South Shore—St. Margarets. However, changes to the Fisheries Act in 2012 and 2013 weakened the government's ability to protect fish and the habitat they depend on. Today, I am proud to support amendments to the act that, together, would restore lost protections and incorporate modern safeguards into legislation.

The proposed amendments are part of the government's broader view of environmental and regulatory processes that cover several key areas. For my part, I would like to address proposed changes to restore our ability to protect fish and fish habitat.

As a member of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, we heard time and again that habitat had to be protected. Therefore, let me begin by providing some context into why these changes are so important.

Our fisheries sector and recreational fishing provides jobs for 72,000 Canadians, who help add \$13 billion to our economy every year. Moreover, we respect and recognize the fishing rights of the indigenous peoples of Canada. Fisheries also contribute to the food security of coastal communities on all three coasts, as well as in freshwater areas.

However, the sustainability of our fisheries is under threat from various forces. One key threat is the degradation of fish habitat. Developments near water, for example, can disturb the ground and lead to erosion or increased sediment in water. This, in turn, can affect a myriad of things that support our aquatic food chains, including water chemistry, spawning beds, and vegetation that fish depend on for survival. Other threats include building dams and stream crossings, and extracting water. These activities, if not planned carefully, can alter the flow of water in a stream, lake, or river. This, too, can affect habitat or cause the death of fish.

More than 40 years ago, Parliament recognized these threats and acted. Parliament amended the Fisheries Act in 1977 to include protection for fish and fish habitat, and not just those connected to commercial, recreational, and aboriginal fisheries. In 1977, the amendments made had the foresight to protect all fish and fish habitat. Other amendments protected fish against the death of fish by means other than fishing.

Unfortunately, these sensible protections were undermined by omnibus bills introduced in 2012 and 2013. In addition, a reduced capacity at the Department of Fisheries and Oceans affected the department's ability to do its job properly. Put together, the results were much weaker protection for fish and their habitat.

Canadians, including indigenous peoples, industry, and environmental groups, told us they were concerned about these changes and how they were made. This government promised to review the changes made previously, restore lost protections, and introduce modern safeguards into the Fisheries Act. With the amendments to the act proposed today, that is exactly what we are doing.

Let me recap how we have arrived today with the bill before the House.

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans plays a significant role in the protection of our fisheries. It does this, in part, by assessing infrastructure and development projects that could affect our fishery resources. Indeed, over the next decade, the department expects to review some \$600 billion in development proposals. For that reason, as part of the government's review of environmental and regulatory processes, we committed to examining changes made to the Fisheries Act in 2012 and 2013.

In 2016, as members may recall, the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans reviewed the impact of those controversial changes. In addition, the department consulted extensively with Canadians across the country, both face-to-face and online. Throughout that process, we paid particular attention to indigenous peoples. In total, we held more than 170 meetings with indigenous groups, and we will continue to engage with them as the bill moves forward.

In addition to input from the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans and indigenous groups, the bill is informed by expert reports and consultations with the provinces and territories, industry, environmental groups, and other stakeholders, as well as individual Canadians. Previous recommendations from the Auditor General of Canada were also considered.

Throughout this process, the message was clear. Canada needs to restore the strong habitat protection measures that were in place until 2012. I want to assure the House that the government has heard this message. Today, we are acting to restore lost protections and introduce modern safeguards that will help ensure future generations can benefit from the fishery.

• (1340)

Let me summarize some of the specific changes that are proposed.



*Government Orders*

The new and amended act would restore protections for all fish and fish habitats, rather than only giving protection to fish that would be part of commercial, recreational and aboriginal fisheries. It would restore provisions that prohibited harmful alteration, disruption or destruction of fish habitat. It would restore a prohibition against causing the death of fish by means other than fishing. It would provide the authority to develop new tools to allow flexibility for how the department would regulate projects, which includes tools to manage large-scale activities, activities in ecologically significant areas, and smaller routine development activities. Furthermore, it would improve transparency through an online registry that would release information on project decisions to the public.

These and other proposed amendments will strengthen the legal foundation for effective management of fish and their habitat by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

More than four decades ago, the House passed legislation that, in hindsight, was visionary. Long before the expression “sustainable development” was commonplace, our predecessors acted to protect all fish and their habitat. Six years ago, however, we lost those protections, which has put social, environmental, economic, and cultural values at risk.

With the bill before the House today, we have an opportunity to restore what was lost. For the sake of much-needed protections to fish and their habitat, as well as the integrity of the House, I encourage all hon. members to join me in supporting the bill, for now and for future generations that will benefit from a sustainable fisheries.

**Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for the work she does sitting beside me on the fisheries and oceans committee, and for representing the people of Nova Scotia well.

I know she was here when the last speaker said there was no evidence given for lost protections and that no one could answer the question. I think she might say they did not give the witnesses a chance to answer the questions because most times the members cut them off. Could she speak to the value of the information we heard from the witnesses in bringing the bill forward?

**Mrs. Bernadette Jordan:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his work on the fisheries and oceans committee. He is right. We heard countless testimony from a number of groups about the problems caused by the elimination of the protections for fish and fish habitat. We heard from environmental groups. We heard from fishery groups. We heard from community groups.

Perhaps one of the reasons why my hon. colleague from across the way said there was no proof was because the Conservatives cut the scientists and closed the offices, which meant there was no enforcement. Therefore, it was really hard to collect the data that was needed to ensure we were going forward in the right direction.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague talked about the need to make changes to reflect what the Conservative government did six years ago when it deregulated the industry and removed the protections we needed for future generations. Could she expand on what she sees as the real

strength to this, not just for the present but for future generations, our children, their grandchildren, and so on?

**Mrs. Bernadette Jordan:** Mr. Speaker, when the protections to fish and fish habitat were eliminated in the omnibus bills in 2012 and 2013, the previous government used a sledgehammer when it could have used tweezers. There were problems with the act. There is no question there were problems with the agricultural communities that had to deal with drainage ditches and the protection of fish. However, those could have been addressed in a much simpler fashion.

The new legislation and the new codes of practice will allow people to know the guidelines in advance. It is a more streamlined process. It will be a much easier process for everyone, recognizing we had a good fishery before 2012. With these changes, we will have a good fishery for all future generations.

● (1345)

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague from South Shore—St. Margarets has also championed another bill we are working on in the House right now, Bill C-64, which deals with derelict vessels, and I thank her for that.

She happened to mention that we had a good fishery in 2012 and we will have a good fishery again. I think of the historical nature of the Fisheries Act, which came into being in 1868. Let us consider what we have lost. We had an abundant fishery, when we consider the Atlantic coast and the great Newfoundland cod fishery, which maintained communities in Newfoundland and Labrador and much of Atlantic Canada for generations. By the early 1990s, that fishery was destroyed.

Rebuilding fisheries is one of the things I am pleased about with respect to this legislation. It changed the focus to restoration of fisheries. I wonder if the hon. member has any comments on that aspect.

**Mrs. Bernadette Jordan:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for her advocacy on behalf of our fisheries. We recognize that they sustain so many of our coastal communities.

My colleague is right. This legislation is not just about protecting fish and fish habitat. It is about growing fish habitat and making sure that it is sustainable in the long term. We need to make sure that we do not just sustain our fishery but have an abundance in our fishery, and this legislation would go a long way toward making sure that this happens.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what a pleasure it is to rise and speak to this very important piece of legislation. I am going to talk about the commitment the government made to the fishing industry as a whole, about why this is such valuable legislation, and maybe even a bit about the process.

*Government Orders*

I believe that the minister and his staff have done a fantastic job in presenting the House with legislation that I would have thought all members would be supporting. It was a very thorough process. In 2016, the minister responsible asked the standing committee to review some changes brought in through the back door of a budget bill when Stephen Harper was prime minister, back in 2012. I sat in opposition during that period of time.

There were a number of changes to 70 different pieces of legislation, this being one of them. What we found was that the changes to the fisheries were quite negative. The reaction of different stakeholders and Canadians as a whole was one of disappointment. They wanted to know, first, why the government was making those changes, because it was generally felt that they were not in the best interest of the industry as a whole, and second, why the government decided to make those changes through the back door in a piece of budget legislation, when they had absolutely nothing to do with the budget.

From what I understand, the current minister asked the standing committee to review the 2012 approach of changing the legislation and to come up with some recommendations. There were over two dozen recommendations brought forward by the standing committee. The minister did not leave it at that. There were two sessions of online communications to the public as a whole. There were well over 100 different meetings with different stakeholders, always with special attention to indigenous people, especially on matters such as this.

The minister has been very thorough in terms of ensuring that what we have today is good, sound, well-supported legislation. I would challenge my Conservative friends across the way to rethink some of their positions on this piece of legislation. Not only does it address many of the problems created by the 2012 budget, but it also advances the whole framework of why we have this legislation, which I believe is really important.

It is all about proper management, control of the fisheries, and conservation and protection of fish and fish habitat. From my perspective, that is what the legislation is all about. The changes advanced by the minister are a positive reflection of what Canadians and stakeholders have said to the government over the last year and a half, in terms of trying to better understand the types of changes that are necessary.

The other piece of good news is that two promises, two commitments made to Canadians in the last election would be kept by the passage of this legislation. One of them was in regard to the 2012 budget. We made a commitment back then to make those changes, and this legislation does just that. At the same time, the Prime Minister made a commitment that we would bring forward legislation that would further expand the issue of fish and the protection of fish and fish habitat. Once again, that is something that is done in this legislation.

● (1350)

In going through the bill, there is one area I want to emphasize. From my perspective, it captures the essence of what the legislation would really do. It would:

provide measures for the protection of fish and fish habitat with respect to works, undertakings or activities that may result in the death of fish or the harmful

alteration, disruption or destruction of fish habitat, including in ecologically significant areas, as well as measures relating to the modernization of the regulatory framework such as authorization of projects, establishment of standards and codes of practice, creation of fish habitat banks by a proponent of a project and establishment of a public registry;

That captures a lot of what this legislation is attempting to do. I would reflect on the legislation as a whole, and we have heard others comment on it. The fishing industry in Canada contributes in many different ways. One could look at it from a heritage perspective, whether it is the Inuit or indigenous people as a whole, and the meaning behind fishing as an industry or a lifestyle in the many different coastal regions.

We have heard from many members of Parliament from the Atlantic and Pacific coasts. We understand and appreciate our northern coast, and let us not forget our inland fishing industry. We have had members stand up and provide comment on that issue as well.

In many ways, we are talking about tens of thousands of direct, good-quality, middle-class jobs. These jobs have been there in the past, and if we manage this wonderful, valuable resource, they will continue to be there into the future. If we continue to look at ways in which we can do better, have a greener economy, and incorporate different forms of technology, I believe we can increase the overall economic impact of our fishing industry.

Over the years, Canadians have benefited both socially and economically. Is it too much to ask of legislators to look at what took place 40 years ago, which was referred to earlier? One could look at many of the environmental terms we use today or the idea of sustainable development. One could look at the fishing industry and some of the legislation that was first brought in dealing with environmental types of issues. This is one of the areas of debate that have occurred for decades inside the House of Commons.

There is nothing wrong with the Government of Canada making a statement through this legislation to recognize the importance of fish habitat and empower the minister, whoever he or she may be, whether today or in the future, to better protect fish habitat. I would suggest that this is very progressive in its nature as legislation.

I am pleased to hear the comments thus far from the leader of the Green Party and from the New Democrats. Both parties seem to support the legislation. I am not perfectly clear on how the Conservatives will be voting, but I get the sense that they are not going to be supporting it. Maybe during questions and answers we might get some clarification on that. If the Conservatives want to be in touch with what Canadians really think is important on issues such as this, they would be better off to appreciate that the preservation or promotion of fish habitat, looking after it not only for today but for tomorrow, is a positive thing.

● (1355)

The Conservatives should be onside with the government on this. What the government is saying, through the many members of Parliament who have spoken whether it is here or in caucus, is that this is good legislation. It is all about the preservation or our fish and fish habitat. That is a good thing.

*Statements by Members*

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I see that the intent of this bill is to enhance Canada's fish stocks and avoid unnecessary negative impacts to industries that rely on access to water, but one thing I do not see in this bill that I would have liked to see is some protection for the industries that depend on access to water.

Members may be aware that in my riding, the Coast Guard did not shut down the shipping channel and as a result of its escorting tankers, ice floes crushed the border crossing. I have been unable to get anyone on the government side to act to reopen the border. Industries on both sides that need access to that waterway are being impacted. I did not see anything in the bill that might address that. I wonder if the parliamentary secretary could comment.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I want to be sensitive to the question, but I do not know the specific background to that issue. However, I can say that the government has brought forward legislation which, as a whole, is being very well received by all of the different stakeholders and Canadians. The government has also reinforced it by providing a substantial amount of money. We are talking about a quarter of a billion dollars, hundreds of millions of dollars. Not only are we creating good, solid legislation to support the industry, but we are also ensuring that the financial resources will be available to enforce and protect.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons will have three minutes and 30 seconds remaining in questions and comments when the House next resumes debate on this bill.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

### CANADIAN OLYMPIC ATHLETES

**Ms. Filomena Tassi (Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate all our Canadian athletes who are participating in the Olympics. I am so proud that we have three Hamiltonians representing us: Laura Fortino, Sarah Nurse, and Nick Poloniato.

Nick was a standout football player who suffered a broken leg, but he did not let that crush his love for sport. He found the bobsled. Then there is Sarah Nurse. Sarah, at the age of five, dreamed of playing on the Canadian women's hockey team, and today that dream has been realized. Then we have Laura Fortino. Laura Fortino's discipline and commitment are second to none. She is a true role model for all. We will never forget the 2014 Sochi games when she assisted in that overtime goal that brought home the gold for the Canadian women's hockey team.

I want to congratulate all athletes and their families on a job very well done. We are going to be cheering them on from here. Go Canada go.

• (1400)

### POVERTY REDUCTION

**Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, It is my privilege to highlight the vigorous leadership of the community of Medicine Hat on helping those in need. Thrive is a Medicine Hat and region strategy to end poverty and increase well-being by 2030. Together as a community we are building access to resources and services to assist those in need with such things as food and income security, transportation access, and housing.

As evidenced by our community's approach on ending homelessness, Medicine Hat is known for using innovation to address social issues. For example, Thrive launched Help Seeker, an app that is dedicated to connecting those in need with services near them in real time. Thrive is bringing the community together by removing barriers to access services that will not only lift people out of poverty, but will prevent them from falling into it in the first place. The best part is there is no values test required for this program, as anyone in need qualifies.

I salute our great community leaders whose hard work brought Thrive into focus to ensure everyone in southern Alberta is better off by addressing poverty and increasing well-being.

\* \* \*

### BIBI NASIB KAUR

**Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today I would like to express my feelings regarding a woman who inspired me to be strong and never let adversity hold me back.

[*Translation*]

One month ago, I lost a very special person in my life, my grandmother, Bibi Nasib Kaur, who was born in 1919.

I would like to pay tribute to her in the presence of my colleagues because one of the proudest moments in her life was when I became an MP. She could not believe it. She was born and grew up in an era when women could not find work outside the home, let alone become parliamentarians.

[*English*]

It is rare these days to still see people born in that year, but Bibi Nasib Kaur was a very strong woman, both mentally and physically. She lived through very difficult times. She saw the world change, but no matter what she had to face, she remained unwavering. She was afraid of no one and refused to be intimidated. She would not let herself get pushed around, and she would not be taught how to think or act.

Especially today, when women are carving the way for equality, she is inspirational. I will miss my Bibi.

*Statements by Members***LUNAR NEW YEAR**

**Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Canada's rich multicultural mosaic has brought us vibrant cultural celebrations from every corner of the globe. In the world today, over 1.5 billion people celebrate the lunar new year. This year, 2018, is the year of the dog. With the faces of the world spread across Canada, many Canadians are celebrating the lunar new year with colourful cultural performances, meaningful practices, and delicious food in their own communities.

I was delighted to attend a number of fabulous lunar new year events in metro Toronto. The leader of the NDP, Jagmeet Singh, also joined in the celebration.

In Vancouver East, community leaders have organized the 45th annual Vancouver Chinatown Spring Festival Parade, which will be held on February 18. It will feature traditional lion dancing, multicultural dance troupes, marching bands, martial arts performances, and indigenous drummers.

Together let us all celebrate our families, our heritage, and our diversity.

*Gong Hey Fat Choy. Gong Xi Gong Xi.*

\* \* \*

**REESOR SIDING STRIKE**

**Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Sudbury, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, February 10, 2018, marked the 55th anniversary of the terrible tragedy that happened in a community not too far from my hometown of Kapuskasing called Reesor Siding. Eleven union workers were shot during the Reesor Siding strike of 1963, and three of them lost their lives during a confrontation which happened that very night.

[*Translation*]

The 1963 Reesor Siding strike was one of the most significant and tragic labour disputes in the history of Canada. The strike by lumber and sawmill workers at the Spruce Falls Power and Paper Company tore apart the communities in the region.

•(1405)

[*English*]

I invite all members of the House to learn more about this strike, but mostly, I invite my colleagues to remember the tragedy that happened and to remember Fernand Drouin, and brothers Irenée and Joseph Fortier, who lost their lives while fighting for better working conditions.

Even after half a century, it is regrettable that health and safety in some workplaces in Canada remain an aspiration rather than a reality.

\* \* \*

**LUNAR NEW YEAR**

**Hon. Alice Wong (Richmond Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure and honour that I extend greetings to my House colleagues and Canadians from coast to coast to coast on the occasion of the lunar new year at the end of this week. It is the tradition of Canadians with Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese

heritage to celebrate this wondrous occasion, and I invite all Canadians to celebrate together.

This lunar new year is the year of the dog, an animal that is renowned for its loyalty, honesty, and justness, qualities that I strive to achieve every day in representing the people of Richmond Centre. I encourage all members of the House to reflect upon those very important traits of the dog in the service of their communities and their constituents in the year ahead.

On behalf of my beautiful riding of Richmond Centre, I wish each and every Canadian a happy lunar new year.

*Gong Hey Fat Choy.*

\* \* \*

**BLACK HISTORY MONTH**

**Mr. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Black History Month provides members of Parliament with the opportunity to thank some of our most remarkable community leaders. They are people like Pat Moore.

Pat has been helping people in the Thorncliffe Park and Flemingdon Park communities for decades. People in my riding know Pat has been a tireless supporter of women, children, and youth services. She has been a staunch advocate for programming for women who have experienced physical and emotional abuse, and has been a leader in efforts to financially empower women.

Pat also remains a key leader in the co-operative housing movement in Toronto. She is vice-president of the Thorncliffe Park Tenants Association, advocating for residents. For more than 30 years, she has worked with TNO, the Thorncliffe Neighbourhood Office in Thorncliffe Park.

Of course, there are days that when I see her coming, I get a little nervous knowing she will have work for me to do. However, she always stands out as a figure whose commitment and dedication to our community are worthy of championing during Black History Month.

I thank Pat for all she has done, and all she continues to contribute to Don Valley West.

\* \* \*

**DORIS MCLEAN**

**Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness that I rise to pay tribute on the passing of Yukon elder Doris McLean, who was a great mentor to me when I was president of the Skookum Jim Friendship Centre.

McLean was a pioneer in indigenous self-government and the revitalization of first nation language and culture. As chief of the Carcross/Tagish First Nation from 1988 to 1992, she helped to finalize Yukon's Umbrella Final Agreement modern treaty in 1990, giving her people self-government.

In the 1970s, she established the Skookum Jim/Keish Tlingit Dancers, which would eventually evolve into the nationally celebrated Dakhká Khwáan Dancers. She would serve as the group's founding elder. Her daughter Marilyn Jensen is one of its most prominent members.

*Statements by Members*

Throughout her career of service, she would also serve as the first Canadian female indigenous sergeant-at-arms for the Yukon Legislative Assembly.

Doris McLean's wisdom, storytelling, and sense of humour will be missed by us all.

*Kwānaschis.*

\* \* \*

**CANADA SUMMER JOBS PROGRAM**

**Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, constituents in my riding were shocked that the Prime Minister bullied them. He bullied organizations and businesses that use Canada summer jobs funding to hire Canadian students. He told funding applicants that they had to sign his new attestation form confirming that their core values were his core values.

The Prime Minister's decision to force his values test on Canadians is inappropriate and wrong. It is an attack on our Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and it is already hurting Canadian communities. Roughly half the applicants from my riding of Langley—Aldergrove were impacted by this heavy-handed decision. This summer, students will not get the jobs they were counting on to help pay for their tuition. The homeless will not get the help they need. The disabled and seniors will not get the help they need. The environment will not get the help it needs.

This new values test is hurting Canada. The Prime Minister needs to apologize and stop his intolerant discrimination.

\* \* \*

**FISHERIES**

**Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in my riding, fishing is one of our most important industries. Our tasty cold-water fish can be found on the plates of happy consumers around the world.

Cape Breton's fishing communities are very happy with the trade agreements our government is working hard on to reduce duties on our international fish exports, making these products more affordable to all and putting more money in our fishers' pockets.

Another good news story for our fisheries I would like to state in the House is the recent announcement the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard made last week in Vancouver. The minister's amendments to the Fisheries Act protect our much valued fish habitats, have more indigenous involvement, and most importantly, maintain the fabric of our communities by keeping the fishing enterprises family owned and operated.

I would like to welcome to Ottawa today fisheries representatives from the Atlantic region and Gaspé area, including John Couture of Cape Breton, and his delegation, to discuss these positive changes to this very important industry.

● (1410)

[*Translation*]

**BIKE RACE ACROSS LAC SAINT-JEAN**

**Mr. Richard Hébert (Lac-Saint-Jean, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the lac Saint-Jean bike race will be held from February 15 to 17. This event, a finalist in the 2017 Canadian Tourism Awards, is a way for many of my constituents and tourists to discover the beauty of lac Saint-Jean in the winter by bicycling a 32 kilometre snowy ice trail.

This event boosts the region's tourism and economy. I would like to thank everyone involved in organizing it, directly or indirectly. Good luck to all the adventurers from around the world who will be participating in this unique event.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**CHRIS STOCKWELL**

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (York—Simcoe, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this week, we lost former Ontario MPP Chris Stockwell. Stockwell was always feisty, colourful, and determined.

As a municipal councillor in Etobicoke, as a Progressive Conservative MPP, as a provincial cabinet minister, Chris Stockwell was truly one of a kind. He even did a stint as the speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario in what some saw as a somewhat ironic turn, but it meant that the workload for the speaker was a little bit lighter. He was a maverick and a rebel.

Throughout his career in serving the public, Stockwell's fierce independence was on full display, and he became well known for his penchant for performance and irreverent sense of humour. Chris was a personality. His booming voice and character filled any room. We always knew if Chris was there.

Stockwell always believed in speaking his mind and fighting for what he believed. For this, he garnered the respect of friends and opponents alike. His contribution to our province will be long remembered, as will his fierce determination and character.

\* \* \*

**ARTS COUNCIL OF SURREY**

**Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, for over 50 years, the Arts Council of Surrey has given local artists a platform and opportunity to showcase their skills and abilities.

At my constituency office in Surrey—Newton, I am proud to display amazing drawings and paintings by local residents. Their talent and commitment in promoting culture represents Surrey at its best and I am proud to showcase their works to the hundreds of constituents that visit my office every week.

I thank the Arts Council of Surrey for continuing to promote literary, visual, and performing arts in our community of Surrey.

*Oral Questions***AGRICULTURE DAY**

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, today, as it has been for our entire existence, the common denominator among humankind is our collective need to eat.

Thousands of years ago, the agricultural revolution fundamentally transformed our species. Gone was the need for us to roam and to hunt and gather our resources in order to ensure our survival. We finally developed the ability to grow our own food in one place, which allowed us to start to develop complex societies, cultures, and civilizations.

I want to stand here today as the newly minted NDP critic for agriculture to offer my sincere thanks and appreciation for the patience, determination, and hard work of the men and women who grow our food and make our society possible.

Let us highlight the remarkable work of our farmers who, on a daily basis, provide us with fresh, local, and good-quality products, from farm to table. On behalf of the entire NDP caucus, I wish everyone a happy Agriculture Day.

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**HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Niagara Falls, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, recently, I held a round table in my riding of Niagara Falls to dialogue with community leaders on how we can work together to combat human trafficking.

My colleague, the former MP Joy Smith, has done much to raise awareness on this tragic issue and will be appearing before the justice committee in March as we prepare to study human trafficking in Canada. Among the initiatives she has developed is a documentary called *Human Trafficking: Canada's Secret Shame*. The documentary is used as a tool to educate young girls on how traffickers use mediums such as social media to lure young people into the sex trafficking trade.

If people have a daughter, granddaughter, or niece, she is at risk of being trafficked. These evil predators prey upon girls whose average recruitment age is thirteen.

I am pleased that the justice committee is determined to shine a light on this terrible crime, and hopefully in the process, help to keep Canadian girls and women safe.

\* \* \*

●(1415)

**AGRICULTURE DAY**

**Mr. T.J. Harvey (Tobique—Mactaquac, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize February 13 as Canada's Agriculture Day. As chair of the all-party agriculture caucus, I hosted a breakfast with industry leaders this morning along with my colleagues and co-chairs, the member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound and the member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot.

We would like to recognize the great work being done around excellence in agricultural innovation and all those who contribute to

the future of the agriculture and agri-food sectors, including artificial intelligence and robotics.

The opportunities for Canada's farmers and food processors on the global stage are nothing short of breathtaking. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization has projected that global demand for food is projected to increase by 60% by 2050.

I would like to reiterate Canada's message about the need to invest in innovation to help feed a growing population while protecting the environment. Today, 5% of the population feeds 95% of those who do not produce food. There is no question that innovation will play a critical role in helping the sector meet these demands.

I would like to extend an invitation to all my colleagues on both sides of the House to come to room 525, 180 Wellington, to sign my "how long have you been farming?" poster.

Last, if people have eaten today, take five minutes and thank a farmer.

**ORAL QUESTIONS**

[English]

**NATURAL RESOURCES**

**Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Trans Mountain pipeline project is an important project. It is a \$7.4 billion investment and 37,000 good-paying Canadian jobs. There is much opposition to this project. They are saying that they are going to interrupt it and delay, and the government is silent throughout this whole time. What is the impact of that? Industry is watching closely, and as well there is a growing crisis among our provinces.

Will the Prime Minister stand up for Canadians relying on these jobs, bring certainty, and unveil his plan to allow construction to start this spring?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have always said that we will make sure that the environment and the economy go together. Unlike what the previous government did, we have taken action exactly on that. We have moved forward on a national plan to reduce carbon emissions. We have moved forward on historic oceans protection. We are moving forward on projects like the Kinder Morgan pipeline that will get our resources to new markets safely and securely. That is what Canadians expect.

That is why I have been across the country speaking with premiers, speaking with Canadians, hearing from both sides of the argument, and remaining steadfast. The Kinder Morgan pipeline will be built.

**Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, unfortunately those are just words and platitudes that the government is utilizing.

Right now, as we speak, industry is responding to the uncertainty and instability that the government's lack of action is causing. Kinder Morgan has already indicated that it is going to be delaying and slowing its investments in the pipeline. The message to the world is that Canada is not open for business.

*Oral Questions*

The Prime Minister can make these concerns go away by showing a bit of leadership. It is simple. When will he guarantee the construction of the pipeline in Burnaby?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I find it humorous that members opposite are talking about showing leadership. For 10 years they did not get anything built and when they approved the northern gateway pipeline, which was not a very good pipeline, they did it by press release in the middle of the night. When we approved the Kinder Morgan pipeline, I stood at a press conference, announced it myself, and then crossed the country taking responsibility for it and demonstrating that it is in the national interest.

For 10 years they had a failed process that could not get things built. We know that by restoring public trust, by protecting the environment, we can grow the economy.

**Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of heat and light in the Prime Minister's kind words but the reality is that he is not getting anything done. Let us take a bit of a review.

Five months ago, the Liberals botched the energy east pipeline and that was 14,000 jobs on a \$15 billion project. Now we have another crisis and another 37,000 jobs. Clearly, the Prime Minister does not actually feel moved by the industry's concerns. Maybe he is going to be moved by the fact that it is 50,000 jobs.

Seriously, how many more well-paying Canadian jobs do we need to put in jeopardy to get him moving?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Again, Mr. Speaker, for 10 years those members talked up the energy industry but actually could not deliver for it. What was I doing? I went down to Washington, D.C., to make the pitch for Keystone XL to a group of American Democrats. That is what I was doing while I was leader of the third party.

I have continued to focus on delivering it. I have focused on making sure we protect the environment and grow the economy together. That is exactly what we are doing and that is why they keep talking down our chances of getting that pipeline built. We will get it built.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

• (1420)

**The Speaker:** Order. I would ask colleagues to remember that each side gets its turn and members wait for their side in each case. We do not interrupt.

The hon. member for Richmond—Arthabaska.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Trans Mountain project will create tens of thousands of jobs and benefit every part of the country. Before that can happen, however, the Prime Minister needs to address the situation instead of letting it deteriorate, which is what he is doing. Thousands of jobs are on the line because of our Prime Minister's lack of leadership. On top of all that, last week, Canada lost a contract worth hundreds of millions in Mirabel, and NAFTA talks are stalling.

Will the Prime Minister tell Canadians how he is planning to resolve the crisis in Alberta and British Columbia?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I made it very clear that we will get the pipelines built. We know it is in the country's interest. This situation is interesting because we know there are people in British Columbia who oppose the pipelines. I am telling them that the pipelines will be built anyway. When Alberta Conservatives go on about the pipeline not being built, however, they are undermining the process and creating uncertainty. We have said it before, and we will say it again: we will get the pipeline built.

**Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would just like to remind the Prime Minister that I am a proud Conservative from Quebec, in case he does not know. I quite like our friends from Alberta, too.

If the Prime Minister knows this matter is urgent, if he knows that the natural resources sector is important to our economy and our country, if he knows that thousands of jobs are at stake, then the question is a simple one. We do not want words. We want to know exactly what steps the Prime Minister will take to resolve the crisis in Alberta and British Columbia.

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the members opposite want to know what steps we will take. We will get the pipeline built.

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**TAXATION**

**Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister informed us yesterday that the Canada Revenue Agency is finally going to share its data with the parliamentary budget officer after making him wait for 62 months. It may be too early to celebrate, however, and this agreement does not address the main problem, which is the agency's refusal to be transparent and accountable.

The agency acts as though it is not accountable to Parliament. The privacy of taxpayers must be protected. However, we have a major problem when agency officials use legislation to shield themselves from parliamentarians rather than to protect taxpayers.

When will the Liberals make the agency accountable to Parliament?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we understand that it is important that the data used by the parliamentary budget officer be reliable and accurate. That is why we have enhanced the position of the PBO and made him an officer of Parliament after Harper's Conservatives spent years undermining his credibility.

As far as the CRA's data is concerned, the Agency has concluded an agreement with the PBO and will, by the end of the month, provide it its data in a manner geared to protect Canadians' privacy. We will continue to support and respect the work of officers of Parliament.

**Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my question was about the lack of accountability of the Canada Revenue Agency.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

The government is actually acting exactly the same way that the previous government did, not only in protecting the unaccountable Canada Revenue Agency, but also in withholding information on tax havens.

Canada just signed two new tax treaties, with Antigua and Barbuda, and Grenada. What do those tax treaties do? They allow corporations to set up subsidiaries in those low-tax countries where their worldwide profits will be attributed, and they will bring those profits back into Canada tax free.

Why are Liberals continuing to sign those tax-avoidance agreements?

• (1425)

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as Canadians expect, we are moving forward to combat tax evasion and tax avoidance. We put close to \$1 billion in our first two budgets towards the Canada Revenue Agency to ensure that everyone pays their fair share of taxes.

That is exactly what we are continuing to do. We will continue to make sure that everyone pays their fair share of taxes. That is what Canadians expect of us.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, to make matters worse, they are still signing treaties with tax havens. That is a fact.

The Prime Minister could act now on certain issues. More than \$3 billion is being lost due to tax loopholes like stock option deductions. More than \$10 billion in tax dollars are ending up in tax havens, while Canadians go without housing and medication and many first nations communities have no clean drinking water. It is a matter of choice.

Will the Prime Minister take action on these unfair loopholes?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to answer the member's question by talking about what we are doing on social housing.

Working with the provinces, we are investing \$40 billion in affordable social housing across the country. These are historic and unprecedented investments. We are investing in our indigenous communities to end boil water advisories nationwide by 2021. We are also investing in Canadians in need and middle-class Canadians through the Canada child benefit. We are going to continue to invest in those in need.

*[English]*

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the truth is, we have never seen so much inequality in this country as under this Prime Minister's watch.

The truth is that this Prime Minister simply does not know how to say no to wealthy Canadians who want to escape taxes by taking their money overseas. That hurts Canadians: Canadians who cannot pay for medication, Canadians who are on the streets because there is so little affordable housing, and indigenous communities that have no drinking water.

Why does the Prime Minister not take action on tax havens so Canadians can have pharmacare, affordable housing, and safe drinking water?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I said, we have and will continue to take action on tax avoidance and tax evasion, but it is nice that the members opposite are bringing up pharmacare, because we recognize on this side of the House that Canadians pay too much for prescription drugs, and our government is taking bold action now to bring down prices. We joined the provinces and territories as a member of the pan-Canadian Pharmaceutical Alliance, which negotiates lower drug prices on behalf of public drug plans. Through budget 2017, we are investing over \$140 million to help improve access to pharmaceuticals and to support innovations within the health care system. We are going to continue to ensure that Canadians can better afford the—

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

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## NATURAL RESOURCES

**Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister just keeps saying that the pipeline will be built, I guess by magic, since Kinder Morgan says it is slowing down its operations, slowing down spending, and delaying it for more than a year. More delays continue to threaten this project every single day. The application was first filed over 2,000 days ago. The pipeline, clearly in the national interest, was approved over 440 days ago, and these delays continue to pile up and pile up. It is just words and no action.

Where is the plan? Table it on Thursday.

How many more days will it be before construction begins in Burnaby?

**Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the British Columbia government says it is going to consult people. The Government of Canada has already consulted tens of thousands of people, and Canadians agree with us that this pipeline is in Canada's interest because of the jobs it creates, because of the expansion of export markets, and because of the \$1.5 billion invested in a world-class oceans protection plan. We have intervened with the proponent of the National Energy Board when we thought it would lead to delays. There will be no unnecessary delays. This pipeline will be built.

**Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it does not matter if he just keeps saying the same thing over and over. It is not actually a plan, it is not actually going to get done, and it means absolutely nothing. Liberals obviously will not stand up for their own approval of a pipeline clearly in the national interest. The minister is saying that the recent consultations are legitimate and there is nothing to be seen here, but it is clearly an attempt to continue to delay the project.



*Oral Questions*

Deliver the plan and confirm: When will construction on the Trans Mountain pipeline begin?

**Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we do not have any difficulty repeating the government's position, and I do not know why members opposite cannot take yes for an answer. Yes, we think the pipeline is a good idea. Yes, we approved the pipeline. Yes, we intervened at the National Energy Board when it wanted to delay the pipeline. We want the pipeline built.

How about members of the opposition? What chill are they putting on investment by their incessant questions?

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

● (1430)

**The Speaker:** Order, order. The hon. member for Carleton will come to order.

The hon. member for Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock.

**Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, all words from the minister and still no action plan.

The trade war between B.C. and Alberta is escalating every day. While this crisis develops, the Prime Minister crosses his fingers and hopes the provinces will just work it out instead of having to demonstrate any real national leadership himself. Wishful thinking will not get this pipeline built.

It has been 441 days since this project was approved. When will the Prime Minister open his eyes and start supporting hard-working Canadian families who are depending on this project?

**Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we live in a federation where provincial governments have strong points of view, and they are elected to speak on behalf of their own constituencies, the people who elected them, and their own interpretation of their provincial interests. There is only one government that speaks on behalf of the national interest, and that is the Government of Canada. We acted in the national interest when we approved this pipeline, and, in those months that have intervened, nothing has changed.

**Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Trans Mountain expansion project is in the national interest. It will create jobs across the country and provide provinces with access to global markets. The dispute between Alberta and British Columbia has escalated solely because the Prime Minister has failed to show any leadership, choosing instead to leave the country while this crisis came to a head. Every day of inaction by the Liberals fuels the national conflict.

When will the Prime Minister shelve the rhetoric, get Alberta and B.C. together, and set a date for construction to begin?

**Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let us examine the Conservative record on this file: in 10 years, not one kilometre of pipe built to tidewater, an erosion of public trust in the regulatory system that we are going to fix, insufficient consultation with indigenous communities, court case after court case that said they blew it. We are going to get it right.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** Order. The hon. member for Barrie—Innisfil and others know the Standing Orders. They know that we are not permitted to interrupt in this place, and I know that members can manage to hold themselves until it is their side's turn.

The hon. member for Chilliwack—Hope.

**Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, thousands of jobs across the country are being put at risk because the Prime Minister is sitting on the sidelines while an approved energy project faces uncertainty and delay. He refuses to stand up to the opponents of the Trans Mountain pipeline, and now the B.C. wine industry is becoming collateral damage as a result. We need less talk and more action from this Prime Minister. Will he tell Canadians what his actual plan is, or is his real plan to let others kill this project and the thousands of jobs that go along with it?

**Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, they are bashing in an open door. They cannot take yes for an answer. I guess we can say it one more time. We want the pipeline to proceed. We have approved it. We have approved it with conditions. We are investing a billion and a half dollars in the oceans protection plan. We are working with indigenous communities up and down the line. What is the opposition doing? The opposition is chilling investor confidence with a record that opposition members should be ashamed of.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** Order. I am sure that the opposition House leader has read the Standing Orders. She knows we are not to interrupt in this place.

The hon. member for Chilliwack—Hope.

**Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, energy workers, the B.C. wine industry, and national unity are all being threatened by this escalating dispute, yet the Prime Minister actually said, "I'm not going to opine on disagreements between the provinces in this case." What a sorry excuse for national leadership. Why does the Prime Minister not opine that the rule of law will be upheld? Why does he not opine that innocent bystanders will not be collateral damage in this dispute? Why does he not get off the sidelines and fight for the jobs that we lost because of his inaction?

● (1435)

**Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister says it in Edmonton, we say it in Vancouver, we say it in Regina, and we say it in St. John's, Newfoundland. We say it in every region of the country. Why do we say it in every region of the country? We say it because the message is a national one and it is clear. We will move our resources to market sustainably. We will expand export markets. We will work with indigenous peoples. We will protect the environment. We are the only party in this chamber that will do all three of those things.

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD**

**Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, today is Canada's Agriculture Day. In honour of this day, the Liberals are refusing to create a trust similar to PACA for perishable goods. In addition, there is still not even a hint of support for milk producers in response to the loopholes opened in CETA, not to mention the potential loopholes to come in NAFTA and the TPP. The government should be ashamed today.

When will the government fulfill its promises to our family farms and implement safeguards to ensure that the people who feed our families every day can also feed their own families?

[English]

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the fact is, as I have said many times, we are the party that implemented supply management and we are the government that is going to protect it. We are going to put programs in place in order to make sure that our food and vegetable sector are also in the trade to export around the world. We also put a program in place after CETA to make sure that the dairy industry itself was on the cutting edge, \$250 million. We put another \$100 million in place to make sure that the processing sector was in place. We have and will continue to—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, for a party that says it likes to stand with farmers, its talking points are sure falling short. Creating a PACA-like deemed trust for producers of perishable goods in Canada is what our produce growers want. Two parliamentary committees, agriculture and finance, unanimously recommended that greater measures are needed to protect Canadian produce growers, but Liberal ministers will not even consider it. On Canada's Agriculture Day, will the government stop breaking its election promises, put the money where its mouth is, and support our produce growers and small businesses?

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I can assure my hon. colleague that the government is committed to the financial success of our fruit and vegetable farmers.

We will be creating a single dispute resolution body, which should resolve the majority of non-payment incidents faced by our producers. Working with farmers, today we are going to make a number of announcements that will indicate just how much more we fully support the agriculture and agrifood sector across the country.

\* \* \*

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC):** Well, Mr. Speaker, the more we dig into the new environmental review process the uglier it gets.

The minister appears to have embedded in the bill provisions that will empower her to delay, suspend, and veto a project before it ever undergoes a full science-based review. That is not a streamlined process; that is a minister-knows-best process, which is based on politics and not science.

How can we trust a process based on the minister's whims? Will the minister now agree to remove her veto power from the bill?

**Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is extraordinarily rich to hear the party opposite talk about science. The Conservatives never ever took into account science or indigenous knowledge. They never listened to Canadians. They never respected the rights of indigenous people. They could not get good projects built.

We understand that the environment and the economy go together, that decisions need to be made on science and indigenous knowledge, and that we need good projects to go ahead. That is exactly what we are doing.

**Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the minister spends more time slinging partisan mud and personal attacks than improving Canada's environment. The Liberals have broken more economic promises than we can count. They killed northern gateway, energy east, and are letting Kinder Morgan die a slow and painful death. Now they are creating an environmental review process that is filled with more uncertainty than ever before, discouraging investment in Canada.

When will the minister finally stop her partisan attacks and rebuild investor confidence in Canada's resource sector?

● (1440)

**Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I certainly encourage the party opposite to stop the partisan attacks.

We understand that the environment and the economy go together. We have also created over half a million jobs. We have the lowest unemployment rate since we have been tracking unemployment rates. We are also tackling climate change. We are committed to reconciliation with indigenous people. We make decisions on science. We protect our animals, our waters, and our air.

Environment and the economy have to go together. Why does the party opposite not come to the party?

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives implemented a rigorous environmental assessment process enabling Canada to meet its economic and energy needs, all while ensuring that approval decisions are based on science. With Bill C-69, the Liberals are trying to turn this process upside down, even though it works very well.

Can the minister tell us which projects approved under the former process she does not agree with? Which projects would she like to see fail?

**Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our party makes decisions based on science, and the party opposite makes decisions based on science fiction. For projects to move forward, we must make decisions based on science, we must listen to Canadians, and we must work with indigenous peoples. Otherwise, these projects will not move forward. The environment and the economy go hand in hand. I hope that, one day, the party opposite will understand this.

\* \* \*

[English]

**INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the changes to the Navigation Protection Act proposed by the minister will delay and increase red tape and costs for rural municipalities building vital infrastructure. The Liberals' changes also reflect their lack of understanding of the importance of resource development to Canada's economy.

Why are the Liberals opposing responsible resource development and delaying vital infrastructure projects in rural communities across Canada?

**Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are very proud of the changes we have made to the Canadian navigable waters act, an act that had been gutted by the previous government, an act in which Canadians no longer had confidence.

We have restored the protection in the navigable waters act, and Canadians can be very proud of the fact that we are looking after their interests with respect to navigation.

\* \* \*

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals promised to actually strengthen the environmental assessment process gutted by the Conservatives. It is still in place. They promised to remove political considerations from assessments and base decisions on project approvals on scientific evidence, yet Bill C-69 retains the government's ability to disregard scientific evidence, traditional knowledge, identification of adverse impacts, health risks, and community concerns, and still deem the project to be in the public interest.

How can the Minister of Environment defend this bill as a strengthened law?

**Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am thrilled to defend the new environmental assessment act we are proposing. I am certainly interested in hearing any proposed changes that may come from the other side that can make it stronger, but we believe we have got it spot on.

We understand we need to make decisions based on science and traditional knowledge, that we need to be respecting the rights of indigenous peoples and partnering from the start, that we need to be listening to communities, and that we need good projects to go ahead.

On one hand, we have a party that does not understand that we need to ensure we protect the environment. We have another party that does not understand that projects need to go ahead. That is where we—

[Translation]

**The Speaker:** Order. The hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie.

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, after dragging their feet for two years, the Liberals are proposing a new environmental assessment process, but it includes some nasty surprises.

Timelines for studies are even shorter than under the Conservatives and, more importantly, the minister is not bound by the recommendations resulting from assessments. Even if citizens oppose a project, even if it is scientifically proven to be a bad project, the minister can approve it anyway.

Is the notion of national interest the Liberals' loophole for approving whatever they want, despite the will of the people, despite the science, and despite input from indigenous peoples?

● (1445)

**Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we listened carefully to Canadians for two years. We listened to indigenous peoples. We listened to scientists. We listened to industry. We listened to environmentalists.

We know that we have a good process. We will be making decisions based on science. We will be partnering with indigenous peoples. We will listen to communities. We will make decisions based on those facts.

We know that the economy and the environment go hand in hand, and we will always stand up for both.

\* \* \*

**THE ECONOMY**

**Mrs. Mona Fortier (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the results speak for themselves. Our plan is working. It is helping Canadians create jobs and it is growing our economy. However, we still have some work to do.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Over 500,000 jobs have been created since the government came to office, and Canada is leading the G7 in growth. Canadians are feeling more confident about their future.

Could the Minister of Finance please update the House on the next steps that we are taking to strengthen Canada's middle class and help those working hard to join it?

**Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, over the last couple of years the plan we have put in place for Canadians has made real improvements for middle-class Canadians.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** Order, please. Usually I can at least hear the question. This time it is hard to hear both. I would ask members to come to order.

The hon. Minister of Finance has the floor.

**Hon. Bill Morneau:** Mr. Speaker, we have seen real improvements over the last couple of years for middle-class Canadians, more confidence, and among the lowest unemployment rates in the last four years. However, there is more work to do.

On February 27, we are going to announce the next budget to continue our plan.

\* \* \*

*[Translation]***AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD**

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today we should be celebrating Canada's Agriculture Day, a day to celebrate our farmers and ranchers across the country.

Farmers and their families work hard to feed their community, our country, and the world. Unfortunately, that is not a priority for this government.

The Minister of Finance treated farmers like tax cheats, the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food is not taking part in international negotiations, and the Minister of Health does not want to hear what farmers have to say about the new food guide.

Will the Liberal government finally do the right thing and listen to what farmers have to say about their future?

*[English]*

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I assure my hon. colleague that we have been listening to farmers and that we are responding to farmers. In fact, we invested \$100 million in agricultural science. That is much better than cutting some money in agricultural science.

An innovations fund of \$1.1 billion is available to agriculture. We have agreed with the provinces and territories to put the CAP, the Canadian agricultural partnership, in place; \$3 billion for the agriculture and agrifood sector; and it goes on. In order to increase trade, we have approved CETA and we have agreed to the CPTPP.

*[Translation]***INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, let us talk about the TPPCPTPTPP, or however many more *P's* they want to add.

Canadian producers are becoming increasingly concerned. More than two weeks after the announcement of an agreement regarding the trans-Pacific partnership, there has been radio silence on compensation programs. In fact, 80% of dairy farmers do not have access to the program cobbled together by the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food. Nothing for egg producers, or poultry farmers. The Conservative government put \$4 billion on the table. The Liberals have no plan.

How is the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food going to ensure that no new concessions will be made to the Americans under NAFTA?

**Hon. Andrew Leslie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Canada-U.S. Relations), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have been clear. We continue to defend supply management. In fact, with the exception of some members of the official opposition, everyone in the House but the Conservative Party believes in supply management. Our position on this issue is clear. We have always defended the system, including during NAFTA negotiations, and we will continue to defend it.

\* \* \*

● (1450)

*[English]***HEALTH**

**Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today is Canada's Agriculture Day. It is a day where across Canada we celebrate our producers and thank them for all they do. However, our farmers and ranchers are not celebrating because the Liberals have shut them out of the discussion on the Canada food guide.

Our producers put their heart and soul into producing quality food for Canadians, however, it is these folks who will be directly impacted by these ill-advised decisions.

In the spirit of this important day, will the Liberals reverse this ideological decision and listen to the agriculture sector and health experts to ensure we have a balanced approach to the Canadian food guide?

**Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to protecting the health of Canadians and supporting an environment that makes the healthy choice the easy choice.

For the past 70 years, Canada's food guide has been one of the most trusted sources of information for Canadians. As a part of the healthy eating strategy, work today on the Canada food guide is well under way. We are engaging with Canadians, experts, and stakeholders.

*Oral Questions*

I was pleased to meet with people from the dairy industry yesterday. They are going to be appearing as witnesses at the health committee in a very timely manner.

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**INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

**Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the trans-Pacific partnership is a vital agreement. It will give our agriculture and agribusiness exporters unprecedented market access to high value markets like Japan, Vietnam, and Malaysia. It will also give us a competitive advantage over the United States. However, there is very real concern that Canada could miss out on these vital new markets if we are not one of the first members to ratify the agreement.

On Canada's Agriculture Day, can the Liberals assure our agriculture and agrifood exporters that they will sign the TPP later next month and will ratify it next summer?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as the member has said, this is a good agreement on Agriculture Day. We should all celebrate in the House that this is going to be good for our country. Thanks to the Prime Minister, we will be signing the CPTPP in March, and we will proceed with ratification.

However, let me again say what this entails for Canadians. We have opened up a market of more than 500 million people, 40% of the world economy. This is a great day for agriculture. This is a great day for Canada. Thanks to the Prime Minister, we will have our position in the Asia Pacific region.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the war of words between the United States and North Korea and the growing tensions with Russia have led the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientist to set the hands of the doomsday clock at two minutes to midnight.

Obviously, the world would be a safer place without nuclear weapons, and Canada should participate in the diplomatic efforts being made to achieve that goal.

Will the Prime Minister commit to ensuring that Canada signs the nuclear weapons ban treaty, which is supported by 120 countries?

**Mr. Matt DeCoursey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canada strongly supports worldwide nuclear disarmament and continues to support efforts in that area. We recently announced an additional investment of \$1.5 million to support the International Atomic Energy Agency in its important work. We are fully committed to making meaningful progress toward a nuclear weapons-free world, and that includes our work toward a treaty to ban nuclear weapons. That is the firm stand that Canada has taken on this issue.

[English]

**Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Canada has traditionally been a leader on the world

stage on nuclear disarmament at the same time as being an active member of NATO. Since a core tenet of NATO is to create the conditions for a world free of nuclear weapons, there is clearly no obstacle to Canada signing the nuclear prohibition treaty.

Therefore, will the Prime Minister now take bold action, sign the nuclear prohibition treaty, and then instruct our NATO ambassador to start working to get all of our NATO allies behind this treaty so Canada can help the world move back from the brink of nuclear disaster?

**Mr. Matt DeCoursey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canada unequivocally supports global nuclear disarmament. We continue to support efforts that substantially contribute to this goal.

We recently announced an additional \$1.5 million for the International Atomic Energy Agency to support its important work on non-proliferation. We are committed to work that will take concrete steps towards a nuclear-free world. This includes the important work that Canada is doing on a treaty that will help to halt the production of material for nuclear weapons. Canada has and remains an important player in the global nuclear disarmament movement.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**HEALTH**

**Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the new version of Canada's food guide that was introduced by the Liberal government seems to be based on ideology rather than science.

We are concerned about the impact that the lack of consultation and the refusal to consult with Canada's agriculture and agrifood partners will have on Canadians' health.

Will the government reconsider its narrow-minded and ill-advised approach and finally hold broader consultations on the food guide with all agriculture and agrifood stakeholders for the good of all Canadians?

● (1455)

**Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I had the pleasure of meeting with stakeholders from the dairy industry.

Our government is committed to protecting the health of Canadians and to supporting a health framework based on healthy choices. For over 70 years, Canada's food guide has been Canada's most trusted source of information on healthy eating. Canada's food guide is being updated as part of the healthy eating strategy, and we are working with Canadians, experts, and stakeholders. Health Canada is committed to making decisions based on the best data available.

*Oral Questions*

[English]

**INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

**Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister will soon be meeting with officials in India to hopefully discuss trade, in between selfies and photo ops.

Recent changes to India's import policies resulted in debilitating tariffs on Canadian pulse exports, putting critical trade agreements and market access in serious jeopardy. With pulse exports to India worth over \$1.5 billion, it is critical for Canada to work on a clear agreement.

Will the Prime Minister include the agriculture minister on this important trade mission?

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are extremely concerned and disappointed with India's increase in import duties, without any advance notice to Canada or any other nation. We are raising our concerns with the Government of India, including on a recent trade mission by the Minister of International Trade, who brought it up on every occasion.

This week I was in Saskatchewan meeting with the pulse farmers and announced funding for market development. What we want to do is to create more markets for the pulse industry in this country.

\* \* \*

**HEALTH**

**Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, agriculture, especially in my province of Manitoba, is an integral part of the community.

We are all very proud of our agriculture contributions to Canada and beyond. Products like Bothwell cheese and HyLife pork are world-class products with excellent nutritional value. However, the Liberal government seems to disagree. The new Canadian food guide is an attack on meat and dairy producers.

Why have the Liberals chosen to downplay the vital role of meat and dairy products in the diets of Canadians? Why this attack on science?

**Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday I had the privilege of meeting with the dairy industry of Canada and had a very productive meeting.

[Translation]

Our government is committed to safeguarding Canadians' health and supporting a health framework that makes the healthy choice the easier choice. For 70 years, Canada's food guide has been Canada's most trusted source of information for Canadians. As part of the healthy eating strategy, Canada's food guide is in the process of being updated, and we are collaborating with Canadians and experts in all fields. Health Canada is committed to using the best available data to make decisions about Canada's food guide.

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**INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg (Bourassa, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, one year ago, Engineers Without Borders released the results of a survey

of young Canadians about greater global development. The results showed that responding to humanitarian crises and natural disasters, promoting access to healthcare for women, children, and youth, and promoting gender equality are key policies that Canada should pursue.

Can the Minister of International Development tell the House how Canada plans to make this vision a reality?

**Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of International Development and La Francophonie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Bourassa for his question and for his interest in international development and our youth. Our government wants to offer young Canadians a personally and professionally rewarding international experience. That is why I recently announced that about 20 Canadian organizations will be sharing more than \$34 million to offer 1,800 youth internships in developing countries. I myself did a similar internship in Morocco, and I urge all young Canadians to apply.

\* \* \*

[English]

**VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Phil McColeman (Brantford—Brant, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister and the Liberals have broken their trust with veterans. Brian Forbes, chairman of the National Council of the Veterans Associations, had this to say about the Liberal promises. He said, "It's fair to say the disappointment (with the new plan) has been immense because it just didn't do the trick.... If you're going to make a promise to provide lifetime pensions, then do it."

Despite the Liberals' rhetoric, veterans consider the promises made to them to be broken. Why is the Prime Minister the only one convinced that they have kept their promises to veterans?

● (1500)

**Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, an increased pain and suffering award, an increased income replacement, increased estate exemption for veterans funerals and burials, an education benefit of up to \$80,000, redesigned career transition, a recognition benefit for caregivers, a centre for excellence for PTSD, 460 more staff, 10 offices, and a pension for life, for everything the Conservatives took away that I listed yesterday, we are delivering on real benefits and services.

Veterans deserve more than words. They—

*Oral Questions*

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Desnethé—Mississippi—Churchill River.

\* \* \*

**JUSTICE**

**Ms. Georgina Jolibois (Desnethé—Mississippi—Churchill River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the government gave vague answers on what their plan was in the aftermath of the trial over Colten Boushie's killing. We must address the under-representation of indigenous peoples on juries and judicial benches. This situation is a crisis of trust and the jury trial in the case of Colten Boushie increases mistrust of the justice system for indigenous peoples.

I will repeat. What is the government's specific plan to ensure that indigenous peoples are treated fairly by our justice system?

**Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have been working diligently since we came into government, building on the work that has occurred over decades advocated by indigenous peoples and the like to ultimately improve our criminal justice system. We will propose broad-based reform to the criminal justice system and we have, as I stated yesterday, committed to looking at the under-representation of indigenous peoples on juries. We are moving forward with that and we will listen to all the voices with respect to that particular issue and move forward in an appropriate way.

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**AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD**

**Mr. Pat Finnigan (Miramichi—Grand Lake, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today is Canada's Agriculture Day, a day to celebrate the food we love and showcase our world-class farmers, ranchers, and growers from coast to coast to coast, of which I am one myself. Canadian agriculture is stronger, more innovative, and more diverse than ever and our government is committed to continuing this growth and investing in the future of Canadian farmers.

Could the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food tell us about today's announcement to build a strong future for Canadian agriculture?

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Miramichi—Grand Lake for his hard work for our farmers and ranchers throughout this country.

Today, I am celebrating Canada's Agriculture Day by launching six federal programs under the Canadian agricultural partnership. The partnership will drive a strong agenda for the future of Canadian agriculture. These investments will ensure Canadian agriculture remains a leader in job creation and innovation and to make sure that we reach our target of \$75 billion of agriculture and agri-food exports by 2025.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**TAXATION**

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the government keeps saying that it is a strong advocate for the middle class, but it is in

cahoots with the wealthy to help them get richer at the expense of the poor, who are being forced to cover the government's outlandish spending. We just learned that the government has given access to new tax havens in Granada and in Antigua and Barbuda.

When will this government be truly transparent with taxpayers, honestly work in their interests, and stop signing agreements with tax havens?

**Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be clear: fighting tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance is a priority for our government.

We are working closely with our international partners because this is a global problem with no simple solution, contrary to what my colleagues opposite seem to think. We adhere to all provisions of the international standard for automatic exchange of information with OECD partners. Starting this year, we will have access to even more information supplied by our partners. I remind my colleagues opposite that under their government, former minister Jean-Pierre Blackburn announced publicly that this was not a priority.

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I do not think it was a priority for Paul Martin, either.

The Minister of National Revenue can spew all the rhetoric she wants and say that her government is combatting tax avoidance and tax evasion, but the truth is, when it comes to fighting tax havens internationally, Canada is part of the problem, not part of the solution.

While the OECD agreement that the minister referred to provides for the exchange of information, Canada has signed an agreement with a country that does not even require income tax returns.

When will the Liberals start taking this a little more seriously and scrap their agreement with Grenada and Antigua and Barbuda?

● (1505)

**Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our government is fully committed to combatting tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance. After all, it was our government that invested nearly \$1 billion in the last two budgets.

The Canada Revenue Agency is now able to assess the risk of all large multinational corporations annually. Every year, it reviews every transaction over \$10,000 in four regions that are deemed high-risk. The first two are the Isle of Man and Guernsey.

As far as offshore compliance is concerned, as of December 31, 2017, the CRA had audited more than 1,090 taxpayers—

**The Speaker:** Order. The hon. member for Joliette.

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Yes, Mr. Speaker, let's talk about tax avoidance.

Canadian investments totalled \$68 billion in Barbados, \$48 billion in the Cayman Islands, \$39 billion in Bermuda, and \$20 billion in the Bahamas.

Average taxpayers pay their taxes while the government makes life easy for rich people who hide their money in the Caribbean.

*Government Orders*

Rather than go after little fish who are doing their part, when will the government stop fattening up the financial sharks?

**Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, tax evasion and tax avoidance are priorities for this government, which is why we invested over \$1 billion in our last two budgets. That is in contrast to our opposition colleagues, whose goal in life is to ask two questions during question period and then wither away on the opposition benches.

Members on this side are going to work for Quebeckers and Canadians. Tax avoidance is a priority for us, and we will continue to work on that.

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. There have been discussions among the parties, and if you were to seek it you would find unanimous support for the following motion. I move that notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, any recorded division in respect of an item of private members' business deferred to Wednesday, February 14, 2018, immediately before the time provided for private members' business, pursuant to Standing Order 93(1) or 98(4), shall be deemed deferred anew until Wednesday, February 14, 2018, at the expiry of the time provided for oral questions.

**The Speaker:** Does the hon. parliamentary secretary have the unanimous consent of the House to propose the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Speaker:** The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order today because I am a charitable person and I want to give the Liberal government one more chance to honour a promise and look after our produce farmers. If you seek it, I hope you will find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move that the House call on the government to honour its election promise to implement a PACA-like deemed trust for perishable goods, which Canadian produce growers have called for repeatedly and which both the Standing Committee on Finance and the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food unanimously recommended to the government.

**The Speaker:** Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on two points of order.

First, I find that the comments made by the Minister of National Revenue about my interventions were not entirely respectful and, consequently, she was disrespectful to the constituents of my riding, Joliette.

I ask that she withdraw her comments.

**The Speaker:** I believe that is a matter of debate, but I will look at the blues.

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie:** Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent of the House for the following motion: that this House call on the government to not apply federal tax provisions that allow the active business income from a Canadian company's foreign subsidiary in Antigua and Barbuda, as well as Grenada, to be paid to the Canadian parent company in the form of dividends that are exempt from Canadian taxes.

I am sure there will be unanimous consent for that.

• (1510)

**The Speaker:** Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to move this motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

### BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

#### OPPOSITION MOTION—TAX FAIRNESS IN BUDGET 2018

The House resumed from February 8 consideration of the motion.

**The Speaker:** It being 3:10 p.m., pursuant to an order made on Thursday, February 8, 2018, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion of the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby relating to the business of supply.

Call in the members.

• (1520)

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

(Division No. 448)

#### YEAS

##### Members

Angus	Aubin
Beaulieu	Benson
Blaikie	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Boudrias	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brousseau
Cannings	Caron
Choquette	Christopherson
Cullen	Davies
Donnelly	Dubé
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)	Dusseault
Duvall	Garrison
Gill	Hardcastle
Hughes	Johns
Jolibois	Julian
Kwan	Laverdière
MacGregor	Malcolmson
Marcil	Masse (Windsor West)
Mathysen	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
Moore	Nantel
Pauzé	Plamondon
Quach	Ramsey
Rankin	Saganash
Sansoucy	Ste-Marie
Stetski	Stewart



*Government Orders*

Thériault

Trudel— 50

**NAYS****Members**

Aboultaif  
 Albrecht  
 Alghabra  
 Allison  
 Anandasangaree  
 Arnold  
 Arya  
 Badawey  
 Bains  
 Beech  
 Benzen  
 Bernier  
 Bezan  
 Bittle  
 Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)  
 Boissonnault  
 Brassard  
 Breton  
 Brown  
 Calkins  
 Carrie  
 Casey (Charlottetown)  
 Champagne  
 Chong  
 Clement  
 Cormier  
 Dabrusin  
 DeCoursey  
 Dhillon  
 Diotte  
 Drouin  
 Duclos  
 Duncan (Etobicoke North)  
 Easter  
 Ehssasi  
 Ellis  
 Eyking  
 Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)  
 Fast  
 Fillmore  
 Finnigan  
 Fonseca  
 Fragiskatos  
 Fraser (Central Nova)  
 Garneau  
 Genuis  
 Gladu  
 Goodale  
 Gourde  
 Grewal  
 Harder  
 Harvey  
 Hoback  
 Holland  
 Hussen  
 Jeneroux  
 Jones  
 Kelly  
 Khalid  
 Kitchen  
 Kusie  
 Lametti  
 Lapointe  
 Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)  
 LeBouthillier  
 Leitch  
 Levitt  
 Lloyd  
 Lockhart  
 Longfield  
 Lukiwski  
 MacKenzie  
 MacKinnon  
 Maguire  
 Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)  
 May (Cambridge)  
 McCauley (Edmonton West)  
 McCrimmon  
 McGuinty

Albas  
 Aldag  
 Alleslev  
 Amos  
 Anderson  
 Arseneault  
 Ayoub  
 Bagnell  
 Barlow  
 Bennett  
 Bergen  
 Berthold  
 Bibeau  
 Blair  
 Block  
 Bossio  
 Bratina  
 Brison  
 Caesar-Chavannes  
 Carr  
 Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)  
 Chagger  
 Chen  
 Clarke  
 Cooper  
 Cuzner  
 Damoff  
 Dhaliwal  
 Di Iorio  
 Dreeschen  
 Dubourg  
 Duguid  
 Dzerowicz  
 Egliniski  
 El-Khoury  
 Erskine-Smith  
 Eyolfson  
 Falk (Provencher)  
 Fergus  
 Finley  
 Fisher  
 Fortier  
 Fraser (West Nova)  
 Fuhr  
 Génèreux  
 Gerretsen  
 Goldsmith-Jones  
 Gould  
 Graham  
 Hajdu  
 Hardie  
 Hébert  
 Hogg  
 Housefather  
 Hutchings  
 Joly  
 Jordan  
 Kent  
 Khera  
 Kmiec  
 Lambropoulos  
 Lamoureux  
 Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)  
 LeBlanc  
 Lefebvre  
 Leslie  
 Lightbound  
 Lobb  
 Long  
 Ludwig  
 MacAulay (Cardigan)  
 MacKinnon (Gatineau)  
 Maloney

McKenna  
 McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)  
 Mendès  
 Mihychuk  
 Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Sœurs)  
 Monsef  
 Morneau  
 Motz  
 Nassif  
 Nault  
 Nicholson  
 O'Connell  
 Oliver  
 O'Toole  
 Paradis  
 Peschisolido  
 Petipas Taylor  
 Picard  
 Poissant  
 Raitt  
 Rayes  
 Richards  
 Robillard  
 Rogers  
 Rota  
 Ruimy  
 Sahota  
 Samson  
 Sarai  
 Schiefke  
 Schulte  
 Sgro  
 Sheehan  
 Shipley  
 Sidhu (Brampton South)  
 Simms  
 Sopuck  
 Sorenson  
 Stanton  
 Stubbs  
 Tabbara  
 Tassi  
 Trudeau  
 Van Loan  
 Vandenbeld  
 Vecchio  
 Virani  
 Warawa  
 Waugh  
 Whalen  
 Wong  
 Yip  
 Yurdiga

McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)  
 McLeod (Northwest Territories)  
 Mendicino  
 Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)  
 Morrissey  
 Murray  
 Nater  
 Ng  
 Nuttall  
 Oliphant  
 O'Regan  
 Ouellette  
 Paul-Hus  
 Peterson  
 Philpott  
 Poilievre  
 Qualtrough  
 Ratansi  
 Reid  
 Rioux  
 Rodriguez  
 Romano  
 Ruedd  
 Rusnak  
 Saini  
 Sangha  
 Saroya  
 Schmale  
 Serré  
 Shanahan  
 Shields  
 Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)  
 Sikand  
 Sohi  
 Sorbara  
 Spengemann  
 Strahl  
 Sweet  
 Tan  
 Tilson  
 Van Kesteren  
 Vandal  
 Vaughan  
 Viersen  
 Wagantall  
 Warkentin  
 Webber  
 Wilson-Raybould  
 Wrzesnewskyj  
 Young  
 Zimmer— 258

**PAIRED****Members**

Fortin

Zahid— 2

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion defeated.

\* \* \*

*[English]***CANADA ELECTIONS ACT**

The House resumed from February 9 consideration of the motion that Bill C-50, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act (political financing), be read the third time and passed.

**The Speaker:** Pursuant to an order made on Friday, February 9, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at the third reading stage of Bill C-50.

● (1525)

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

*Government Orders**(Division No. 449)*

## YEAS

## Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Alleslev	Amos
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Aubin	Ayoub
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Beech
Bennett	Benson
Bibeau	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)	Boissonnault
Bossio	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Bratina
Breton	Brison
Brosseau	Caesar-Chavannes
Cannings	Caron
Carr	Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Casey (Charlottetown)	Chagger
Champagne	Chen
Choquette	Christopherson
Cormier	Cullen
Cuzner	Dabrusin
Damoff	Davies
DeCoursey	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Di Iorio
Donnelly	Drouin
Dubé	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Dusseauil	Duvall
Dzerowicz	Easter
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Erskine-Smith
Eyking	Eyolfson
Fergus	Fillmore
Finnigan	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fragiskatos	Fraser (West Nova)
Fraser (Central Nova)	Fuhr
Garneau	Garrison
Gerretsen	Goldsmith-Jones
Goodale	Gould
Graham	Grewal
Hajdu	Hardeastle
Hardie	Harvey
Hébert	Hogg
Holland	Housefather
Hughes	Hussen
Hutchings	Johns
Jolibois	Joly
Jones	Jordan
Julian	Kang
Khalid	Khera
Kwan	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
Laverdière	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	LeFebvre
Leslie	Levitt
Lightbound	Lockhart
Long	Longfield
Ludwig	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Malcolmson	Maloney
Masse (Windsor West)	Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
Mathysen	May (Cambridge)
May (Saenich—Gulf Islands)	McCrimmon
McDonald	McGuinty
McKay	McKenna
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendès	Medicino
Mihychuk	Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs)
Monsef	Moore
Morneau	Morrissey
Murray	Nantel
Nassif	Nault
Ng	O'Connell

Oliphant	Oliver
O'Regan	Ouellette
Paradis	Peschisolido
Peterson	Petipas Taylor
Philpott	Picard
Poissant	Quach
Qualtrough	Ramsey
Rankin	Ratansi
Rioux	Robillard
Rodriguez	Rogers
Romanado	Rota
Rudd	Ruimy
Rusnak	Saganash
Sahota	Saini
Samson	Sangha
Sansoucy	Sarai
Schiefke	Schulte
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sikand	Simms
Sohi	Sorbara
Spengemann	Stetski
Stewart	Tabbara
Tan	Tassi
Trudeau	Trudel
Vandal	Vandenbeld
Vaughan	Virani
Whalen	Wilson-Raybould
Wrzesnewskyj	Yip
Young — 215	

## NAYS

## Members

Aboultaif	Albas
Albrecht	Allison
Anderson	Arnold
Barlow	Beaulieu
Benzen	Bergen
Bemier	Berthold
Bezan	Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Block	Boucher
Boudrias	Brassard
Brown	Calkins
Carrie	Chong
Clarke	Clement
Cooper	Diotte
Dreeschen	Eglinski
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Finley
Généreux	Genuis
Gill	Gladu
Godin	Gourde
Harder	Hoback
Jeneroux	Kelly
Kent	Kitchen
Kmicc	Kusie
Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Leitch
Lloyd	Lobb
Lukiwski	MacKenzie
Maguire	Marcil
McCauley (Edmonton West)	McColeman
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Motz	Nater
Nicholson	Nuttall
O'Toole	Paul-Hus
Paupé	Plamondon
Poilievre	Raitt
Rayes	Reid
Richards	Saroya
Schmale	Shields
Shipley	Sopuck
Sorenson	Stanton
Ste-Marie	Strahl
Stubbs	Sweet
Thériault	Tilson
Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Vecchio	Viersen
Wagantall	Warawa
Warkentin	Waugh
Webber	Wong
Yurdiga	Zimmer — 96

## PAIRED

## Members

Fortin Zahid— 2

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.  
(Bill read the third time and passed)

\* \* \*

[Translation]

## BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

## OPPOSITION MOTION —TRANS MOUNTAIN EXPANSION PROJECT

The House resumed from February 12 consideration of the motion.

**The Speaker:** The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion of the member for Lakeland regarding the business of supply.

• (1535)

[English]

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

(Division No. 450)

## YEAS

## Members

Aboultaif	Albas
Albrecht	Allison
Anderson	Arnold
Barlow	Benzen
Bergen	Bernier
Berthold	Bezan
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)	Block
Boucher	Brassard
Brown	Calkins
Carrie	Chong
Clarke	Clement
Cooper	Diotte
Dreeshen	Eglinski
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Finley
Généreux	Genuis
Gladu	Godin
Gourde	Harder
Hoback	Jeneroux
Kelly	Kent
Kitchen	Kmiec
Kusie	Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Leitch	Lloyd
Lobb	Lukiwski
MacKenzie	Maguire
McCaughey (Edmonton West)	McColeman
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Motz	Nater
Nicholson	Nuttall
O'Toole	Paul-Hus
Poillievre	Raït
Rayes	Reid
Richards	Saroya
Schmale	Shields
Shipley	Sopuck
Sorenson	Stanton
Strahl	Stubbs
Sweet	Tilson
Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Vecchio	Viersen
Wagantall	Warawa
Warkentin	Waugh
Webber	Wong
Yurdiga	Zimmer— 88

## Government Orders

## NAYS

## Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Alleslev	Amos
Anandasangaree	Arseneault
Arya	Aubin
Ayoub	Badawey
Bagnell	Bains
Baylis	Beaulieu
Beech	Bennett
Benson	BibEAU
Bittle	Blaikie
Blair	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Boissonnault	Bossio
Boudrias	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Bratina
Breton	Brison
Brosseau	Caesar-Chavannes
Cannings	Caron
Carr	Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Casey (Charlottetown)	Chagger
Champagne	Chen
Choquette	Christopherson
Cormier	Cullen
Cuzner	Dabrusin
Damoff	Davies
DeCoursey	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Di Iorio
Donnelly	Drouin
Dubé	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Dusseault	Duvall
Dzerowicz	Easter
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Erskine-Smith
Eyking	Eyolfson
Fergus	Fillmore
Finnigan	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fragiskatos	Fraser (West Nova)
Fraser (Central Nova)	Fuhr
Gameau	Garrison
Gerretsen	Gill
Goldsmith-Jones	Goodale
Gould	Graham
Grewal	Hajdu
Hardcastle	Hardie
Harvey	Hébert
Hogg	Holland
Housefather	Hughes
Hussen	Hutchings
Johns	Jolibois
Joly	Jones
Jordan	Julian
Kang	Khalid
Khera	Kwan
Lambropoulos	Lametti
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)	Laverdière
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lefebvre	Leslie
Levitt	Lightbound
Lockhart	Long
Longfield	Ludwig
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacGregor
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Malcolmson
Maloney	Marcil
Masse (Windsor West)	Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
Mathysen	May (Cambridge)
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	McCrimmon
McDonald	McGuinty
McKay	McKenna
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendès	Mendicino
Mihychuk	Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs)
Monsef	Moore
Morneau	Morrissey
Murray	Nantel
Nassif	Nault
Ng	O'Connell

*Routine Proceedings*

Oliphant	Oliver
O'Regan	Ouellette
Paradis	Paupé
Peschisolido	Peterson
Petipas Taylor	Philpott
Picard	Plamondon
Poissant	Quach
Qualtrough	Ramsey
Rankin	Ratansi
Rioux	Robillard
Rodriguez	Rogers
Romanado	Rota
Rudd	Ruimy
Rusnak	Saganash
Sahota	Saini
Samson	Sangha
Sansoucy	Sarai
Schiefke	Schulte
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sikand	Simms
Sohi	Sorbara
Spengemann	Ste-Marie
Stetski	Stewart
Tabbara	Tan
Tassi	Thériault
Trudeau	Trudel
Vandal	Vandenbeld
Vaughan	Virani
Whalen	Wilson-Raybould
Wrzesnewskij	Yip
Young — 223	

## PAIRED

## Members

Fortin

Zahid — 2

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion defeated.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Diane Lebouthillier:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to apologize to my colleague from Joliette. I am well aware that all members have the right to properly represent their ridings.

**The Speaker:** I thank the hon. minister for her apology.

I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded divisions, government orders will be extended by 26 minutes.

The hon. member for Haldimand—Norfolk.

• (1540)

[*English*]

**Hon. Diane Finley:** Mr. Speaker, I believe that if you seek it you will find unanimous consent to revert to petitions at this point.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Does the hon. member for Haldimand—Norfolk have the unanimous consent of the House to go back to petitions under the routine proceedings rubric?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

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**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

[*English*]

**PETITIONS**

## CANADA SUMMER JOBS PROGRAM

**Hon. Diane Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to table a petition from 31 constituents.

These petitioners call to the government's attention that, as it is now written, the application to the Canada summer jobs program forces employers to choose between their charter-protected freedoms and eligibility for government funding. The petitioners are calling on the government to remove the discriminatory attestation requirement from the Canada summer jobs application and respect the charter rights for all Canadians, even though they may be different from the political agenda of the government of the day.

## NORTH AMERICAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

**Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present today a petition calling on the government to recognize the unique situation we are in with the renegotiation of NAFTA. The petitioners have some direct asks: remove ISDS provisions, eliminate the energy proportionality provisions, make significant improvements to enhance the enforceability of the agreements on labour and the environmental standards, and resist further patent extensions. There are nearly 100 signatories to this petition that I am proud to present today calling on the government for action on these important issues in NAFTA renegotiations.

## INDIGENOUS HISTORY

**Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I rise today on the traditional unceded territories of the Algonquin nation, I am pleased to present petition e-1228 calling on the government to work in consultation and partnership with indigenous peoples to redesign the Canadian citizenship guide and exam to acknowledge indigenous treaty rights, require applicants to answer a question about the traditional territories they may currently inhabit, and educate new Canadians about residential schools and the legacy of colonialism.

This petition was initiated by my constituent, Mariam Manaa in consultation with local indigenous knowledge keeper, Stephen Paquette. The petition received tremendous response and support in my riding of Oakville North—Burlington, located on the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation, and across Canada.

## ORGAN DONATION

**Mr. Len Webber (Calgary Confederation, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition in support of my private member's bill, which I expect will come up for debate in April, Bill C-316. The petition was submitted by members of the National Capital Region Gift of Life Network. Petitioners from around Ottawa and Gatineau are calling on the House to improve the organ donation system in Canada. This would be achieved by making the process to register as an organ donor easier by adding a simple question to our annual tax returns. Becoming an organ donor is the easiest way to save the life of a fellow human being. These are signatures of caring Canadians who want to see our organ donor system work better so that we can save more lives every day.

*Government Orders*

●(1545)

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there have been some discussions among the parties with respect to getting the unanimous consent that I made reference to earlier. Therefore, I move:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, any recorded division in respect of an item of Private Members' Business deferred to Wednesday, February 14, 2018, immediately before the time provided for Private Members' Business, pursuant to Standing Orders 93(1) or 98(4), shall be deemed deferred anew until Wednesday, February 14, 2018, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Does the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader have the unanimous consent of the House to propose the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[English]

**FISHERIES ACT**

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-68, An Act to amend the Fisheries Act and other Acts in consequence, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**The Deputy Speaker:** When the House last took up the question, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader had three and a half minutes remaining in the time for questions and comments for his remarks. We will now go to questions and comments.

The hon. member for Avalon.

**Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, during the removal of certain aspects in 2012 from the fish and fish habitat protections, there was a provision put in for developers to self-assess. In other words, if I were a proponent building a hydro dam, I would report myself if there was any harm brought to fish or fish habitat during that construction. It seemed a bit ridiculous when I found that out because it would be like putting the fox in charge of the henhouse.

I wonder if the member could comment on how ridiculous it is to expect people to report themselves for breaking a law with respect to any development they would be doing.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I can say that the member for Avalon has a way with words and has really hit the nail on the head. The member talked about an action that was taken by the former Stephen Harper government. He is doing a fantastic job representing the interests of

those who recognize that it was a bad thing that the Conservatives did in the 2012 budget, because this is all about protecting our fish habitats and fish in general.

What this legislation would do is fulfill an election commitment by the Prime Minister and the government, which was no doubt heavily influenced by members of the Atlantic caucus and others across all regions of the country. As I know that is an important issue for the member personally, I am sure he will be happy that we not only reversed what the Harper government had done but did more with respect to protecting fish habitat and fish in general, which is a good thing. I suspect members will find that all stakeholders and interested Canadians who are following the issue would be quite pleased with this piece of legislation and support it.

**Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that this last question was about self-reporting and the belief that it was actually removed. If members would look at subclause 25(4) of Bill C-68, it states:

Every person shall without delay notify an inspector, a fishery officer, a fishery guardian or an authority prescribed by the regulations of the death of fish that is not authorized under this Act

That is still self-reporting. It is still there. It has not changed. Therefore, how can the hon. member opposite try to say that was restored or changed?

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to assure the member that what he needs to do is look at budget 2012, which I know is a 400-plus page document, and he will find that there were issues that were taken out of the act that dealt with things such as fish and fish habitat preservation. These are the types of things that this legislation reverses. That is the essence of what was being talked about in the previous question and the response I had provided.

●(1550)

**Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today, but I am not pleased about the topic or Bill C-68. This is a large bill that would have huge impacts on fisheries and fish stocks across Canada. The bill would also have wide-ranging implications for economic development, farmers, rural municipalities, and more, and I will get into that in detail.

As a relatively new member of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, I was not on the committee when it studied the 2012 changes that were made to the Fisheries Act. However, I would like to focus a good chunk of my comments on the testimony that was heard during those hearings.

The committee started its study in October 2016 and presented a report to the House in February 2017. The committee heard from 50 different witnesses during the study and received over 188 submitted briefing notes. It was a very comprehensive study and I think would have been a useful tool for the government to use when it was drafting this proposed legislation. The study directly looked at the changes that the previous government made in 2012 to the Fisheries Act, which were changes that significantly improved the Fisheries Act.

### *Government Orders*

One of the significant changes made in 2012 was a shift away from what is commonly referred to as “HADD”, which stands for harmful alteration, disruption or destruction of fish habitat. It is contained within proposed subsection 35(1) of the bill, where it states:

No person shall carry on any work, undertaking or activity that results in the harmful alteration, disruption or destruction of fish habitat.

Essentially this means that any sort of development that could be seen to be harmful, altering, disrupting or destroying fish habitats, would be subject to an immense amount of review and red tape and could be stopped or prohibited. Furthermore, it is unclear what constitutes fish habitat. It was found that DFO and others played fast and loose with this term, and used a broad definition to apply this to waterways that really had no impact on fish stocks. This system was ineffective, a nightmare for development, and had no measurable success in protecting fish populations.

Of the things that were affected the most by this, I have some on my farms. They are waterways after a very heavy rain or first thing in the spring runoff, but other than that, they are dry and able to be farmed the rest of the year. However, the same things applied to them as what would apply to, say, the St. Lawrence River, which is totally ridiculous.

The change in 2012 brought in a much simpler and effective definition to ensure that fish were protected but that reasonable projects could still move forward. This new definition was as follows:

No person shall carry on any work, undertaking or activity that results in serious harm to fish that are part of a commercial, recreational or Aboriginal fishery, or to fish that support such a fishery.

This definition is much more effective and provides certainty and clarity for developers, farmers, fishermen, first nations, and more.

In the report from the fisheries and oceans committee, the third recommendation stated that:

Any revision of the Fisheries Act should review and refine the previous definition of HADD due to the previous definition's vulnerability to being applied in an inconsistent manner and the limiting effect it had on government agencies in their management of fisheries and habitats in the interest of fish productivity.

Therefore, I am slightly confused as to why we are now seeing what looks to be a return to HADD in Bill C-68. It does not make any sense. The testimony is there in black and white, and that testimony, of course, came from witnesses.

For example, as I mentioned, the committee heard from 50 different witnesses and received more than 188 submitted briefing notes. Not one single individual or organization was able to present the committee with any scientific or legal proof of harm that was a result of the changes made in 2012. We all know that, at the time, the environmental associations and others threw their hands up in the air, yelled, screamed, and kicked that these changes would be the death of all fish in Canada, but the proof is just not there. Six years later, I think our fish are doing pretty good. However, it is my distinct fear that the government is simply returning to the pre-2012 provisions just to appease these groups.

• (1555)

The return of HADD in Bill C-68 would undoubtedly be used as a way for opponents of projects to prevent development projects from

moving forward. Just look at the pipeline that was discussed in depth yesterday. By returning to this system, a system that had proven to be ineffective, the government is playing right into the wheelhouse of those who seek to halt, delay, and do whatever they can to stop all forms of development in the country. That has to end.

One impact that is not always clear to many is the impact farmers face due to the Fisheries Act, and it will be 10 times worse under a system that uses the HADD definition. When farmers are looking to expand or develop their farmland they can get caught up in reviews of their projects under the Fisheries Act. A return to HADD would make the lives of farmers much more difficult.

When testifying before the committee, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture stated that prior to 2012 there were lengthy bureaucratic applications for permitting and authorizations, but the 2012 changes drastically improved the timeliness and cost of conducting regular maintenance and improvement activities to their farms. CFA expanded on this by stating that it is the CFA's position that a complete revert—which we are getting from the government now—to reinstate all provisions of the Fisheries Act as they were, would be unproductive, would re-establish the same problems for farmers, and would provide little improvement. That goes back to the example I used of intermittent waterways on our farms being treated like they were fish habitat.

What is ironic about the attack on farmers in the bill is that today is Canada Agriculture Day. As we should be doing every day, let us recognize the important work that farmers do and ensure that their voices are heard. Farmers do not want to return to a pre-2012 system. In fact, no one but those that oppose development do. The government should stop catering to these interest groups and abandon this plan.

The reason these changes came about was members of Parliament from all parties came together for the rural caucus to come up with ways to improve things overall, whether it was agriculture, rural health care, or whatever. The changes that came from the bill in 2012 came out of discussions there. Just because the government has groups of people who are against anything going on in the country, to appease them, to try to get their vote, it is saying, “Okay, we'll give you what you want.” That is not the way to do business or to govern.

It is not just farmers that have concerns though. The Canadian Electricity Association said that Bill C-68 is “one step forward but two steps back”. It went on to state:

*Government Orders*

CEA is particularly concerned that the government has chosen to return to pre-2012 provisions of the Fisheries Act that address “activity other than fishing that results in the death of fish, and the harmful alteration, disruption or destruction (HADD) of fish habitat”. In practical terms, this means that virtually any action, without prior authorization, could be construed as being in contravention of this Act. Consequently, the reinstatement of these measures will result in greater uncertainties for existing and new facilities, and unduly delay and/or discourage investment in energy projects that directly support Canada’s clean growth agenda and realize its climate change objectives.

To make a long story short, this is bad news for Canadian development, and will have no positive impact on the protection of fish populations in Canada. I urge the government to revisit the return of HADD and amend the legislation to ensure that economic development and environmental protections go hand in hand and not head to head.

I sit on the committee with my hon. colleague, the member for Avalon. I know he has the best interests of fish at heart, but I would ask him to consider agriculture in this. The examples are these intermittent waterways that are put back in the way they were before, which is just not right. It is a direct attack on agriculture and does not do anything for the environment, fish, or any other thing.

• (1600)

**Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I was present earlier when the minister spoke and answered questions. One thing he did say to another member was that he looked forward to the bill going to committee and the committee coming back with any amendments that it deemed good for the bill.

Would the hon. member not agree that now is the time to get this bill before the committee so it can review it and suggest any amendments for the protection of people such as farmers, and then return the bill with the suggested amendments to the minister?

**Mr. Larry Miller:** Mr. Speaker, yes, the committee is part of the process. I thank my colleague in advance for his support of the reversal of some of the good things that had been reversed by this bill. We will put them back in place.

**Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member specifically cited the impacts this can have on large electrical infrastructure projects. In British Columbia, as many people know, we pride ourselves on our clean hydroelectricity. Unfortunately, from time to time we do have to import other sources of energy and often they are not clean sources of hydro.

These projects, by the way, are regulated provincially under the B. C. Utilities Commission process, and sometimes they are not allowed to build new electrical stations for demand until it gets to the point where it is justified. They cannot be planned 10 years in advance. Often when these projects start, it is well after that demand point has been hit, and we are bringing in less than clean energy.

This particular legislation throws more obstacles in the way, and not just in regard to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. Does the hon. member think that this will have an adverse effect and create a situation where provinces and their electrical utilities, and the companies that operate under those regulatory schemes, will have more dirty sources of power, and those costs will be transmitted to the ratepayer?

**Mr. Larry Miller:** Mr. Speaker, the easy answer to my colleague's question is that yes, this will cause negative problems. It will cost the consumers, who are Canadian taxpayers, more for the product, in this case hydro.

The changes in 2012 were done for a specific reason. They were done to still have a process where approvals could get done properly, but there were timelines put on them. I always point people who are opposed to anything and everything, and in this case, the people behind this bill, to the Mackenzie Valley pipeline. For 25 years the government, environmentalists, and other organizations held up businesses who were willing to invest in the project. Really, all that the government was saying in 2012 was to set a reasonable timeline and tell the companies yes or no, not maybe. Tell them one way or the other, and if the answer is no, they will accept that. Then they will take their money and invest it in other Canadian projects, which is only good for jobs, business, and the economy. That is what this is about. However, Bill C-68 reverses that and makes it longer and more onerous.

**Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have looked forward to engaging in this debate on the Fisheries Act amendments that the government has brought forward.

Let me begin by saying that I doubt there is a member in this House who would not promote the protection of our environment and, more specifically, the fisheries resources that we have across Canada. We are an incredibly wealthy country when it comes to fisheries resources. We live in a beautiful country with clean streams, clean lakes, pristine oceans, and we want to protect all of our fish habitat and the fish that find their way into that habitat.

We, as Conservatives, really pride ourselves on conservation. It is something that we did a really good job on when we were in government for 10 years. We believe that being stewards of the environment is one of the things that should characterize who we are.

I would like to share a story with members. I used to be a member of city council in Abbotsford, and of course had lots of interactions with developers, farmers, and people who were running commercial businesses. One day a farmer came into my office. He was very irate. He shared with me that he had just had an altercation with a fisheries officer. The farmer was on his own land; it was owned by him. A couple of years earlier, he had dug a ditch to drain the water from his fields so that he could grow crops and provide for his family, and make a living off the land. As he was on the land clearing his ditch, a fisheries officer, with a sidearm, by the way, approached him, without permission, and said, “Sir, what you're doing, cleaning the ditch, you cannot do. It's going to harm fisheries. You just cannot do that. You're going to have to make due with flooded fields.” As everyone can imagine, the farmer got really angry. That is why he approached me and asked what I could do.

*Government Orders*

We finally passed on our concerns, as did many of my Conservative colleagues, to the Conservative government of the day. In 2012, that government responded positively and said that there were elements of the Fisheries Act that were not reasonable, that did not reflect common sense. One of the reasons we were having problems was with the kind of work that was being prohibited in the Fisheries Act. It was defined as any work or undertaking that results in “harmful alteration, disruption or destruction of fish habitat”, which my colleague from Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound referred to as HADD.

That HADD standard had some very unintended consequences and side effects, especially for the farmers in my riding of Abbotsford. I went to bat for them, and I know many of my Conservative colleagues went to bat for farmers in their ridings, and the government delivered. In 2012, our former Conservative government changed the legislation to delete references to HADD. We introduced language that was more reflective of what actually happens in real life.

These changes were made, but our Liberal friends opposed them and our NDP friends opposed them, as they always do. When the new Liberal government was elected, it decided to send the matter of fisheries protection and the 2012 changes that we had made to the fisheries committee. As my colleague from Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound articulated, that committee looked very carefully at the revised provisions of the Fisheries Act from 2012 to see what kind of impact they had had.

● (1605)

Members of the committee asked witnesses at committee what they could point to specifically to show that the 2012 streamlining measures by the former Conservative government that reintroduced common sense to the Fisheries Act had had any negative impact on fish or fish habitat. They could not find anything. Not one witness before committee could point to one instance where streamlining the Fisheries Act in 2012 negatively impacted Canada's fishery resources.

Should these decisions to again revise the Fisheries Act and reintroduce HAAD, which caused so much angst among farmers and others who had to do business, not be based on evidence and science? There was no science basis for the decision to move forward with these new amendments to the act. The committee could not show one instance of where fish and fish habitat had been harmed. The government had no evidence, no science, upon which this legislation before us was based.

I did my homework as well. I actually went to our critic for fisheries, the member for North Okanagan—Shuswap, and asked him if he discovered any information that might lead us to believe that the Liberal government actually did some checking as to whether there was some science attached to the changes it is bringing forward today. My colleague said, “Yes, we submitted an Order Paper question to the Minister of Fisheries.”

In an Order Paper question, we can ask ministers any question about their portfolio, and they are compelled to respond. What question did my colleague ask the Minister of Fisheries? My colleague referred to the mandate letter the fisheries minister received from the Prime Minister when he was appointed minister to

see what he had been mandated to do with respect to the Fisheries Act.

He found that the government had done no work to determine whether the new provisions of this act were even necessary or to determine what impact they would have. The questions were, for example, what loss protections the mandate letter was referring to. What harm or proof of harm to fish or fish habitat, attributed to the previous Conservative government's changes to these acts, exists? Is there any evidence of harm? What protections were lost, or are alleged to have been lost, as a result of the previous government's changes to these acts that are not provided for under other federal, provincial, or territorial legislation or regulations?

Here is the answer that came back from the fisheries minister:

the department has not been either resourced or mandated to conduct this type of comprehensive monitoring and has not undertaken specific monitoring or analysis to compare the impacts of the changes to the act. The department is, however, developing new processes....

After the fact, the Liberals are now trying to catch up, but this legislation that came forward has no science basis. It is intended to delay development in Canada.

We see what has happened with the Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain pipeline, which has created a trade war between the provinces of British Columbia and Alberta, because there are certain individuals and governments in Canada that do not respect the rule of law. That project went through a rigorous scientific review.

The changes to the Fisheries Act being contemplated today in the House, presented by the Liberal government, have only one intent, and that is to slow down and stop critical development of our natural resources and critical infrastructure that is needed across our country.

I say to the Liberals, shame on them. They claim to be the defenders and promoters of a science-based approach to governing and legislation, and they brought forward a bill like this, which is nothing of the sort. It omits a science-based approach and simply imposes an ideological one, replacing badly needed changes our previous government implemented and reverting to the old system, which harmed so many businesses across Canada that tried to build critical infrastructure and develop natural resources.

● (1610)

That is not the way Canada is going to grow its economy. This is bad legislation. I hope when this gets back to committee, the Liberal and NDP members of the committee understand what is at stake and reconsider the changes they are bringing forward to the Fisheries Act.



*Government Orders*

•(1615)

**Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, a few years back, my daughter Candice was an Earth Rangers ambassador. She raised thousands of dollars for the Oregon spotted frog. From that, we see that there are a number of young people who understand the importance of the environment and of protecting our environment and our coastlines, etc.

I am wondering what my hon. colleague would say to the young people in his riding and elsewhere who want to restore the protection of fish and fish habitat, who want to ensure that we are protecting up to 10% of our coastal area by 2020, and who want to ensure that the environment and the economy go hand in hand.

**Hon. Ed Fast:** Mr. Speaker, what I would say in response is that the legislation we have before us is not about restoring lost protections. Those protections were never lost.

In 2012, we brought amendments to the Fisheries Act that streamlined the act to make sure, as the member has said, that the economy and the environment went hand in hand. This is what the Minister of Environment always preaches but actually never delivers on, because she has never found that beautiful balance between the environment and the economy.

We cannot have a healthy environment without having prosperity. If we look around the world, the countries with the highest environmental standards are those that are the most prosperous. The two go hand in hand.

When the Liberals introduce legislation like that before us, what they are doing is undermining Canada's ability to build infrastructure, to build pipelines, and to develop resources. They are undermining our long-term prosperity as a country.

**Mr. Fin Donnelly (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the member for Abbotsford painted quite a picture of the reason for the 2012 changes. He talked about farmers' drainage ditches being the reason for the gutting of the Fisheries Act in 2012. I remember it quite differently. My understanding of the real reason behind the changes was to do with then prime minister Harper's concern about the Fisheries Act causing a problem for the oil agenda he had, which was to get those pipelines to tidewater.

What did the Conservatives do? They went after a specific section of the act, which was about habitat protection, and removed it completely. They switched the focus of the act to serious harm to certain fish, commercial fish, making it practically impossible to prove that any project would have an impact on fish or fisheries. In fact, that caused the absolute opposite of what he was hoping for, which was certainty for business and industry. It started to cause uncertainty.

Six hundred scientists spoke out. Two former Conservative fisheries ministers, John Fraser and Tom Siddon, spoke out. What would my colleague say to John Fraser and Tom Siddon about their concerns about the changes in 2012?

**Hon. Ed Fast:** Mr. Speaker, what I would say to them and what I would say to that member, who I respect, is that his suggestion that we gutted the Fisheries Act is not borne out by evidence.

In my earlier comments, I mentioned that the fisheries committee studied the changes we made to the Fisheries Act. Committee members specifically asked the witnesses if there was any evidence that the changes made to the Fisheries Act to make it more responsive to the needs of the Canadian economy, while at the same time protecting our fish and fish habitat, put fish habitat at risk. There was not one piece of evidence brought forward at committee.

I am an evidence-based guy. I am a lawyer. In courtrooms, they always talk about evidence. I believe in science. I believe in evidence. That evidence could have been presented at committee. Any of the members of that committee, representing all the parties in the House, had the opportunity to ask if those changes the former Conservative government made harmed fish or fish habitat, and not one person came forward.

The suggestion that the Fisheries Act was gutted in 2012 is patently false.

•(1620)

**Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to the changes in the Fisheries Act. I believe that many of the amendments being proposed are absolutely necessary at this time.

I will start by responding to some of the comments made by my colleague across the way. He talked about evidence being submitted in this review. Members will remember that it was back in November of 2015 that the Prime Minister mandated the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard to review the previous government's changes to the Fisheries Act to restore lost protections and incorporate modern safeguards. The standing committee was asked to examine the changes that were made in 2012, as the member indicated, and to engage with Canadians right across the country about their views.

Despite what the member said, the standing committee at that time heard from 50 witnesses during the process, which included indigenous groups and many others involved with resource management and in the resource sector. The committee also received 188 written submissions, 40% of which were from indigenous Canadians who felt they had been omitted from previous structuring within the Fisheries Act on waters adjacent to their areas. There were also eight resource management boards, established under land claim agreements that the Government of Canada signed on to, that made submissions either individually or jointly, because their agreements with Canada were not being upheld from a fisheries perspective.

I know this issue very well. I have one of those agreements in my own riding with the Inuit of Labrador in Nunatsiavut where land claims were signed on to, with fisheries jurisdictions being part of that. However, they were not upheld as the beneficiaries of the agreement had intended. Therefore, these things needed to be looked at.

*Government Orders*

There will be a number of changes to this act. I realize members are often afraid when changes happen, including industry and others across Canada, as to how the changes will impact them. All of us have a responsibility, as lawmakers in this country, to ensure that what we do, we do in a practical, sensible, and sustainable way. That means that when it comes to resource development and job creation, we have to ensure there are environmental protections and good habitat for the sustainability of fish species. It works both ways. When we talk about managing the environment, we also have to ensure there are mechanisms for economic growth, job creation, and resource development. These are the pieces that our government has been focused on. We are focused very clearly on how to create maximum opportunities for all Canadians, both in the environment and the economy.

I believe we are getting this right. The proposed changes in the Fisheries Act that we are looking at today, and the overview of the changes that have been presented to Canadians by the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, are very much in line with what Canadians are asking for.

Before I continue, I will inform you, Mr. Speaker, that I will be splitting my time today with the member for Fleetwood—Port Kells.

There are a couple of things that I want to note. First, one thing I like about this act is that it looks at the social, economic, and cultural aspects of how the fishery is managed and performs across Canada.

• (1625)

I live in a region of the country where this has not always been the case, where it has not always been looked at how local economies can benefit. We have not always looked at the social well-being of the communities that are in and around those areas. We have certainly not taken into perspective the cultural and traditional practices of many individuals within the fishing industry across Canada.

I am very pleased with those sections that have been incorporated here. I am also pleased to see there will be consultations around quota allocation, where priorities should be set around quota allocations, and how communities benefit from those quota allocations. A lot of these things are at the discretion of the minister. Therefore, having a full understanding and the incorporation of traditional knowledge from those in the industry, indigenous knowledge from those who live in and around resources, is very important in those decisions. They are as important as science in many cases when they are deciding how quotas will be allocated, how species will be protected, or how habitats within certain regions are dependent upon each other.

Under the former government, enforcement was lacking. My region is one of those regions in Canada where the former government closed down DFO enforcement offices, and conservation and protection offices. We had numbers of people who were laid off, and we had a fishery that was left with very little input from conservation and protection. That has to change. In order for us to have sustainability of resources and a good rapport with people in areas and communities, we need to have those kinds of supports.

The other thing we found is that, under enforcement, there was very little dialogue or discussion with the industry on how

enforcement should work. In fact, people had little or no input on that. This act would change that. It would give them the opportunity to have that input. It also recognizes indigenous people and the rights of indigenous people. It is important that no matter what resource development we have in this country, when that development is being done on the doorsteps of indigenous communities and indigenous lands, they should be a part of the decision. Their views should matter. That has not been the case with Fisheries and Oceans, and this is one of the pieces I am very supportive of in this bill.

I live in an area where today, if the cod fishery were to open in areas 2J, 2G, and 2H, there is only one groundfish licence left in that area. The whole region is indigenous. In our province, there are over 3,000 licence-holders who could access the resource in that area, even though it has not been fished in 30 years. With a new fishery reopening, how do indigenous people who have been out of that fishery for 30 years become engaged again? They can only become engaged if they are going to be fully consulted and a fair player in how fisheries are managed, protected, sustained, and harvested in the future. That is why I believe that incorporating the section on indigenous access and rights, the consultations with people in the industry who have fished in this industry for many years, and allowing them to bring their knowledge to the table to help manage this industry, is so important.

In areas like Newfoundland and Labrador, where the fishing industry is so important to the livelihoods of the people we serve, it is important that they have a say. The act would allow them to have input to bring their knowledge to the table, but it would also allow us to look at the social, economic, and cultural connections they have to this industry to ensure it is managed, protected, and sustainable, in the best interests of all who are involved.

I want to thank the minister and the committee for the extensive work they have done, and for travelling and talking to so many Canadians who feel passionate about the fishing industry, those Canadians who depend upon this industry for a livelihood.

• (1630)

There will be varied opinions across Canada around these proposed new changes in the act. However, one thing we can all agree on is the importance of the fishing industry to the lives of many people, and the responsibility we have to ensure it is protected, and that their interests are protected as well.

**Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Labrador for her comments today. We both serve on the all-party parliamentary outdoor caucus together.

I know that the member is aware of Phil Morlock and his role with the Canadian sport fishing industry. I would like her to speak to how this proposed legislation would have an economic and social impact on all of the communities across Canada.

Basically, the proposed act would impact recreational fishing and the billions of dollars that it provides to our communities. Of course, we know that individuals who do recreational fishing are very concerned about our environment, but I would like to have some comment from the member on how this proposed act would impact them.

*Government Orders*

**Ms. Yvonne Jones:** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have this question because I think it is an important one.

When we look at the recreational fishery, we see that it is an economically driven fishery. It brings tremendous benefits to rural and northern Canada, and to my riding. I am an angler myself. I love being on the river, and I love to fish.

One of the things that was looked at under the fisheries review is the lack of scientific data that we have. Years ago, there were counting fences on rivers, in ridings like mine in remote rural areas, where there are commercial fishing lodges, multiple users, and recreational fisheries. The former government cancelled those programs. It took the counting fences out and cancelled the conservation programs. As a result, we do not have data anymore on those rivers.

This proposed act would bring back information. It would bring back data. It would bring back a way for us to measure the sustainability of stock. Also, with regard to the commercial lodges and operators I have in my riding, one of every two today have catch and release. They do not retain salmon on those rivers.

**Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague across the floor for her work on this, and for bringing in both Bill C-68 and Bill C-69.

My riding of Kootenay—Columbia was Conservative for 21 years. Quite frankly, it was the Conservative government's attack on environmental legislation, including the Fisheries Act, Navigable Waters Act, and the Environmental Assessment Act, that led to the change in my riding of Kootenay—Columbia.

I was a regional manager with Fish and Wildlife for southeastern B.C. from 2002 to 2009. At the time, there was a DFO office in the Kootenays that had four staff working in it. They showed me a staffing chart. They were supposed to go to 12 staff, but by the time 2015 came along, there was not one DFO staff left in the Kootenays.

Would the member support re-establishing a DFO office in Kootenay—Columbia in the southeastern part of B.C.?

**Ms. Yvonne Jones:** Mr. Speaker, one of the things I was assured of in this briefing was that there would be more protection and enforcement available in jurisdictions across Canada. That is because of the cuts that had been made in regions like the one my colleague speaks of in his riding and in many others. We recognize that as being one of the critical pieces that has to happen.

For countless generations in this country, the fishery has been a tremendous industry, socially, culturally, and economically. Whether inland waters or offshore waters, it is a valuable resource in this country. We should never be afraid to stand up to protect that resource for the benefit of those who earn their livelihood from it, and the communities that are sustained from that industry.

• (1635)

**Ms. Kim Rudd (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have had pleasure of visiting my colleague's riding in Labrador and had the opportunity to talk to fishers who were out on the water. They talked about conservation and some of the challenges they have had since the cuts happened under the former Conservative government. I wonder if

the member could expand a bit on how they believe that this data is important to ensuring their livelihood and conservation.

**Ms. Yvonne Jones:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague sat in many of those meetings with me in my riding and she knows of what she speaks.

I could not be prouder than I am of the fishing industry I represent in my riding. It is a predominantly indigenous fishery, but it also includes many people who fall outside the indigenous guidelines. They were one of the first groups in Canada to come to the federal government asking for protected areas for the fishery, to make sure that their fishers were not dragging for turbot or shrimp in certain areas, and that other areas be protected as well.

That is the kind of people I represent in the House. That is the kind of people who want to see protection of the fishery for sustainability and for the long-term economic, social, and cultural benefits for their communities. I will continue to stand and support them.

[*Translation*]

**The Deputy Speaker:** Before resuming debate, 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 Calgary Rocky Ridge, Taxation; the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, Poverty; the hon. member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith, The Environment.

[*English*]

**Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a real privilege to speak to Bill C-68 and its amendment to the Fisheries Act, especially given the opportunity I have had for the past two years to serve on the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans.

I want to take a moment to salute all of my colleagues on that committee, because all of them have demonstrated deep concern for the health of our fisheries and the communities that rely on them. We could have different views on what should be done or how it should be done, but the collegial approach to our deliberations has produced recommendations that will stand the test of time. In fact, all of them in one way or another are reflected in this legislation.

I also particularly want to salute our friend and colleague, the hon. member for Cariboo—Prince George, who may be watching, bored to tears, as he is on the mend from a significant health scare. We certainly look forward to getting him back into the saddle again.

A year ago this month, our committee tabled in the House its sixth report, titled "Review of Changes Made in 2012 to the Fisheries Act: Enhancing the Protection of Fish and Fish Habitat and the Management of Canadian Fisheries". The study was prompted by ongoing concern from a broad range of stakeholders about decisions made by the previous government that, to many, had the effect of stripping habitat protections from 98% of Canada's lakes, rivers, and streams.

### *Government Orders*

Coincidentally, the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, on which I also sit, examined the changes the previous government had made to the Navigable Waters Protection Act. Again, most stakeholders reacted to those changes with concern, in the belief that various works could have taken place without environmental reviews.

Throughout these studies, efforts were made to understand the reasons behind the changes made by the Harper government. We felt it was important to ensure that, where appropriate, measures that improved processes while preserving safeguards were maintained in the interest of modernizing the oldest legislation in Canada.

However, our review did shed light on a couple of critical issues.

One of the notable changes made to the act in 2012 was that of focusing its protections on the productivity of fish that are part of a commercial, recreational, or aboriginal fishery, or fish that support such a fishery, rather than on all fish and fish habitat, as was previously the case.

In addition, prior to the 2012 legislative changes, the act contained prohibitions against killing fish by any means other than fishing, and against carrying on any work or undertaking that results in the harmful alteration, disruption, or destruction of fish habitat, a prohibition commonly known as HADD. In 2012, those two provisions were replaced with a single new prohibition against carrying on “any work, undertaking or activity that results in serious harm to fish that are part of a commercial, recreational or Aboriginal fishery”.

As a term, “serious harm” struck many as being very subjective. The committee heard from witnesses who said that it created confusion, leading to uneven application of the regulations at best, or at worst possibly allowing damaging activities to take place.

The 2012 amendments to the Fisheries Act removed the protection for fish habitat from subsection 35(1). Witnesses submitted that this amendment shifted the focus from fish habitat protection to fisheries protection, which offered substantially less attention to fish habitat. Many believed that applying the term “serious harm” only to fish could allow the disruption and non-permanent alteration of habitat.

According to Dr. Kristi Miller-Saunders, a research scientist at Fisheries and Oceans Canada's Pacific Biological Station in Nanaimo, B.C., the requirement for the death of fish to be deemed “serious harm” created a problem. Dr. Miller-Saunders noted that fish that are stressed in one environment could become physiologically compromised but might not immediately die within the habitat where the initial stress took place. Their compromised state could leave them unable to adapt or thrive as they move to new habitats, disconnecting the original stress from the weakening or death of fish.

Dr. Miller-Saunders noted that the 2012 changes might not protect fish stocks that were once abundant but became degraded to the point that they were unable to support a commercial, recreational, or aboriginal fishery. In essence, the fear was that once a stock was no longer useful to humans, it might be left on its own, unprotected.

● (1640)

Our committee heard a great deal about the degradation of the DFO's ability to do the necessary science and to monitor compliance with protection regulations. Thus, when the time came to make changes, yes, indeed a lot of the science would not necessarily have been there.

The hon. member for Beauséjour, Canada's fisheries minister, reported that the number of fish habitat protection officers had been reduced from 63 to 16 in the previous government's final years. He noted that from 2010 to 2015, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans' budget was cut by \$35 million, which led to the loss of almost 1,100 positions, including over 300 scientists.

Remediating that situation started two years ago, with the government's initiative to hire 135 scientists to boost the DFO's capacity, and the allocation of an additional \$197 million to the department in budget 2016.

Let us go now to Bill C-68 itself. After extensive consultations, and with the standing committee's recommendations, this legislation establishes new criteria for decision-making, one of the key ones being an increased reliance on scientific information, but information bolstered by the traditional knowledge of our indigenous peoples and the experience of our fishing communities. This decision-making would look beyond the commercial factors that appeared to dominate the previous government's approach, to include the social and cultural impacts of the choices we make.

Clearly, this means that we have to talk among ourselves more often: scientists, academics, advocacy organizations, and the people whose livelihood and quality of life depend on our fisheries.

Just as we have to have broad-based processes above the waterline, we have to maintain care and concern beneath the water, care and concern beyond the commercial considerations, to entire ecosystems. Every fish, every plant needs to matter.

A potent tool at the disposal of the DFO and the minister in their decision-making is the application of the precautionary principle, understanding that we may never know conclusively what is behind an emerging situation in the ecosystem, and appreciating that an emergency usually cannot wait for the science to lead us to the fine points of a response. The precautionary principle mandates action.

The government's response, even before Bill C-68, was Bill C-55, which would give the minister the authority to designate interim marine protected areas, allowing time for science to reconcile evidence that we have a potential crisis on our hands.

Of course, Bill C-68 itself would restore protections that were perceived to have been either lost or seriously weakened by the changes in 2012. No longer will we focus on the subjective matter of “serious harm to fish”. No longer will our care and concern extend only to fish that are useful to humans. No longer will we be uncertain about how and where habitats will be protected.

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Prohibitions are restored against causing the death of fish other than by fishing, and the harmful alteration, disruption, or destruction of fish habitat. In our standing committee's study, we often heard that we simply cannot consider the impact of each individual project or activity but have to consider the cumulative effects of industrial activities, public works, and recreational projects such as private docks on fish, their habitat, and the freedom to navigate.

At the same time, our committee considered the need to avoid causing undue delay to important municipal works, for example by requiring full environmental reviews for repairs to existing infrastructure. Bill C-68 introduces measures that allow the minister to issue permits for designated project types and to establish standards and codes of practice to provide proponents with more certainty in the planning, scheduling, and implementation of their projects.

I have selected only the issues that stood out in the notes I took at our standing committee's hearings, but many other important and positive aspects of Bill C-68 will undoubtedly be covered by my colleagues as this debate continues.

There is a lot to celebrate in this legislation, and as much as I am privileged to have made a contribution to its creation, I believe that once the process is done, this whole House will be justifiably proud of its passage, because so many of us care so much about the future of our lakes, rivers, streams, and oceans, and all the creatures and people they serve.

• (1645)

**Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, one issue that keeps arising in my riding is a very particular challenge of people overharvesting shellfish. One of the major concerns is the fact that there is not enough enforcement. There is no one there watching and checking how many shellfish are being harvested, and that goes back to the sad history of seeing staff from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans slowly erode in smaller rural communities.

As this challenge continues to grow, indigenous communities and the general population are coming forward, particularly in Powell River, where we now have busloads of people coming in from the Lower Mainland to harvest shellfish from one particular beach.

I am wondering if the member would be willing to speak about the importance of enforcement and how we need to look further into the future at legislation creating a safety net for this industry.

**Mr. Ken Hardie:** Mr. Speaker, that is an excellent question. We have to look at a number of different issues.

The first is public information. We have areas called rockfish conservation areas where certain activities are not allowed to happen. The casual fisher or the harvester may not even know those areas are posted. Therefore, we need to ensure they are more clearly delineated.

Second, absolutely we must reinforce and rebuild DFO's ability to do the necessary enforcement to protect fish stocks and shellfish stocks in this case.

Finally, we heard so many times from so many people that we had the capacity of people who made a living on the water, our

indigenous people and non-indigenous people, who could make a contribution not only to the science but also to the monitoring of compliance with the rules and regulations that would come forward in the bill.

On all three scores, I hope this will address the concerns raised by the hon. member.

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as someone who grew up on the north coast of B.C. and as a teenager worked at a cannery fileting fish and salmon, I know how important the fishery industry is to Canadians from coast to coast to coast. How will this legislation fulfill what was a campaign commitment, a platform commitment, that our party ran on in 2015 to restore balance to environmental programs and to the Fisheries Act? I would love to hear what and how this would fulfill our platform commitment.

• (1650)

**Mr. Ken Hardie:** Mr. Speaker, a key value that we put forward was the necessity to make evidence-based decisions. The problem we have had is that the evidence has not been available. The capability to collect that evidence was seriously compromised over the past 10 years.

We want to rebuild that but at the same time we want to employ the precautionary principles to move in where things might not necessarily be clear, where we know something is going on and we have to take immediate remedial action.

Like my hon. friend, I spent some time on the north coast out in the fishing boats. One of the things that concerns me about the activities on the west coast is the separation of the people who own boats and the people who own the fishing quotas. They have been struggling with this on the east coast as well but seem to have a much different and much healthier industry because of their approach on the east coast.

The legislation also introduces an opportunity to talk about this issue on the west coast.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague's remarks. For the past few hours, I seem to have heard the Liberals make heartfelt speeches about the environment and push the few merits of this bill, because it does have some, while at the same time criticizing the horrors of the previous system established by the Conservatives.

Since the Liberals have recognized the need to protect habitats, which is the intent of this bill, how can the Liberals say that they are working to protect the environment and help economic development, and then turn around and agree to the construction of Kinder Morgan under the principles they criticized the previous government for?

[*English*]

**Mr. Ken Hardie:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member may have heard this before, but it is possible to have a healthy economy and a healthy environment, and we need both.

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**Mr. Marco Mendicino:** That's a very good point.

**Mr. Ken Hardie:** This has been noted as being a very good point, Mr. Speaker.

The Kinder Morgan line passes right through the north end of my riding. Our citizens are concerned. However, we need rules of the game, standards and codes, that prescribe what can go and what should not go. These are all component parts of the legislation.

May there be another Kinder Morgan, we do not know? However, in the future when projects like this come forward, there will be a much clearer way of assessing their positive and negative benefits, if we want to call them that, and to respond accordingly through the regulations that will be in place.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I want to mention that I will share my time with my charming colleague from North Island—Powell River.

Bill C-68, an act to amend the Fisheries Act and other acts in consequence, has been a long time coming. The NDP is very happy that this bill has finally been introduced. All of the environmental bills being introduced this week and those that were introduced last week should have been introduced and implemented much more quickly. The Liberals promised to do so, and then waited two years. I understand that they had to consult the public, but they could have implemented some of the provisions without taking all this time for consultations. We are a bit disappointed in this.

Nevertheless, this bill is extremely important, because it implements a number of the recommendations the NDP made in its dissenting opinion during the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans' review of the amendments made to the Fisheries Act in 2012. I remember that sad day in 2012 very well, when the Conservative government rammed the hundreds and hundreds of pages of its infamous Bill C-38 down our throats. This bill contained a number of amendments that weakened our environmental laws. As my colleague from Trois-Rivières pointed out, these amendments are unfortunately still in effect.

The Liberals endorsed Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain pipeline project even though the public does not support it. Furthermore, since the assessment was a total farce, two of our country's wonderful provinces are now in a dispute.

There are some good things in this bill, of course. The government will once again protect fish and their habitat from activities that could kill fish. With respect to this bill, many people have commented that we must not protect only fish used by humans. We must not forget that biodiversity is an ecosystem. Fish eat each other, and if we do not save the other fish, then those we eat will have nothing to feed on. That is why taking several fish species off the protected species list was so ridiculous. That protection will be restored, which is a good thing. The HADD provision on harmful alteration, disruption, or destruction of fish habitat will be restored.

In addition, the government will for the first time include recovery of depleted fish stocks in the Fisheries Act. That is a very good thing. There are some aspects of the bill we are concerned about, though. A number of my colleagues have mentioned that the bill gives the minister far too many discretionary powers. The Liberals

have said they would make evidence-based decisions. However, if the minister is allowed to do whatever she wants regardless of science and ancestral indigenous knowledge, everything will depend on the minister's opinion rather than science. That is what we find so problematic about this aspect of the bill.

• (1655)

As I was saying, the Liberals should have reinstated fish habitat protections as soon as they took office, rather than waiting.

I must mention that many of these measures came from amendments proposed by the NDP.

Congratulations to everyone who worked on improving this bill. I commend the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam, who did excellent work on this. He worked to reinstate solid protections for fish habitat, to put forward suggestions on how to replenish fish stocks and ensure their viability, to advocate for establishing a public registry, which is very important, and to take into account indigenous knowledge.

Before I continue, I would like to talk about the very important report of the Cohen commission, which deals with Fraser River sockeye. The report recommended that the government, which is currently a Liberal one, act on the commission's recommendations to restore sockeye salmon stocks in the Fraser River. In the third recommendation of the report, Justice Cohen wrote:

The Government of Canada should remove from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans' mandate the promotion of salmon farming as an industry and farmed salmon as a product.

In that regard, I would like to come back to the excellent work done by the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam. We know that, unfortunately, the Liberals defeated Bill C-228, which was an excellent bill that sought to transition to the use of closed containment facilities and protect the jobs of workers in that sector so that nobody would lose out. It was a very good bill but, unfortunately, the Liberals voted against it.

Right now, many Canadians, including many of my constituents, are questioning the Liberals' intentions, since they also voted against the bill introduced by the member for Sherbrooke, who is another excellent MP. His bill had to do with the mandatory labelling of GMOs.

As the Liberals were voting against the mandatory labelling of GMOs, they secretly approved the farming and sale of genetically modified salmon in Canada. In fact, Canada remains the only country in the world whose citizens have eaten genetically modified salmon. We do not know who ate it. We do not know where it was purchased. We do not know the circumstances, since labelling is not mandatory, but there is absolutely no question that we unfortunately ate it.

Meanwhile, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, or ACOA, has invested over \$3 million in the company that produces genetically modified salmon.

Once again in secret, genetically modified salmon is being produced in Prince Edward Island, even though there has been no environmental assessment on the potential dangers. Genetically modified salmon could escape from their enclosures during storms and other severe weather conditions that could occur. The potential impact of such an accident on Atlantic salmon populations has not been assessed. As we know, the wild Atlantic salmon stock is already threatened.

We will support this bill for all the reasons mentioned. However, we are very disappointed in the Liberal government's efforts relative to what could have been done to improve aquaculture on the Pacific coast, as well as the labelling, sale, and farming of genetically modified salmon. Canadians are angry. We need to take action on this, and we will.

• (1700)

**Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I listened attentively to the remarks of my colleague from Drummond. Despite the bill's few merits, there is one element in particular that caught my notice, and I would like to hear what he thinks about it. The Liberals seem to be borrowing, or carrying on, the Conservatives' tendency to use bills to grant more and more power to ministers.

The Liberals had assured us that decisions would be based on scientific evidence, but the current bill says that the minister will have the power to make basically whatever decisions she wants. Then, when I check the registry of lobbyists, I see more lobbying of companies than of scientists themselves.

Is there not a risk that the government will give in to pressure from big lobby groups and depart from the goals it is setting out with Bill C-68?

• (1705)

**Mr. François Choquette:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from Trois-Rivières for his question. He is correct. One of the flaws in this bill, which we do support, is that it gives the minister far too much leeway. The Liberals say we are going to rely on science and indigenous traditional knowledge, but at the same time they say the minister is going to be able to do basically whatever she wants. That makes no sense. If we say we are going to rely on science, that means we are not going to rely on the minister's opinion. We had enough of this with the Conservatives, who supported economic development at all costs, without regard for sustainable development. The economy is one of the pillars of sustainable development, but there is also the social aspect, meaning the environmental and social economy.

This flaw is evident not only in this bill, but also in other bills, including the environmental assessment bill the minister just introduced. I do not know what the Minister of Environment put in her coffee, but all of her bills leave her plenty of leeway to do whatever she wants.

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am sure the member can appreciate that a great deal of work was done leading up to the legislation that was presented today. There were a couple of outreaches to the public to participate, via the

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Internet. There have been well over 100 different meetings with different stakeholders and indigenous people to get their thoughts and reflections first-hand. The standing committee was also engaged, which came up with 30-plus recommendations.

The legislation before us today is very much forward thinking and I am wondering if the member would agree, given the consultations that have taken place, that the bill was fairly well thought out before being introduced in the chamber and that we should send it to committee. The minister indicated that the government is open to hearing what everyone else might have to say. Does he think that is a good thing?

[Translation]

**Mr. François Choquette:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for the question. He is right that it was important to consult all the groups affected by this bill. There is one thing the Liberal government could have done immediately. As soon as it came to power, it could have restored protections for all fish in Canada. That is being done now, but sadly we lost two years.

I commend the government for listening to the groups and the public because there are a lot of good things in there. I mentioned for example habitat protection for all fish, the considerations related to restoration and sustainability, the cumulative follow-up, which is important, and the rebuilding of fish stocks. These are all good things that are in this bill. I congratulate the government on that. It says that it is open to amendments, but I hope it will also be open to clarifying the ministerial discretion because we have serious concerns about that.

[English]

**Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am here to speak to this particular bill because it is so important to the people I represent in North Island—Powell River. It is a very large riding, covering half of Vancouver Island and parts of the mainland as well, so it is really important to me as I serve coastal communities. These communities have a long history of resource economies, and in our resource-rich area the ocean is a large part of our economy.

In these changing times, many people from across my riding have spoken to me about the challenges that they face. Many members of the communities I serve have spoken to me about increasing challenges to make a living fishing in our region. Licences are getting increasingly expensive, leaving the smaller family-owned businesses struggling. Most concerning is the growing scarcity of wild salmon in our region.

It is important for me to discuss legislation like Bill C-68, an act to amend the Fisheries Act and other acts in consequence, as it touches so directly and profoundly on the lives of residents of our coastal communities. The Fisheries Act is a key federal law for fish habitat protection, one of the key laws for marine biodiversity, and an essential part of Canada's environmental safety net.

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On October 25, 2017, Oceana Canada released a review of the state of Canada's fisheries and how the government is managing them. Most concerning to me was how the results told the story of serious concern. In Canada's fisheries, only one-third of the stocks are considered healthy and 13% are in critical condition.

Canada's fishing industry employs more than 79,000 employees and exports more than six billion dollars' worth of seafood annually. In my riding, we have businesses that focus on seafood processing, like Keltic Seafoods in Port Hardy. These local businesses are an important factor to the economic backbone of these regions. They hire local people, keep jobs in the areas that need them, and are so close to the resource of seafood. When our marine stocks are in trouble, this has a significant impact on businesses like these.

It also has impacts on the tourism businesses in our region that flourish due to the natural habitat. Be it in Telegraph Cove, up Bute Inlet, in Gold River, Campbell River, Tla'amin, or Sonora, just to name a few of the robust tourism communities, if people want to experience the beauty of whales, wild salmon, eagles, or bears we have them all and all of them rely on the marine stocks.

The other concern that I have been hearing from the indigenous communities that I have the pleasure to represent is the lack of access to seafood resources for the traditional foods of the people. Many of these communities rely on the food of their ancestors, and as it becomes harder to access, many people are struggling. Visitors to my riding do not have to be there long before they understand the importance of the water, how the ocean and inlets provide a livelihood for the people who live there. They are our water highways and roads for jobs.

It is so easy in our fast-food, plastic-wrapped world to forget the food chain, from the food on our plates back to the earth and the waters, to the farmers and men and women who fish. It is too easy to disconnect ourselves from where our food comes from and how much that food needs to be healthy, safe, and enjoy the protection of good laws and regulations. This is the vital role that the federal government plays.

We saw with the previous Conservative government a disrespect for our fish habitat. The government gutted provisions that offered protection. Changes made to the Fisheries Act in 2012 removed protection for fish and for habitat. I am not surprised that four former ministers who wrote the former prime minister to oppose the changes all came from British Columbia. We on the west coast know its importance. Two of those ministers, Siddon and Fraser, were members of the former prime minister's own Conservative Party but he did not listen to them.

In fixing the loss of that protection, it is important to recall the huge public outcry then opposing the Conservative government legislation. More than 700 scientists wrote the government urging it to keep habitat protection in the act. First nations communities in my riding and across British Columbia spoke out against the changes. Conservative organizations, recreational fishers, and concerned citizens joined first nations demanding that we do everything possible to protect fish habitat.

● (1710)

As Jeffery Young of the David Suzuki Foundation notes:

Without healthy habitat, fish can't survive. These changes are important tools to fight badly degraded habitat from resource development across Canada as well as prevent species extinction.

My party and I welcome this legislation. We give our support now for second reading. The progress we are making in protecting our fish habitat is happening in part from the good work of the New Democratic Party in committee, including the amazing advocacy of my colleague from Port Moody—Coquitlam. This bill would implement some of the recommendations made by the NDP in our dissenting opinion to the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans' review of changes made in 2012 to the Fisheries Act and the management of Canadian fisheries.

This legislation is a good start, but I fear the government does not go far enough to address protection. Let me state first what I like about the changes proposed in this legislation and then what needs to be better. It is good that we again are more specific on what we must be on guard against. It is good we are talking now about the harm, alteration, disruption, and destruction of fish habitat, and that we are again restoring the definition of fisheries to include all fish.

Now, when making a decision under the Fisheries Act, the minister will have to consider any adverse effects the decision may have on the rights of the indigenous people of Canada, recognized and affirmed by section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982; include provisions respecting the consideration and protection of traditional knowledge of the indigenous peoples of Canada; and authorize the making of agreements with indigenous governing bodies to further the purpose of the Fisheries Act.

This is long overdue. This respects and begins the process of a nation-to-nation relationship between governments. This is something we will all be watching very closely.

These changes will provide measures for the protection of fish and fish habitat with respect to works, undertakings, or activities that may result in the death of fish or to their harm. We will need to be vigilant on the regulations still to come to ensure that an ecologically significant area will truly be protected. There are several such ecological areas that are significant and sensitive in my riding. There can never be too much protection, given the human, financial, and ecological consequences from any accidents. I find that the expertise in my region of local sport fisheries and indigenous communities is key here. The benefits of hearing those voices, who care so deeply for the habitat and the success of our marine life, will assist in making good policy. I hope the minister remembers to use that local knowledge.



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So much of whether this law will lead to good practice will depend on the regulations. Susanna Fuller, Ecology Action Centre, has said, “It is a big step that the new Act includes that the minister must take into account whether or not rebuilding measures are in place for depleted species, however, details on rebuilding will be in regulations.”

Even with this progress in fish habitat protection, I still have concerns on whether this legislation has gone far enough. I am concerned that this bill still does not address the conflicting mandates that Commissioner Cohen identified of conserving wild salmon while promoting salmon farming. This needs to be clarified and it is still not being addressed.

Another concern I have is the need for strong regulations that follow the passing of this legislation. This will need to be clear with timelines and targets, and take into account the impacts of climate change and species interactions.

I note the bill would give a great deal of discretion around decision-making to the minister, allowing decisions to be made based on the minister's opinion rather than enshrining the necessary strong guidelines in the law. This has me concerned and vigilant, along with many who are at the forefront of protecting our fish habitat. I am concerned too that this legislation does not look at protecting environmental flows. This is so important.

With this bill, we would see undone the bad laws of the previous government. Let us ensure we do everything to make sure this a good law, the best possible law and regulations to truly protect our fish habitat. The activists, scientists, businesses, and first nations communities are asking for a better bill.

In closing, the people of North Island—Powell River rely on the strength of our coast to provide recreation, beauty, and economic development. Protecting these investments is so important today and into the future.

•(1715)

**Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciated the speech and I want to make a comment as opposed to a question.

I want to put on the record that in my jurisdiction, we are so happy with the recent agreement with the Arctic nations to preserve the Arctic Ocean from fishing until the stocks have been evaluated to see if our stocks can actually be fished, to hold off all the countries that would like to fish there. I assume the member, with her very positive speech, would agree with that initiative.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Mr. Speaker, the reality is, as I work and live in the riding I serve of North Island—Powell River, I hear from so many different communities. Many of the sport fishery folks talk to me about how well they work in that environment. They are watching to see what is happening, because they want to preserve and conserve that region. They want to make sure we have healthy habitat for fish, and a strong fishery into the future.

We hear from those sectors and the indigenous communities that there is so much we could be doing. They say, “We need to protect and maintain, because this is our food. This is the wealth of our communities.” It is a wonderful thing to see that come together.

It is important though to state that the minister still holds a lot of power and we need to make sure that decisions are not based on a minister's opinion but that they are based on science and the information that is given to us. Many people rely on that resource. We must respect it.

•(1720)

**Mr. Fin Donnelly (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. member for her excellent speech and for her passion for representing her riding, an important part of the coast and coastal communities.

She talked about how important the Fisheries Act is to her area, to the coastal communities, and how important it is to get it right. She also spoke about local knowledge and traditional knowledge and the importance of including traditional knowledge. That is being reflected in the bill, which is a good first step, but in fact it is a small step.

I wonder if my colleague could talk about the importance of going the next step, which is talking about co-governance, co-management, and actually looking at UNDRIP and recognizing what it is all about when talking to first nations and the importance of the fishery to first nations, and their knowledge.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Mr. Speaker, the member has raised a really important question.

I have the honour of representing over 20 indigenous communities in my riding. They range across a broad area. The issues that they face are very diverse and very similar. One of the challenges that a lot of the communities have talked to me about is being able to work and harvest our marine life for traditional purposes, but also as a way of having their own economy, and how many things have changed, and how that has had a huge impact on their ability to have good jobs in their small and sometimes very remote communities.

This discussion of nation to nation, of really looking at working together and governing together is so important. There is so much knowledge. When I sit down with the leadership, with the elders, I hear that knowledge. I really hope the minister will step in the direction of understanding that the first peoples have lived here since forever. They know their territory. Their history goes so far back that 150 years does not even touch it. They want to share that. They want to make sure their locations are cared for, and they want to be a part of that process.

We had a terrible diesel spill in one of the parts of my riding not too long ago. The indigenous community was there on the scene. They said to me afterwards, “We just want to be part of the process so that when this happens, we can activate things, do something, but we were sitting there waiting, being told we couldn't be part of the solution. When are we going to be part of the solution?”

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That discussion is really the next step. I look forward to seeing that happen. I know the nations in my riding are watching for that.

**Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the proposed Fisheries Act amendments which would introduce key measures to ensure our fishery resources are available for generations of Canadians yet to come.

Today, through proposed amendments to the act, the government is moving to restore lost measures that would protect fish and their habitat, and to modernize safeguards for the challenges we face in the 21st century. However, more than protecting further loss of these resources, we are also introducing measures that would help restore them. These actions would help maintain biodiversity and would also generate positive economic spinoffs for the fisheries. Such dual benefits reflect the goal of sustainable development, a healthy environment, a prosperous economy, and a vibrant society for current and future generations.

All told, the fisheries sector is valued at \$13 billion and employs some 72,000 Canadians. Our fisheries are an economic driver in rural communities on all three coasts, including in many indigenous communities. That is why the Department of Fisheries and Oceans supports an economically prosperous fishery while retaining conservation as its top priority.

The cultural impact of the fisheries may be harder to measure in dollars and cents, but it is no less important. For some families in coastal communities, fishing has been a way of life for generations. Indeed, for many indigenous peoples, fishing traditions extend back millennia.

In developing the Fisheries Act, the government understood that the fisheries contribute to rural and indigenous communities in both tangible and intangible ways. In keeping with the principle of sustainable development, we sought to achieve a balance between environmental, economic, and social imperatives. In this way, we could help preserve the integrity of the fisheries in the years ahead.

There is no single threat to the sustainability and productivity of our fisheries. Damage and loss of habitat, aquatic invasive species, and changes to freshwater flow all contribute to the decline of freshwater and marine fisheries.

Indeed, restoring habitat provides an opportunity to redress past negative impacts. The proposed Fisheries Act identifies four key areas that would require consideration of fish and habitat restoration measures: stock rebuilding; factors to consider when issuing permits and authorizations; ecologically significant areas; and the making of regulations. Let me take them one by one, starting with fish stocks.

The proposed act would support the restoration of degraded fish habitats. Of course, the department already works to repair past impacts and help restore depleted fish stocks; however, these activities are not integrated into key areas of its mandate. The new act would address this gap. Under the proposed amendments, when making decisions that would impact a depleted stock, the minister would need to consider whether measures are in place to rebuild that fish stock. In addition, the minister shall take into account whether there are measures in place to restore degraded fish habitat, where the minister is of the opinion that the loss or degradation of fish habitat has contributed to a stock's decline.

The second area for consideration of fish habitat restoration is the list of factors the minister must review before making decisions about permits, authorizations, or regulations. The proposed amendments add a new factor for the minister to consider: do the planned offsetting activities give priority to the restoration of degraded fish habitat?

The third area for consideration of fish habitat restoration is the creation of ecologically significant areas. These areas are intended to protect sensitive and important fish habitats by prohibiting certain types of activities. The proposed amendments would make provisions for these sensitive areas clearer, stronger, and easier to implement.

I will give an example of how the process might work. Working with partners, including indigenous groups, the department would identify potential ecologically significant areas. Together, they would identify the best way to protect fish habitat and what activities the minister could approve. If the minister believes that habitat restoration is required to meet prescribed objectives for conservation and protection in an ecologically significant area, then a fish habitat restoration plan must be published on the public registry. Not only would this approach go a long way to restoring habitat, but it would also promote greater engagement with partners, as well as greater transparency with Canadians around decision-making.

● (1725)

The fourth area relates to authorities for making regulations for the restoration of fish habitats. This regulation-making authority can be exercised when it supports the conservation and protection of fish.

These amendments help the department pursue the overall policy objective of restoring the ecological integrity of degraded or damaged aquatic habitats. Collectively, they give the department legislative authority to advance restoration planning, regulate harm to aquatic habitats from proposed development projects, guide habitat-offsetting efforts, and to work with multiple partners to achieve these objectives.

Together, these proposed changes to the act would help achieve three important results. First, they would help protect biodiversity in aquatic ecosystems which leads to more stable and resilient biological systems that can better withstand impacts related to development projects. Second, they would help build healthier and more abundant fish stocks. This in turn would make fisheries more resilient and would lead to greater potential long-term economic gains. Third, the proposed changes would contribute to the sustainability of the fish stock and continued economic prosperity in Canada's fishing communities.

I urge all hon. members to join with me in supporting these much needed amendments.

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• (1730)

**Mr. Fin Donnelly (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's comments and agree with a lot of what he said. However, I do want to focus specifically on a large issue that is affecting the west coast in British Columbia. That is the Kinder Morgan pipeline. The project was approved under the current act and the old NEB process. My colleague talked about the importance of science-based decisions. If this project goes ahead, one of the issues is with the product that is going to be shipped. We do not know if dilbit sinks or floats, but it is likely to sink. There is no technology on our coast that is readily available to clean that up. As well, how would we go forward with a world-class oil spill response?

The minister and the government have talked about the oceans protection plan, but there is no technology known to clean up that product. How can we have a science-based approach, and then this glaring scientific gap in cleaning up this product that the government wants to move off our coast?

**Mr. Ken McDonald:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague did say that the Kinder Morgan project has already been approved, so I guess the approval and the environmental assessment have already been done for it to move forward.

Hopefully, now that we have the time to bring these changes in, we will find and incorporate the science that will provide the necessary protection should such a mishap occur where the substance leaks out into our pristine oceans.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments from my colleague from Avalon. He has been a very strong advocate on a wide variety of issues, but he has a special interest in our coastal regions and important issues in that area. I also respect his representation of his constituents. How does he think his constituents would see this legislation as a whole, and the manner in which he will be supporting it?

**Mr. Ken McDonald:** Mr. Speaker, when we were looking at amendments to the Fisheries Act at the committee, one question I asked various witnesses, whether they were DFO officials, environmentalists, or whomever, was whether we were going to get it right this time. I told them that Newfoundland had a strong connection to the fishery, my riding in particular, that all but one community was bound by the Atlantic Ocean, that many people made a living from the ocean and had for hundreds of years, and that they would continue to do that. It was very important that we get it right, that we protected the fish and fish habitat. I did not speak to one fisherman who was inclined to say that we should catch the last fish or damage the habitat. They wanted it to be there for themselves and their children to use.

A representative from one of the larger fish companies in the province, Ocean Choice International, was speaking at a function one night. He made the comment that the fishery had to change. He said that it was not about the quantity but the quality we took out of the water. I was surprised to learn that this Newfoundland-born company, and still Newfoundland owned and operated, exported 100 million pounds of fish to 35 different countries every year. These people depend on the fishery. It provides a good living for a lot of

people involved in the fishery. The company wants to see the fish there tomorrow so it can continue to provide those very important jobs.

• (1735)

**Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the perspective of my Liberal colleague. I do not think anybody in the House wants to jeopardize the health of our fisheries, whether in the oceans or rivers. I have probably three of the most pristine fly fishing rivers in the world in my riding. I certainly understand the importance of protecting those waterways.

The concern we certainly have heard from many of our constituents is the overarching unintended consequences of undoing a lot of the elimination of red tape and regulations we did in 2012. I know it is important to protect some of these large fisheries and large waterways, but there would be unintended consequences. It would impact farmers, ranchers, and rural municipalities.

They will have to go back and deal with that onerous red tape. They will have the DFO enforcement officers over their shoulders when they are spraying around draining ditches. They will have to worry about cleaning culverts. This was a huge issue for our rural communities. That is why we made a lot of these changes in 2012, and the bill before us would undo the changes and go back to that red tape.

Could my colleague comment on the unintended consequences of the proposed legislation and the impact it will have on rural communities?

**Mr. Ken McDonald:** Mr. Speaker, I agree with some of what the member said, such as a farmer who puts in a drainage ditch in which a trout decides to habitat and is punished or stopped from doing any future work in that area.

I was glad to hear the minister say earlier today, in response to a question, that he hoped the bill would go to committee so further amendments could be introduced. I would hope for something along those lines to protect the farmers. I certainly do not agree with them being punished because a trout or some species of fish has found refuge in drains they have created to drain their lands or provide water to their crops. I look forward to those amendments coming forward to committee in the near future.

**Mr. Fin Donnelly (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, one thing that will be strengthened in the Fisheries Act is the focus on the inshore fishery, the owner-operator principle. We support that element of the legislation.

*Government Orders*

My hon. colleague talked about the importance of protecting habitat and biological diversity. However, one of the shortcomings of the bill is that there is no protection for environmental flows, which is about the quality and quantity of the water in rivers and that habitat which is so vital to the protection and flourishing of the fishery. Could my hon. colleague comment on the importance of protecting environmental flows and securing that water for fish?

**Mr. Ken McDonald:** Mr. Speaker, my NDP colleague is on the fisheries and oceans committee.

It is important we look at all aspects of protecting the environment and the habitat. It is no good protecting one part of it if we do not protect it all. Water flow is certainly a big part of that. As I said earlier, I look forward to the bill coming to committee and having amendments put forward.

The member mentioned the owner-operator policy, which is very important to individual fishers in Newfoundland and Labrador. Instead of seeing large companies buying up quotas and farming them out to fishermen, the individual fishermen are the people who should hold those quotas. They should see the benefits of it, with the money going back to the communities in which live.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** Questions and comments. We have time for a 30-second question and a 30-second answer.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Watch how quick I can be, Mr. Speaker.

The government committed to bring in legislation in response to the legislation that was passed in 2012, so it is a promise kept. Could my colleague comment on keeping that promise?

• (1740)

**Mr. Ken McDonald:** Mr. Speaker, that is the shortest question I have ever heard him ask, keeping it to 30 seconds.

It is a promise made and a promise kept. It was a good promise, and it is good to see this great promise kept by this government.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** The promise to keep it under a minute was kept as well, and I am glad to see it.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Foothills.

**Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise to speak in this debate. I recall very succinctly, in my previous career as a journalist, how important the ramifications of the changes in 2012 to the Navigable Waters Protection Act were to farmers, ranchers, and municipalities. I will share this story.

I lived in a municipality in Saskatchewan and a farmer had a drainage area across from his property, where six weeks of the year, during spring runoff, water would flow across the property. There was a very old bridge there. In partnership with the farmer, the municipality went to replace that bridge. However, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans said that it was navigable water, that there was the possibility of a fish habitat there, and that the bridge over this waterway needed to be large enough for watercraft to fit under.

I can assure everyone that for this waterway, which held water for maybe six weeks a year with a good snowfall, there was no reason for the bridge over this drainage area to be large enough for watercraft. There were going to be no canoes, kayaks, Sea-Doos, and certainly the last pirate of Saskatchewan was not going to sailing down the plains to the mighty banks of the Regina. That is exactly what farmers and ranchers in rural municipalities were having to face before the changes were made in 2012.

The Liberal government likes to say that the environment and the economy go hand in hand. Unfortunately, with a lot of the legislation it puts forward, including this, there is always one hand tied behind our backs, and that is the economic hand. That certainly is the case with our farmers and ranchers when it comes to this legislation.

We can go back to what has been a very clear theme with a lot of the Liberal legislation: consequences be damned to rural communities and agriculture. We saw that come to a head in the fall with the small business tax changes. The government did not understand the consequences the changes were going to have on the transition of the family farm or farmers using income splitting. It was not until the rural communities and farm families voiced their opposition quite profoundly to the changes that the Liberals finally decided to step back. I will not say they stepped down, because I want to see what is in the budget coming up later this month.

Canada's food guide is still the number one document that people download from the Government of Canada website. It has a profound impact on the agriculture sector. Canada's food guide asks Canadians to eat less animal protein and less dairy. During the discussions and consultations on this document, it specifically said that representation from the agriculture sector was excluded from those discussions. In addition, very important health experts were also excluded from that discussion. I have letters signed by 700 medical professionals who say the direction of Canada's food guide is wrong.

Then there is the carbon tax. Studies have shown, even by the finance department, that it is profoundly impacts rural Canada. We see this theme going through everything the Liberal government is doing, unfortunately. The consequences of its decisions on rural Canadians and our agriculture sector do not resonate, it does not matter, and that is very unfortunate. They are an important part of our economy, certainly a pillar of who we are as Canadians, and part of our Canadian culture.

That is still the case with the legislation before us today. I do not think there is anyone in the House who does not want to ensure that we protect our fisheries and pristine waterways. It is certainly a fabric of who we are as Canadians. As I said earlier, in my constituency and riding of Foothills, there is the Bow River Basin and some of the most pristine fly fishing areas in the world. I am very lucky. If I drive north to south in my riding, I cross the Bow, Elbow, Sheep, Highwood, Oldman, and Belly Rivers. My riding covers all of those rivers.

*Government Orders*

• (1745)

A lot of Albertans would be quite surprised to learn that hunters and anglers spend close to \$1 billion a year in Alberta. Many of my rural communities, like Crow's Nest Pass, Longview, High River, rely on the dollars that are spent by those hunters, anglers, and tourists.

For my colleagues across the floor and in the other room today to say that the changes we made in 2012 dismantled protection of Canada's waterways is not only misleading, it is absolutely wrong.

I am a Conservative member. I understand the impact that has on my constituency and my communities. There is no way I would have stood up and voted in favour of something that I knew would have a detrimental impact on certainly one of the most important amenities in my riding, the lifeblood of southwest Alberta.

Some of my favourite moments as a child was going on fishing trips with my father, going into the back country, no one around, no cellphones, of course this was before cellphones, and enjoying the wilderness. My son and his grandfather enjoyed many of those same excursions. They were important to him.

To say that we do not care about our environment is just not true. We worked hard to find a balance between what was best for the environment and at the same time ensure that our farmers and ranchers had the ability to operate their farms and that municipalities could work through what was very onerous red tape and bureaucracy in the process.

The Conservative Party believes the goals of the Fisheries Act should remain. They were there to protect fish stock while at the same time avoiding unnecessary negative economic impacts and the bureaucratic tape that industries and municipalities had to, ironically, navigate through to ensure they could even operate.

The changes made by the previous Conservative government in 2012 improved fisheries conservation, prioritized fish productivity, protected significant fisheries, and reduced the regulatory burden on rural and farming communities. It also ensured that we protected our environment by protecting critical waterways, while at the same time eliminating those unnecessary hurdles and obstacles that were impeding economic opportunities.

Prior to 2012, the Fisheries Act did not make any distinction between vital waterways, lakes, or rivers that supported Canada's fishing industry. It did not distinguish between those smaller waterways that likely never supported a fish population, maybe 150 years ago but certainly not now.

The 1992 Canadian Environmental Assessment Act required environmental assessments for all protected waterways, even if it was a single project, like a small dock, cleaning a culvert, or minor bridge repairs. All of these were assessed in the same way that a major project on a major waterway was assessed. We tried to clean up some of these issues in 2012, and we did a strong job on that.

I have heard from our agriculture community and our rural municipalities that when spraying was being done near a drainage ditch, one of the biggest headaches was always looking for that DFO enforcement officer who would slap on a fine when minor maintenance or pest control was being done, the types of things

that are done on a farm. Municipalities had to go through a lot of hoops and hurdles just to do a bridge repair or clean out a culvert after a long winter.

We want to ensure there are no unintended consequences with the legislation as a result of doing these things. However, the Liberal government has not given us that assurance. We just heard the minister say that he was hopeful that when the bill went to committee, there would be amendments to address some of these things. The Liberal government has not exactly been open-minded when it comes to amendments brought forward by opposition parties. I cannot say that I am hopeful that it will take our amendments in good faith and will listen to concerns of our farmers.

I recall many of our farmers in rural municipalities being quite relieved when we made these changes in 2012. These were important mechanisms and levers they had to ensure they could get critical infrastructure projects done.

• (1750)

It is important that they were going to be allowed to follow through on some economic development opportunities and some natural resource development. Again, these things have to be done with a balanced approach. We are not saying that this is wide open. Over the last five or six years, since the 2012 changes were made, we have not had constituents or communities or municipalities coming to us saying that this has been a horrible decision, to please go back to what we had before, that they needed those regulations and that red tape and things have gone a bit out of control. That has not been the case.

In fact, the changes we made have achieved the goals that we intended. They have allowed our rural communities to continue doing business without having that exorbitant amount of red tape and bureaucracy that they had to go through. That is critically important. Our rural communities are looking to our different levels of government to ensure we are giving them the tools they need to survive and to thrive. Unfortunately, over the last 18 months, what they have seen is a federal government that is doing exactly the opposite. Any tools that have been provided to them to be successful are being dismantled and one by one taken away.

On this side of the House, the Conservative members have been the voice of our rural constituents. We will continue to do that, whether it is the small business tax changes, the carbon tax, the Canada food guide, or the front-of-package labelling. Going back to putting restrictions and red tape and bureaucracy on to these communities is not a step forward; this is a punishing and debilitating step backward. We want to ensure that our municipalities and rural communities have an opportunity to thrive and grow.

It is troubling to see the Liberals reverting back to these pre-2012 regulations. Those regulations created confusion, they were difficult to enforce, and they certainly negatively impacted our farmers, communities, and natural resource development.

*Private Members' Business*

We have seen in the discussions we have had over the last couple of weeks on the Trans Mountain pipeline, the Minister of Natural Resources and the Prime Minister stand up and vehemently say that the pipeline is going to get built, but never will they say what they will do to ensure that project gets built. When it comes to a natural resource perspective, in my province of Alberta, we rely heavily on our natural resources, and we want to ensure that there is a clear path to success. Is there going to be some environmental impact analysis that needs to be done, some environmental boxes that must be ticked? Absolutely, there will be. We want to ensure that we protect our pristine Canadian landscape. At the same time, we have to ensure there is an opportunity for investment, an opportunity for natural resource development in Canada.

I would like to point to my colleague from Calgary, who a couple of weeks ago put it in a wonderful perspective. The direction we are going toward is adding hurdles to doing everything we can to ensure there is never another natural resource project built in Canada. Let us put that in perspective. They will say that oil is at \$57 a barrel today. Absolutely, West Texas Intermediate is at \$57 a barrel, but Canadian crude oil is selling at \$30 a barrel. That is almost a \$30 subsidy that we are giving to United States. That is a hospital being built in the United States every month that should be built here in Canada. That is a school being built every day in the United States that could be built here in Canada. However, it is not, because we have an ideological approach to our natural resources, to our agricultural economy, and to our rural constituents that is harmful not only to my province of Alberta but to all of Canada.

We had the Minister of Natural Resources say today that under 10 years of our former Conservative government, we never got anything built. Seventeen pipelines were built. They were not talked about being built, but built. Under the current government, it is zero. The Liberals have talked a lot about having pipelines built. Absolutely, I give them credit for that, but there is no shovel in the ground on Trans Mountain. Northern Gateway is done. Energy east was done, never to be heard from again. It is a lot of talk.

• (1755)

Again, on these environmental changes to the Fisheries Act, there has been a lot of talk; however, members do not understand the consequences of these decisions and what they are going to be doing to rural Canadians and our economy. That is something that I really hope my Liberal colleagues across the floor would start to understand and take into consideration, that the decisions they are making are having a detrimental impact on rural Canadians, our agriculture sector, and certainly our natural resources sector.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** The hon. member will have four minutes and 30 seconds to complete his debate when this topic comes up again.

It being 5:56 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business, as listed on today's Order Paper.

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

[English]

**CANADIAN JEWISH HERITAGE MONTH ACT**

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill S-232, an act respecting Canadian Jewish heritage month, as reported (without amendment) from the committee.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** There being no motions at report stage, the House will now proceed without debate to the putting of the question on the motion to concur in the bill at report stage.

**Mr. Michael Levitt (York Centre, Lib.)** moved that the bill be concurred in.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** **The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** When shall the bill be read the third time? By leave, now?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

**Mr. Michael Levitt** moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is a great honour to rise again as the House considers Bill S-232, an act respecting Canadian Jewish heritage month. It has been an absolute privilege not just to be the sponsor of the bill, but to be part of and witness to the debate and discussion surrounding the bill in both the other place and in the House.

I want to acknowledge Senator Linda Frum, who has partnered with me in introducing the bill, and the members for Thornhill and Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, who I have had the pleasure of working with to ensure strong multi-partisan support for the bill. I saw enthusiastic support as the bill was considered before the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, and I hope it will be mirrored by all members of this chamber as we debate Bill S-232.

I also want to take a moment to recognize the efforts of my friend and mentor the Hon. Irwin Cotler, who originally introduced the substance of the bill as a motion in 2015. I designate my work on this bill in his honour.

The bill came before the heritage committee soon after the committee heard from representatives of the Jewish community on the anti-Semitism that Jewish Canadians face. As we know, Jewish Canadians are consistently the most targeted group for hate crimes in Canada. Anti-Semitism, like all forms of discrimination, has no place in Canadian society. It is a testament to the long-standing advocacy of Jewish Canadians and Jewish civil society that we have come this far on this issue, but there is so much more to do.

While we know that anti-Semitism is a very real problem in Canadian society, we can all be proud of the distance we have come as a country. We no longer face the institutional, social, and political discrimination faced by so many Jewish Canadians over the course of Canadian history.

It is fitting that we have resumed debating the bill in 2018. This year marks the centenary of the end of the First World War, in which approximately 4,700 Canadian Jews from across Canada fought for their country, in spite of the discrimination they faced at home. Samuel Waskey from Winnipeg joined the 44th Battalion as a private and lost his life at the Somme. To avoid what has been referred to as an “unpleasant experience” because he was Jewish, he changed his name to Waskey from Warshawsky. Other Jewish soldiers took a more drastic step and registered as Protestants.

Saskatchewan Jews were among the first to volunteer during both World Wars I and II, and many lost their lives fighting in Europe. The province honoured those who sacrificed their lives, including a number of Jews, by naming lakes after them. Among these eternal memorials to our fallen are Faibish Bay, after Jack Faibish from Markinch, Saskatchewan; Levine Lake, after David Levine from Swift Current; and Glansberg Lake in honour of Maurice Glansberg.

During the Second World War, over a third of all Jewish Canadian men over 21 served in the Canadian Expeditionary Force. This was in spite of the discrimination and the many hurdles they faced. The year 2018 also marks the 70th anniversary of the end of Canada's notorious “none is too many” policy. From 1933 to 1948, under this policy, only 5,000 Holocaust refugees were admitted to Canada, the fewest of any western country. The most egregious example of this misguided policy was in 1939, when Canada turned away the MS *St. Louis*. Of the more than 900 Jewish refugees on board seeking sanctuary here in Canada and forced to return to Europe, 254 died in the Holocaust. We cannot turn away from this ugly truth and Canada's part in it. However, in 1949, Canada admitted 11,000 Jews, more than any other country except Israel.

● (1800)

As Canadians, we must remember the lessons taught by this awful period. The stories of Holocaust survivors who came to Canada are our stories as Canadians. I am proud that my riding of York Centre became home to so many Holocaust survivors who emerged from the ashes of Europe to begin new and vibrant lives here in Canada. They helped inform and build the modern Canada that we are all so proud to represent.

I want to highlight the success of the March of the Living, a two-week educational experience that takes hundreds of Canadian students each year to Poland and Israel. On Yom HaShoah, to mark Holocaust Remembrance Day, these students undertake a three kilometre march from Auschwitz to Birkenau accompanied by a group of indomitable Holocaust survivors who serve as their guides.

This May is March of the Living's 30th anniversary. Over 12,000 high school students have taken part in this incredible project. I want to recognize the exceptional work of Rabbi Eli Rubenstein for his leadership on this initiative.

March of the Living illustrates the importance of Holocaust education as an essential part of our Canadian Jewish heritage. Projects like March of the Living connect our past to our future, with older generations educating our future leaders. The march has 12 goals, among them to never allow the unchecked rise of the menace of antisemitism; to never again allow any kind of discrimination directed by any individual or any group against any other to gain

### *Private Members' Business*

strength; and to inspire participants to commit to building a world of freedom, democracy, and justice, free of oppression and intolerance.

March of the Living has benefited enormously from the selfless work of over 100 Holocaust survivors, survivors like Max Eisen, Anita Ekstein, Esther Fairbloom, Bill Glied, and Pinchas Gutter, to name but a few. They give their time and energy, but most importantly, they open themselves up to reliving their immense pain and suffering so that future generations can learn from their experiences.

There is no replacement for the first-hand stories of Holocaust survivors. As their numbers dwindle, it is even more important that we hear and document these stories.

Nate Leipziger is one of the hundreds of survivors of Auschwitz who came to Canada, but he has returned to Poland 17 times with the March of the Living. I have personally had the privilege of listening to and learning from Nate, from his experiences during and after the Holocaust.

One of his most inspirational stories is from a year and a half ago. Seventy three years after having survived the lowest point of his life at Auschwitz, Nate returned there with the Prime Minister. He described his return to Auschwitz with the Prime Minister as triumphant. As Nate wrote, “When the Prime Minister and I shed tears together in Auschwitz-Birkenau, never have I been more grateful for the welcome given to me by my adopted land, never have I been prouder to be a citizen of our beloved country, Canada. It was one of the most uplifting moments of my life.”

The Prime Minister's experience is not unique. It has been shared by thousands of Canadians from all walks of life.

Jewish Canadians hail from all corners of the world: South Africa, Russia, Israel, Morocco, India, Iraq, Argentina, and many other countries. Their histories and experiences shape the Canadian Jewish identity and add to the very fabric of our nation.

I am a proud Canadian, and I am also a very proud Scottish Jew. Nothing gives me more pleasure than sharing my own heritage, like wearing the Jewish tartan, as I am today, or donning my kilt, as I did at our annual Robbie Burns supper on the Hill just a couple of weeks ago.

In many ways, the diversity of Jewish Canadians mirrors the diversity of our broader Canadian society, each of us bringing our own customs and our own traditions. These stories have played out in communities big and small across Canada. I am certain that every member of this House from every province and territory can point to the history of Jewish Canadians in their own communities.

● (1805)

While the largest Canadian Jewish communities are in Montreal and Toronto, the purpose of this bill is to recognize the role and highlight the stories of Jewish Canadians from coast to coast to coast, from St. John's to Victoria to Iqaluit and everywhere in between.

*Private Members' Business*

During the debate on Bill S-232, I have learned of the histories of Jewish communities in Cape Breton, Niagara Falls, and Hirsch, Saskatchewan. Each community has a rich history and a story to share, like Congregation Emanu-El in Victoria, Canada's oldest synagogue, in continuous operation since 1863, or the Jewish community of St. John's, which is one of the oldest in Canada, having arrived in Newfoundland in the 1770s. Even the very small Jewish community in Iqaluit, numbering just 20 people, adds to the fabric of our Canadian Jewish heritage.

The enactment of Canadian Jewish heritage month will ensure that the historic and ongoing contributions of Jewish Canadians are recognized, shared, and celebrated across this great country for generations to come. By choosing May as Canadian Jewish heritage month, we will see what currently exists in the United States and Ontario expanded to a national celebration across our great country.

As I close, I want to thank my colleagues for the support they have offered so far and encourage all of them to see this bill passed into law.

**Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have two comments. First, I would like to thank the member for referencing the north. We have a great Jewish community in the Yukon. I can think of Rick Carp and Arthur Mitchell offhand, and a number more.

Second, I want to thank him for his tribute to my former seatmate, who started this bill. Hon. Irwin Cotler is a great world citizen. He has done so much for human rights in the world. He has received accolades and many awards from around the world for that type of work. I really appreciate the member's reference to Mr. Cotler for the great contribution he has made to Canada and the world.

• (1810)

**Mr. Michael Levitt:** Mr. Speaker, I have just learned more about another part of our great country and the contributions of the Jewish community. One of the joys of bringing this bill to Parliament has been hearing from all sides of the aisle, from all parties, the great and inspirational stories of Canadian Jews and their contributions.

I share with the member pride in the hon. Irwin Cotler and his contributions. As the chair of the subcommittee on international human rights, I lean on his learnings often. He is one of so many strong voices of Jewish Canadians in this country. Just down the hall, we have Justice Rosalie Abella, with her contributions to the Supreme Court.

I could go on and on, as I have done in previous speeches. This is the opportunity of Canadian Jewish heritage month. Every May, across this country, we are going to be able to celebrate and talk about the contributions of Jews to Canada. This is going to be especially important. My children are 18 and 16, and I look forward to their learning more and more about the contributions Canadian Jews have made as the years go on. It is a tremendous opportunity, and I thank my colleague for his support.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, like many communities across Canada, the Jewish community has been very active, particularly in support of those who are seeking resettlement here in Canada.

I know in my own community, Or Shalom has been very active in sponsoring privately sponsored families. Operation Ezra in Winnipeg has been doing fantastic work.

One of the things they have in common is that they are calling on the government to lift the cap on privately sponsored refugees. I wonder whether the member would agree with that and with supporting the Jewish community in its effort to show compassion and humanitarianism to those who are in great need.

**Mr. Michael Levitt:** Mr. Speaker, I am well aware of the fantastic contribution so many Jewish communities across Canada have made in supporting refugees, whether Syrian refugees or the Yazidi community. They have had an ongoing role in advocating for and supporting the refugees when they have arrived in Canada.

In my own community, several synagogues have banded together, particularly Temple Darchei Noam and Beth Emeth and a number of others, and have been active in supporting and advocating for refugees. In the Jewish tradition, this is something that is a priority. We want to lend our voices and our support to people who are in need. We want to make sure that we are giving people the opportunity.

I think that is something that, again, will be highlighted during Canadian Jewish heritage month, and I look forward to those lessons being taught to future generations as we move forward.

**Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour and a pleasure to rise today to speak in support of Bill S-232, the Canadian Jewish heritage month act. This proposed legislation is the product of a partnership jointly sponsored by Senator Linda Frum and my hon. colleague from York Centre. I join in the multi-partisan support of Bill S-232 with the hon. member for Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke.

The proposed legislation received unanimous support in the other place, and I hope that this House will follow suit. The preamble of Bill S-232 remarks that Canada is home to the fourth-largest Jewish population in the world of approximately 400,000 men, women, and children.

Some of my colleagues, or the folks watching at home, might have noticed that when Statistics Canada reported the 2016 numbers on Canada's ethnic makeup that more than half of the Jewish population in Canada who were reported in 2011 seemed to have disappeared. That 2016 StatsCan census report of a drop of almost 200,000 people would have been the largest such drop for any ethnic group in history, if it had been accurate. Leaders of Canada's Jewish organizations immediately protested that the shrinkage was grossly inaccurate, and they were correct. Subsequent investigation revealed that the problem was a product of StatsCan's own misdesigned survey, which left the term "Jewish" off the list of examples of ethnic origins for respondents to check off. The new survey design did not reflect reality, but it did reveal the very different ways that the community today answers the age-old question of how to define Jewish.

Members of the Canadian Jewish community self-identify in different ways across various levels of observance, whether individuals see their identity as religious, linguistic, ethnic, or as a cultural affiliation. Therefore, how do we get the community's numbers right as we consider this piece of historic legislation?



*Private Members' Business*

Jewish community leaders are asking Statistics Canada to redraw the 2021 census design and restore the term "Jewish" to the list of examples offered to respondents. By 2021, I think it is safe to suggest that the true measure of Canada's diverse Jewish community will be restored and shown to be approaching fully half a million. With that clarification on the record, I will address the significant contributions that the Canadian Jewish community has made to the growth and prosperity of Canada, even while enduring and overcoming tremendous obstacles.

Jews have lived in Canada for more than two and a half centuries. The first recorded arrivals settled in Trois-Rivières, Quebec, in 1760. Most of the early Jewish families, who came from central and western Europe, settled in Quebec. In 1832, a full quarter of a century before Great Britain and its other dominions, the parliament of Quebec and the Legislative Assembly of Lower Canada voted to enfranchise, give full rights, to Jews living in Lower Canada.

Jewish immigration to Canada increased after Confederation, with immigrants arriving from eastern Europe, Russia, Romania, Poland, Lithuania, and beyond, fleeing political turmoil and, of course, anti-Semitism. They settled in Montreal, Toronto, and Winnipeg initially, building their own small businesses. From those humble beginnings with pushcarts and recycled rags, the schmatta trade developed major garment companies, employing thousands of Canadians in eastern Canada, but in the west as well.

Immigration slowed in the mid-1920s, as federal immigration regulations made it more difficult for Jews to enter Canada until after the Second World War when the world belatedly recognized the horrors of the Holocaust. This was the time of Canada's infamous "none is too many" immigration policy that was applied against Jews.

● (1815)

Between 1933 and 1948, for example, and this statistic has been noted a number of times, only 5,000 Jewish refugees were admitted to Canada, the lowest number for any western country at that time. When Canada finally properly reopened our doors to post-war immigration, thousands of Holocaust survivors, displaced from countries across Europe, came to settle in Canada. More than 12,000 settled immediately in Montreal and another 8,000 in Toronto.

Subsequent waves of Jewish immigration to Canada resulted from political persecution in their home countries, from Hungary after the 1956 revolution, from Iraq and from Egypt, from Romania in the 1960s, along with Sephardic Jews from France and North Africa. In the 1970s, Jews began to arrive from the Soviet Union, very often as a result of Canadian advocacy on their behalf. As well through the 1970s and 1980s, North African Jews, particularly from Morocco, arrived in a new wave of immigrants adding wonderfully to the spectrum of Canada's Jewish community, as anyone who has attended the exuberant post-Passover festival of Mimouna at Thornhill Sephardic Kehila Centre can attest.

Over the recent years particularly, there have been the arrivals of a high-tech generation of Jews from Israel and from eastern Europe. They are scientists, innovators, and entrepreneurs who have come to Canada to share their skills, to grow their companies, to flourish in Canada, and to contribute to Canadian society and to our economy.

All of that said, despite the diverse and dynamic community of Jewish communities, the scourge of the original hate crime, anti-Semitism, remains. We were reminded in the most recent audits of anti-Semitism by B'nai Brith and Statistics Canada that documented the highest levels of nationwide anti-Semitism on record. Michael Mostyn, the chief executive of B'nai Brith Canada, said recently, "Canadians from coast to coast have seen the swastikas, heard the anti-Jewish hate speech, and now have access to the statistics". Mr. Mostyn commended Statistics Canada for the release of data that will aid both government policy-makers and advocacy groups, working with police and prosecutors and government officials, to tackle the ever-persistent presence of hate crimes. Every member of the House would agree with that sentiment.

Finally, back to Bill S-232, as the preamble says:

Whereas the Canadian Jewish community has made significant contributions to the growth and prosperity of Canada while overcoming tremendous obstacles;

Whereas the month of May is meaningful for the Jewish community around the world;

Whereas, by designating the month of May as Canadian Jewish Heritage Month, the Parliament of Canada recognizes the important contributions that Jewish Canadians have made to Canada's social, economic, political and cultural fabric;

And whereas Canadian Jewish Heritage Month would provide an opportunity to remember, celebrate and educate future generations about the inspirational role that Jewish Canadians have played and continue to play in communities across the country;

For all of these reasons and for the powerful logic underpinning the initiative of Bill S-232, I would encourage all of my hon. colleagues to support this very worthy piece of legislation.

● (1820)

**Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am proud to have this opportunity today to stand in the House in support of Bill S-232, which would establish May as Jewish heritage month.

I must admit that I am a bit surprised that such a bill has not yet already been passed in the House. The United States proclaimed May as the month to celebrate the contributions of the American Jewish community in 2006, and Ontario established May as Jewish Heritage Month in 2012.

I suppose it was not so long ago that Canada had the unofficial policy of "none is too many". Anti-Semitism in Canada's immigration policy ultimately led to the admittance of only 5,000 Jewish refugees between 1933 and 1948. It is my sincere hope that passing this declaration and promoting the month of May as Jewish heritage month will allow for us as a society to ensure "never again".

At this point, I would like to take a moment to recognize the strength and resiliency of the Holocaust survivors. On a number of occasions, I have had the opportunity to hear first-hand the stories from survivors and their families. Their stories are beyond inspirational. Their survival speaks to the greatest strength of all, and that is the strength of the human spirit. As we debate the bill before us, I would be remiss if I did not pay tribute to them.

*Private Members' Business*

January 27 is International Holocaust Remembrance Day. An estimated six million Jewish people were murdered. This horrendous crime against humanity must never be forgotten.

In 2018, one might ask what action we can take today. One way to commemorate this genocide is for Canada to prioritize the resettlement of those who are faced with genocide today. Another way to honour the survivors and their families is to ensure that we do everything we can to combat anti-Semitism in Canada.

It is with dismay that I note that the Jewish community in Canada continues to be the most targeted group for hate crimes on an annual basis. In 2016, there were 221 police-reported hate crimes against Jewish Canadians, which is up from 178 in 2015. This fact should not be acceptable to anyone and it cannot be the path forward. It highlights the importance of a bill like the one before us and the fact that much work remains to be done in combatting hate in Canada.

I had the privilege of sitting on the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage during its study of systemic racism and religious discrimination. Committee members had the opportunity to hear from Canada's Jewish communities, such as the Canadian Association of Jews and Muslims, B'nai Brith Canada, and the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs. It was noted that once a crime has been reported and is being investigated, in some cases, that motivation, i. e., hate, was not being examined. David Matas, senior legal counsel for B'nai Brith Canada explained:

One of the problems we see with the police forces when dealing with hate-motivated crimes is sometimes—indeed, perhaps all too often—they will identify the crime without looking at the motivation. I mean, obviously if somebody paints a swastika, you can see the motivation, but if it's a simple assault, they may just go after the assault without looking at the motivation. The low figures we hear about hate-motivated crimes are in some instances the result of the police just not looking to see whether it's a hate-motivated crime. One of the things we could usefully do in terms of training is sensitize police forces, so that when there is a hate dimension to a crime, it gets noticed, it gets reported, and it gets acted on.

The difficulty in laying a hate crime charge, difficulties in having complaints responded to in a standardized and thoughtful manner, and the lack of trust that complainants will be taken seriously led to what many witnesses described as significant under-reporting of hate crimes in Canada. This is because official statistics rely only on police-reported hate crimes.

Shimon Fogel, chief executive officer of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs recommended that “the government establish uniform national guidelines and standards for the collection and handling of hate crime and hate incident data.” Going forward, I hope that the government will act on this recommendation.

That being said, Jewish Canadians have still created vibrant, long-established communities across Canada.

• (1825)

Over the holidays, I had the opportunity to participate in the candle lighting ceremony in celebration of Hanukkah, the Jewish festival of lights. I was honoured to light the seventh candle with Alycia Fridkin in Vancouver this past December. The Jewish community, like so many other communities, has unique practices and celebrations. In a rich and diverse multicultural society, it is truly our good fortune that we have the opportunity to learn about and experience these different practices.

In my time spent as an elected official municipally, provincially, and now federally, the resiliency and compassion of Canada's Jewish community always shine through. I believe this is part of how many Jewish Canadians attempt to embody the concept of *tikkun olam*, the Hebrew term meaning “repair of the world”. For many people of the Jewish faith, this is the aspiration to behave kindly, act constructively, and help those who are disadvantaged. The Jewish community's effort to showcase this belief is the beauty and strength of Canada's multiculturalism policy, and highlights why our diversity is such a strength for us.

At the immigration committee, whenever we study the issue of refugee resettlement, Canada's Jewish community has provided a voice with its expertise and desire to do even more than it already is. I was proud to bring representatives of Or Shalom Synagogue in Vancouver East to our study of the federal government's initiative to resettle Syrian refugees in Canada. Their humanitarian spirit and efforts to resettle Syrian refugees in Vancouver was incredibly inspiring.

To date, representatives of Or Shalom continue to call, write, and speak to me about their desire to do more and to call for the federal government to address the lengthy processing delays of their sponsorship applications. Back in July, after waiting anxiously for the arrival of its sponsored families, Or Shalom was finally able to host a Syrian resettlement initiative welcome gathering in celebration of the arrival of its sponsored Syrian families.

Whether it is Or Shalom's efforts in Vancouver to resettle Syrian refugees or the efforts of Operation Ezra in Winnipeg to resettle Yazidi refugees, I have been inspired time and again by the work and spirit of Canada's Jewish communities on these important humanitarian efforts. With more than 65 million people displaced due to global conflicts, these groups want to do more and are constantly advocating for the government to take further action.

They have called for and continue to demand that the government lift the artificially imposed cap on the private sponsorship of refugees. They have the capacity, resources, and the desire to sponsor more people and to allow for more people to rebuild their lives in safety here in Canada. Canada needs to lift the cap on privately sponsored refugee applications, and we need to expeditiously resettle accepted privately sponsored refugee applications. The outpouring of generosity and humanitarianism shown, not just by these Jewish communities but by Canadians from coast to coast to coast, should be celebrated and not stifled.

*Private Members' Business*

It is an honour for me to stand in the House to recognize the incredible efforts in refugee resettlement and interfaith dialogues of Canada's Jewish communities. I, along with my NDP caucus, will vote in favour of recognizing May as Jewish heritage month in Canada. We believe this will give Canadians an opportunity to reflect on the great contributions Canada's Jewish community has made and will continue to make in this country.

It will also provide us with the opportunity to reflect on a history of injustice, intolerance, and the tragedies that can occur if we allow for the politics of hate and division to win the day. We cannot stand idly by and allow for hate crimes to continue to increase, as we saw from 2015 to 2016. We must act. While the notion of none is too many might no longer be said about members of the Jewish faith, it is unfortunately not as uncommon as it should be to hear that type of rhetoric employed against other groups.

We must remember this history and redouble our efforts to ensure "never again". The strength and resiliency of Canada's Jewish community is something I am very proud to celebrate. We must, with love and courage, continue this work to build a more just, inclusive, and equal Canada.

• (1830)

**Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage (Multiculturalism), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to stand in the House today to speak to Bill S-232 to recognize every May as Canadian Jewish heritage month. At the outset, I want to start by congratulating the member for York Centre for sponsoring this bill, and to say a short hello to Toronto to my son, Nitin, who is watching at home.

Bill S-232 would recognize the important contributions Jewish Canadians have made to Canada's social, economic, political, and cultural fabric.

[Translation]

Bill S-232 would also provide an opportunity to remember, celebrate, and educate future generations about the inspirational role that Jewish Canadians have played and continue to play in communities across the country.

[English]

Today, Canada's Jewish population is nearly 400,000 strong, making it the fourth-largest Jewish population in the entire world. Most Canadian Jews, as has been mentioned, live in Ontario and Quebec, followed by British Columbia, Manitoba, as well as the province of Alberta. Jewish communities in Canada have made a major contribution to the development of cities, particularly Toronto and Montreal, which today count 188,710 and 90,780 people of Jewish faith or Jewish origin, respectively.

Supporting this bill is important for our government because it is consistent with past decisions of Parliament aimed at commemorating and supporting the Jewish community, its heritage, and the important contributions that Jews have made to Canadian society.

[Translation]

During the 37th Parliament, in 2003, Bill C-459, an act to establish Holocaust Memorial Day, was unanimously and quickly passed through all stages by Parliament. During the 40th Parliament,

Bill C-442, an act to establish a National Holocaust Monument, garnered unanimous support and was given royal assent on March 25, 2011.

• (1835)

[English]

It was also in this commemorative and educational spirit that on September 27, 2017, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Canadian Heritage participated in the unveiling ceremony of the National Holocaust Monument. The establishment of Canadian Jewish heritage month would provide an opportunity to commemorate the memory of the Holocaust and the important fight that continues to this day against anti-Semitism.

Over the last few decades, a number of awareness and commemoration initiatives were funded by the government under the community historical recognition program. These include the Wheel of Conscience monument inaugurated in 2011 at the Canadian Museum of Immigration in Halifax at Pier 21 to commemorate the victims of the MS *St. Louis* incident in 1939. The importance of learning from history has been demonstrated again in this House, even today, in reference to some of the speeches made by my hon. colleagues and people talking about the importance of learning from the decision of the Canadian government of the time to turn away German Jews who were aboard the MS *St. Louis*.

The Government of Canada has also been committed for decades to combatting all forms of anti-Semitism, both at home and around the world. Canada became a full member in 2009 of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance. That intergovernmental body supports Holocaust education, remembrance, and research both nationally and internationally.

[Translation]

Celebrations such as Canadian Jewish heritage month will resonate with many Canadians and help create vibrant and inclusive Canadian communities that foster and support our arts and culture. Proclaiming Canadian Jewish heritage month will give us the opportunity to recognize and commemorate the excellence and passion of eminent Canadians of Jewish origin who shaped our history and our culture and continue to do so.

[English]

Let us remember just a few of them: Leonard Cohen, the famous author, songwriter, and singer; Mordecai Richler, a novelist who wrote about my alma mater, McGill; Charles Rosner Bronfman, a businessman; Jessalyn Gilsig, an actor; Drake, known by many, the hip-hop artist and actor; Ruth Goldbloom, co-founder of Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21; Jane Jacobs, the journalist and journalism theoretician; Ezekiel Hart, the first Canadian Jew elected to the Legislative Assembly of Lower Canada, as it was then known; and Cecil Hart, coach of the Montreal Canadiens, after whom the famous NHL MVP trophy is named.

The bill that we are debating tonight would also allow us to focus on Jewish heritage and important sites around the country. Allow me to highlight one located in my very own riding of Parkdale—High Park.

*Private Members' Business*

The Junction Shul, located in the neighbourhood known as the Junction, was called Congregation Kneseth Israel. It was established over a century ago in the northwest corner of my riding of Parkdale—High Park. At 56 Maria Street, a tract of land was purchased in 1911 by a small number of immigrant families, who also founded that congregation. The structure, which still stands to this very day, was completed in 1913. I am very proud to say that Kneseth Israel is the oldest synagogue in Toronto still in use, and the building was designated as an Ontario heritage site in 1984.

When we talk about the formal recognition of May as Canadian Jewish heritage month, we are also talking about Canada's multiculturalism policy, as referenced in the comments by my friend on the opposition benches. That policy is entrenched in our Multiculturalism Act and in the Canadian charter, and it plays a fundamental role in shaping our diverse, inclusive, and welcoming society.

The policy acknowledges the freedom of all members of Canadian society to preserve, enhance, and share their cultural heritage. It also promotes the full and equitable participation of individuals and communities of all origins in the continuing evolution and shaping of all aspects of Canadian society, and assists them in eliminating barriers to that participation.

That is what makes Canadians proud to stand in the House and talk about their heritage, whether that is Jewish heritage, Scottish Canadian Jewish heritage, or Jewish heritage that hails from other parts of the planet. That is what makes this country what it is. It is policies like this and bills such as this that reinforce that diversity and that strength.

This dual focus on valuing diversity and ensuring equity distinguishes Canada's approach from those of our global peers. It goes beyond a policy that simply tolerates minority groups. We actually celebrate different cultures and we actively seek to build an inclusive society.

Supporting the bill is also aligned with similar provincial initiatives, such as the declaration of May as Jewish Heritage Month by the Government of Ontario in 2012.

I am proud to stand in the House to indicate the government's support of the bill, but I am equally proud, as a parliamentary secretary for multiculturalism, to emphasize the important contribution Jewish Canadians have made to that multicultural fabric.

As a Muslim Canadian man, and a member of this government's caucus, I am equally proud to say that the fight against anti-Semitism, the fight to create a more tolerant and plural society, is a fight that we continue with vigilance, as we must. This kind of bill is important because it underscores that heritage. It underscores the fight to promote tolerance and pluralism, and it is something that this government and I are very proud to stand behind.

With Canadian Jewish heritage month, we will provide a welcome opportunity to look back at the thousands of Jewish Canadians who have come to this country over centuries and linked their fate and their futures to the fate and future of this country we call Canada.

• (1840)

**Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to continue the debate on this private member's bill, Bill S-232, that we have been offered from the other place. The bill proposes to make the month of May Jewish heritage month.

May is a special month for my family. I have said before in the House that my kids are part Jewish. My father-in-law, who is from Singapore, is of Jewish heritage. Singapore is not an area of the world where people would think there were many Jews, and practising Jews for that matter. In his youth, he did practise many Jewish customs, but he did not realize they were Jewish at the time. His family only discovered its Jewish heritage when they came to Canada of all places and got to know their family a bit better.

May is also a special month for my family because my father-in-law was born on May 2 and my wife was born on May 2 as well. She was a special gift from my mother-in-law to my father-in-law and then to me many years later.

I thank the member for York Centre who sponsored this bill in the House. I have served with him on the foreign affairs committee. I am pleased to be able to debate this legislation because it does have special meaning to me because of my family relationship.

Many famous Jewish Albertans have made immense contributions to the province of Alberta. Many members know that I have a great love for Yiddish proverbs, so if they hold on, I do have one that I will share with them later.

We are going to be celebrating Purim very soon as well as Pesach, which are important holidays that I would encourage all Canadians to join in celebrating. People of Jewish heritage have been celebrating these holidays for thousands of years and I would encourage all Canadians to obtain a greater understanding of their deep meaning. These holidays have a very rich history and they have a very rich meaning to Jewish people.

I want to take a moment to talk about one famous Calgary of Jewish heritage, Sheldon Chumir, who passed away on January 26, 1992. This gentleman was born in Calgary. He was a Rhodes Scholar. He was a tax lawyer, but I will not hold that against him.

Mr. Chumir founded the Calgary Civil Liberties Association. He was a tireless advocate for international human rights. He was elected as a Liberal MLA in 1986 for the provincial riding of Calgary—Buffalo. One might wonder why a Conservative MP is raising the political successes and the personality that was Sheldon Chumir. It is because he was important. He was important to Calgary.

The Sheldon M. Chumir Health Centre is named after him. It is actually much more than a centre. It is a huge hospital that provides services in a downtown area of Calgary. It is well known and well respected. It carries his name because of the immense contributions he made to the city and to the province.

Mr. Chumir was one of those rare birds in Alberta politics. He was a Liberal who was re-elected, which is very rare indeed, but only once. He served in the Alberta legislature.

*Private Members' Business*

A large hospital bears his name and this speaks a lot to both his personal work and the work of the Jewish community to ensure that he was remembered properly and honoured for his contributions to the province.

Alberta's first permanent Jewish settlers came before Alberta even existed, in 1889, when it was just a territory. Jacob and Rachel Diamond, and there could be no more Jewish names than Jacob and Rachel, settled in Alberta.

I want to talk about the Yiddish heritage in Alberta. As I mentioned, I do have a Yiddish proverb, "Tasty is the fish from someone else's table". In this case, the table was set by the other place, and now we have the opportunity to have this debate in the House of Commons. It is indeed tasty. I get to talk about supporters of the Yiddish language, of the Yiddish culture, who built the I.L. Peretz Institute in 1927. Calgary's first Jewish school was founded by people who cared for the Yiddish language and the Yiddish culture.

Unfortunately, after 1929, anti-Semitism was rising and during World War II a lot of Jewish people were discriminated against. There was a pervasive kind of cultural exclusion of them, both professionally and socially. This experience was not made any better by the Social Credit provincial government of the time which had some anti-Semitic members among it.

● (1845)

That was the experience of people around the world: governments and populations that discriminated against Jewish people who were living among them and making contributions. These were neighbours, co-workers, suppliers, and merchants, people who were building lives for themselves and who had proven themselves to be good, reliable, loyal members of the Canadian family.

The anti-Semitism and discrimination they faced is a lesson for all of us today. We must not repeat the mistakes of the past. Unfortunately, it has happened. We have heard other members say that the Jewish population in Canada, Canadians with Jewish heritage, some who practise the Jewish religion, are still victims. The number one group targeted by hate crimes, by vile anti-Semitism, is the Jewish people.

One other thing I would like to mention is that last year, in October, I visited Budapest in Hungary. I met with members of the government there. They have a coalition government. They encouraged us to visit the Dohany Street synagogue, one of the grand synagogues in Europe. It is a beautiful synagogue. I went with my wife.

It is a solemn experience but also rich in its cultural significance and because of the Holocaust. Wherever people go, the Holocaust and the Jewish experience go hand in hand. It is something that is so fundamental, so deep, in the Jewish psyche. My in-laws have talked to be about it. My wife talks to me about it. It is something I share with my kids. For the Jewish population in Asia at the time, the persecution and the anti-Semitism was not quite like what Jewish people experienced in Europe.

The two cannot be separated. Today it is something people simply have to address. When it is spoken about it, we have to pay homage to it. We have to recognize what happened in that time period.

It is a beautiful grand synagogue in Budapest. Even in a country like Hungary, we had a government official encouraging us to visit it. We were able to share a little with some of them the Jewish successes in Canada and famous Jewish individuals.

We heard the name of Irwin Cotler, a former minister of justice in this House, a man I have met. I have great respect for him. I did not always agree with his politics, of course, but I deeply respect him for his work on international human rights.

I will go back to Calgary for my last few minutes. I have been to the House of Jacob in Calgary. I have attended the service there, and I will never forget it. Being Polish, people always assume, because I was born in Poland and I speak with a slight accent, that I am Catholic. When I say that I am not Catholic, the next thing they expect me to be is Jewish, especially with the curly hair. They ask how I could not be, and I always point to my wife. My wife is actually half-Jewish, half-Chinese-Singaporean. She is actually more Jewish than I am. She knows more about Jewish cultural practices.

One never knows. The person one meets could have Jewish heritage and might be able to share a story in Hebrew. They might be able to do a Shabbat properly. My Hebrew pronunciation has never been very good. I am still practising my Yiddish pronunciation.

This bill, this opportunity we have, this table that was set by the Senate, to go back to my Yiddish proverb, is an opportunity for all of us to share among ourselves the great stories, the great personalities, and the great successes of Canadians of Jewish heritage every single May of every single year. I know for myself, I will be celebrating my father-in-law and my wife and the contributions they have made here in Canada and will continue to.

I thank the member for sponsoring the bill, and I look forward to voting for it. I encourage all members in the House to do the same.

● (1850)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to start off by expressing appreciation to my colleague from York Centre for the fine work he is doing in raising a very important issue. He is working with a member from the other House, and today we are debating the importance of our Jewish community. It is a community that has contributed to who we are as a nation. The idea of having the month of May designated as national Jewish heritage month in law is something that is long overdue. I applaud him for his efforts.

The speaker before me was commenting in regard to a connection. Winnipeg North has a very strong historical connection with the Jewish community, going back many decades. In the mid-30s, the population of Winnipeg North was not much more than 55,000 or 60,000. The Jewish community back then was made up of probably somewhere in the neighbourhood of 15,000 individuals. It played a very strong role in terms of who we are in the north end today.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

I have had the opportunity to get better acquainted with the entire riding and the contributions, and the thing that comes to my mind is the fact that we live in a multicultural society. We have, I believe, 200 different communities from around the world that make up Canada. Out of that, over a dozen of those communities have over one million individuals. People of Jewish heritage are just under 500,000, and it is a growing community here in Canada. It has contributed and continues to contribute to every aspect, whether economic or social, all different levels of political, academic, and so on. Obviously, it is a community that is really a part of the Canadian identity in every way.

I have had a couple of individuals I have looked up to immensely in my political career. I would like to share a couple of those names. Some members will know Israel Asper. Izzy Asper was a friend of mine. I did not know him exceptionally well, other than the fact that he was a leader of the Manitoba Liberal Party for a short period of time. However, that is not really what he was known for. He went on to buy up a TV station. He built a media empire, but that was not necessarily what he was best known for.

I believe his best contribution was the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, the first national museum to be located outside the nation's capital here in Ottawa. Now it is at the forks where the Red and Assiniboine rivers come together. Izzy's dream and vision of having the human rights museum became a reality. The city of Winnipeg never would have had that museum if it were not for the efforts of Izzy and the individuals he brought to the table in order to make it happen.

Today, his daughter Gail really picked up the ball after his passing. It is an absolutely beautiful museum. I am sure a number of my colleagues, especially from Manitoba, have had the opportunity to visit the museum. If members have not been to the museum, this is definitely a national treasure. We bring in people from around the world. That is something that is truly unique, and it is because of the efforts of Izzy Asper.

Another individual, who was referenced here earlier, is Irwin Cotler. Even though I did not get to know Irwin for a great length of time when I sat in opposition, I admired what he brought to the House of Commons. We could see it every time he made a statement in the House. He likely had more standing ovations than anyone else that I can think of. He was a human rights advocate second to no other. He is an extremely intelligent, able man. I believe he was even on the legal team for Nelson Mandela.

● (1855)

Whether it is politicians, individual community leaders, movie actors, there are so many of them to name, whether they are the economic drivers of big industry or social gathering points. In Winnipeg, we have the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg and the Asper Jewish Community Campus, and the community centre that kind of ties it all together. If members have not had the experience of being a part of Winnipeg's Jewish community, I would encourage them to get engaged with events such as the Folklorama. That is an activity in which people would find the Israeli pavillion to be one of the most popular pavillions. The lines get long as people try to get a better appreciation for Manitoba's Jewish community, or just the Jewish community as a whole. May is a significant month, as it

recognizes the Holocaust, both in the province of Ontario and in the United States. I had the opportunity when I was in Israel to take a tour of the Holocaust museum.

I suspect I will get a bit more time when the issue comes up again before the House.

[*Translation*]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** The time provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired, and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[*English*]

### TAXATION

**Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to follow up on a question I had asked the Minister of National Revenue last fall. In mid-October, the minister repeatedly told the House that nothing had changed regarding the disability tax credit. However, we all know that the CRA changed the forms that were used by doctors to establish the eligibility for that credit starting on May 2, and that the minister had defended these changes in writing based on letters sent to rejected applicants over the summer.

On October 24, I asked why the minister was defending the 80% rejection rate that followed the May 2 change. I pointed out that she had done so in writing in July, when she wrote, "adults who independently manage their insulin therapy...are unlikely to meet the 14-hours...requirement." Her answer to my question was to repeat her assertions that they were "committed to ensuring [Canadians] receives the...benefits to which they are entitled." She patted herself on the back for simplifying the forms and said something about nurse practitioners. She said this, even as they were denying a benefit that some Canadians had been receiving for over 10 years. Therefore, they were denying benefits to Canadians that Canadians were entitled to, that they had been receiving for over 10 years in some cases, and taking credit for somehow making things simpler and helping Canadians receive a credit. I guess denying it quickly is one way to make things simple, but I do not think that is what Canadians would have in mind.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

We know that the minister's agency made a decision last May to reject type 1 diabetics applying for the DTC. We know that just before Christmas, after two months of daily demands in question period to restore the pre-May 2 criteria, Liberals caved in and promised to restore the DTC to those who were denied due to the changes they made on May 2. However, what has been missing in this whole sorry episode is ministerial responsibility. At no time has this minister stood up and taken responsibility for her department. She is the minister. She is accountable for the actions of her agency. If the decision to reduce the number of approvals for type 1 diabetics was hers and she now agrees that it was a poor policy choice at that time, then she should apologize to disabled Canadians. If it was a staff decision that she was not aware of, then she should apologize for her poor management. If the letter was changed in defiance of her will as minister, someone should be fired. Canadians need to have confidence that ministers will be held accountable by the elected Parliament, and so far nobody has taken any responsibility.

If the DTC fiasco were the only problem at the CRA, one might be more forgiving of the minister's poor judgment and ignore the foolish answer she gave to my October 24 question. However, this minister's department has also been denying the DTC to the mentally ill, denying child tax benefits to single moms and dads, changing folios to tax employee discounts, hanging up on 64% of the people who call into her agency, giving wrong information to 30% of the others, taking eight months to correct simple mistakes, and issuing ever-increasing numbers of bad assessments that have an 18-month appeal queue. This minister has much to be accountable for tonight, so perhaps her parliamentary secretary could apologize on her behalf and acknowledge that they were wrong, that they had made a mistake, and that they plan to do better in the future.

● (1900)

**Ms. Kamal Kherra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to rise once again today and help my hon. colleague understand information which has already been shared on multiple occasions in the House on the disability tax credit. Hopefully, tonight will be the night where the message will finally click.

Unlike the previous government, our government is committed to ensuring that Canadians with disabilities not only receive the credits and benefits to which they are entitled but are also able to advise the CRA on how to best serve them. One way we have done this is to reinstate the disability advisory committee, which the previous government gutted in 2006. After more than 10 years without a voice, Canadians with disabilities, stakeholders, and experts once again have access to a forum where they can engage with the CRA and provide insight on how to best ensure they receive the benefits to which they are entitled.

Our government has also engaged with over 6,000 Canadians through a set of national consultations, which will inform the development of new federal accessibility legislation that we hope to table this spring.

In addition to hearing directly from Canadians, our government has taken concrete steps to ensure they receive the benefits to which they are entitled. For instance, we have made it easier for Canadians to apply for the disability tax credit. Nurse practitioners, who are often the first point of contact between patients and Canada's health

care system, are now able to certify the medical information and the effects of their impairment on the application form, making the application process much easier and more accessible.

Contrary to the misleading assertions made by my colleague across the aisle, over 80% of the applications received by the CRA are approved, allowing more than 700,000 Canadians to claim the disability tax credit on their annual tax return.

I have provided my hon. colleague this information on countless occasions. In fact, I was here last night to answer a question that was almost identical to the one before us tonight. Therefore, I thought I would end by telling my colleague about other ways the CRA is working to better improve service to Canadians.

The file my return service will allow eligible Canadians, particularly those with low and fixed incomes, to file their returns by answering a few questions over the phone. The CRA has also made it easier for paper tax filers to do their taxes by mailing their T1 forms to it directly. Additionally, the CRA and Service Canada are working together to ensure indigenous communities across Canada receive the benefits to which they are entitled.

As we can see, a lot has been done. I look forward to bringing a lot more good news to the House very soon.

**Mr. Pat Kelly:** Mr. Speaker, late show is a lot like question period. When we ask a question, we get unrelated information back, not an answer, and absolutely no acknowledgement of the issue at hand then, and it continues. One would think that we did not go through a whole period of months while the department was denying the fact that it was excluding type 1 diabetics from the disability tax credit.

A little humility goes a long way in politics, and a simple apology from the minister would probably put this to rest and we could move on to other things. I am quite sure that hubris and arrogance will be the government's undoing.

● (1905)

**Ms. Kamal Kherra:** Mr. Speaker, let me be absolutely clear. Our government is committed to ensuring that Canadians with disabilities receive the credits and benefits to which they are entitled.

Canada is at its best when all of society benefits and when everyone is included. That is why we are committed to ensuring greater accessibility and opportunities for Canadians with disabilities in their communities and workplaces.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

I sincerely hope I have been able to answer my colleague's question this evening. However, I would be happy to answer it once again tomorrow if he would like to hear more about the service improvements coming to the CRA.

[*Translation*]

## POVERTY

**Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, last October, I rose to draw the government's attention to the fact that thousands of Canadians continue to live in precarious circumstances. The most recent data show that nearly one in seven Canadians are still living in poverty. That is unacceptable.

This is an alarming situation, since the most recent Campaign 2000 report indicates that nearly five million Canadians are living in poverty. My thoughts go out to those thousands of families who are struggling under the burden of debt. According to Statistics Canada, Canadian households carry an average debt of \$162,400, the highest in the G7.

We cannot allow families to continue to fall a little further into debt each year. Today, the average family has \$1.53 of debt for every dollar earned, which is unacceptable. The NDP believes that it is high time we made life more affordable for these families and reduced that burden. I am therefore asking the government to stop sitting on its hands and take immediate action to put an end to this situation.

I invite the Liberals to realize that the results we are seeing from the economic policies that they have put in place since 2015 are not as positive as they would have us believe. In fact, the gap between the rich and the poor in Canada has never been wider.

Just a few weeks ago, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives published a report showing that Canada's richest CEOs earn nearly 200 times as much as the average worker. That is unfair. It is unfair to workers. It is unfair to families. It is unfair to everyone. The NDP is focused on putting forward solutions to make our country more fair and equitable, a place where the privileged and friends of those in power contribute their fair share and the people get the services they need. This situation is worrisome and should alert the government to the harsh reality facing too many of our fellow citizens in all of our ridings.

Household debt and growing inequality are hardly the only things I am concerned about.

I am very worried about the fact that this government is doing nothing to help seniors who are still not receiving the guaranteed income supplement automatically and have trouble making ends meet. The FADOQ and its Richelieu-Yamaska regional branch are to be commended for drawing attention to this injustice and demanding that the government take action. Their demands mirror our own. They can count on my support and on the NDP caucus to represent them.

I remind members once again that this government promised to help hundreds of thousands of seniors out of poverty, but this government let these seniors down. This is completely unacceptable. There is, however, a simple solution: make the guaranteed income supplement automatic for everyone. This is why the NDP has long

been calling for the guaranteed income supplement to be given to everyone eligible to receive it, since the NDP believes that it is impossible for these seniors to live on less than \$10,000.

Can we finally guarantee them a decent income and give them the supplement they are entitled to? I do not think this is too much to ask.

[*English*]

**Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on the issue of the GIS, let me be very clear. We made it automatic enrolment a month ago. That has been done and we did it for a very good reason. We care about seniors and we know that for seniors, particularly in rural communities and those who have linguistic challenges and perhaps come from different cultures, their access to government services is inhibited. We knew that in order to help seniors, we needed to make that enrolment automatic and so we have done that. We did it without being asked by the NDP.

On the other issues that were raised, I have no problem being pushed to do more for low-income Canadians and for Canadians who fall below the poverty line. I support the NDP and I have worked with colleagues across the House to make sure that poverty is sustained as a critical focus of this government. Therefore, let me tell members what we have done without being asked and what we intend to do before we are asked.

Fundamentally, the most important thing we have done in this term of government is the Canada child benefit. The Canada child benefit supports children in this country by supporting their families and 65% of the families who receive the maximum CCB are households led by single parents. Part of the reason we brought in gender-based budgeting and gender-based analysis to our economic policies was to make sure that when we made expenditures not only did we help the intended targets of support, but we broadened that support to make sure that women were also helped simultaneously. We do more than one thing with these sorts of investments. We do not just lift children out of poverty. We lift women in this country out of poverty and with them the families that they often lead as single parents.

That single government policy has lifted 40% of children living in poverty in this country out of poverty. Again, we did not wait to be asked how to do this, we did it.

Another initiative that is critical to what has gone on in terms of our approach to dealing with poverty was the reform of the CPP and the enhancement to the GIS. What we are slowly starting to see is a series of programs that not only target low-income Canadians, but also make sure we understand the impact poverty has on racialized communities, the role that anti-black racism has on poverty in this country, the role that gender has on poverty in this country. Our programs not only deal with poverty as a general issue, but we target specific groups in specific ways to make sure those hardest hit by poverty are lifted out of poverty the quickest.



*Adjournment Proceedings*

We have more work to be done and as I said, I have no problem being pushed to be more proactive, more progressive, and more successful in alleviating poverty. I have no problem, but to be told we are not doing things and to not acknowledge what great steps have been made is just wilfully partisan.

I will give another example. The national housing strategy has been criticized because it is too long. The only way to get into a systemic transformation of the housing policy in this country is not to do one- and two-year programs as promised by the party opposite during their campaign platform, a short four-year program. The only way to do it and the way every municipality, every housing activist, every homeless person, every single person in the sector says is the right way to do it is to do a multi-year program. As we build the multi-year program, by sheer force of nature as we add new housing, the program must go. We have heard criticism that the program is back-end loaded. Of course it is back-end loaded.

If I build 100 new houses in a riding this year and 100 more the year after that, and 100 more the year after that, after three years I do not have 300 units of housing. I have 100, then 200, then 300. I have 600 units of housing. We build housing systems in a back-end loaded multi-year way. That is exactly what we have done.

However, we have done something else as part of this process. We have also proposed for the first time ever, as part of the first national housing strategy, a Canada housing benefit. If the party opposite wants to know what the next big move to eliminate poverty in this country is, it is the Canada housing benefit, which will subsidize people and give them choices as to where they live and help subsidize them on core housing needs and put them in a position where they can choose to locate near a school, jobs, and family—

• (1910)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** The hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy:** Mr. Speaker, seniors deserve better than half-truths. What the government is not saying is that automatic enrolment for the guaranteed income supplement applies only to seniors who turned 65 on or after January 1.

The minister himself held a press conference to say that, according to the government's figures, 56,000 seniors were not automatically enrolled for the guaranteed income supplement. That is what his figures show. Even if we were talking about just one senior, that would be unacceptable. We are talking about 56,000 seniors who are not entitled because the measure applies only to those who turned 65 on or after January 1. We are talking about 56,000 seniors who are living on less than \$10,000 a year. This is unacceptable. Income inequality is our society's most flagrant injustice—

• (1915)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** Order. The hon. member for Spadina—Fort York.

[*English*]

**Mr. Adam Vaughan:** Mr. Speaker, as I said, I have no hesitation in welcoming a push by the party opposite. Having 56,000 people in poverty is 56,000 people too many. The reality is that it is very hard to retroactively fix programs. One has to proactively project them

into the future and start fixing problems systemically. Otherwise, they reoccur.

One of the challenges we have with the two methods we are using to alleviate poverty, the Canada child benefit and the GIS, is that they are tied to the income tax system. They need to be because of the way in which they are calculated. However, we also have put in place other programs, such as the CPP enhancement and the new Canada housing benefit, which attempt to get at different populations outside of the Income Tax Act as a way of supporting our anti-poverty initiatives. That is the way to do it.

Is there room for improvement? The Prime Minister will say every single time he is asked that better is always possible, but this government takes poverty reduction seriously. Our campaign to create new and innovative ways to support people, regardless of what stage they are at in life and regardless of what part of the country they live in—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** The hon. member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith.

## THE ENVIRONMENT

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise again to describe the abandoned vessel that sank in Ladysmith Harbour, the 90-foot, 100-year-old *Anapaya*. It has been on Transport Canada's vessel inventory of concern since 2014. It had been identified as a risk to sink. When it went down, after being overwhelmed by rain and the bilge pumps could not keep it up, the Coast Guard, bless it, took action. It boomed the wreck and contained the oil spill. That was so important for Ladysmith Harbour, because there are shellfish jobs at risk from even the smallest oil spill. The Coast Guard acted, which we are very grateful for. It lifted this 90-foot-long, beautiful old wooden boat from the bottom of the harbour, with everyone saying the whole way along that it would have been much easier to have prevented the boat from sinking in the first place.

A significant take-away for me afterward was that the previous owners, in fact the people who had been living on the *Anapaya*, knew that she was nearing the end of her life. She was an abandoned boat by the time she sank. The previous owners said they did not have the economic means to prevent her from sinking, but if there had been a vessel turn-in program, the same that Oregon and Washington states have very successfully used to get at the backlog of abandoned vessels, it would have prevented it from sinking and becoming a problem in the first place. This was a significant element of my abandoned vessel legislation, Bill C-352, which was famously blocked in the House. It was the first time that had ever happened to a bill. I went through all the appeals and was told that it was the Liberal majority that squashed it in the end.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

The interesting thing is that now that we are studying the transport minister's bill, Bill C-64, at committee, I have been able to ask all kinds of witnesses if they wish that a vessel turn-in program were still part of the legislative offer for Canadians. It makes sense. It has been proposed by local governments in British Columbia for many years, and it was on that basis that I included it in my legislation, Bill C-352.

In the last few days, there has been testimony from Troy Wood, the manager of the derelict vessel removal program in Washington state, saying that the vessel turn-in program was the prevention arm of their very successful derelict vessel removal program. Sara Anghel, president of the National Marine Manufacturers Association, said there is no place to take boats before they become a hazard for her industry, which is significantly made up of vessel manufacturers and marine operators. She said they would welcome the opportunity to create a viable recycling program and there needs to be a place to take them.

The committee also heard from Kyle Murphy from Washington state, Peter Luckham, chair of Islands Trust Council, and Anna Johnston from West Coast Environmental Law. Georgia Strait Alliance said very clearly that in the transport minister's bill, it is left wondering about the absence of a voluntary turn-in program that could deal with this backlog and help vessel owners, who do not have the means to dispose of them responsibly and do the right thing.

I ask the government why it did not include a vessel turn-in program in its legislation to resolve abandoned vessels.

• (1920)

**Mrs. Karen McCrimmon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for her concern for her and many other coastal communities.

I am proud to be here today to talk about the actions this government has taken to address the important issue of abandoned and wrecked vessels, an issue affecting many communities across Canada.

Our government has been looking at the best practices on the issue of abandoned and wrecked vessels. We have considered these carefully and have adopted the elements that make the most sense for Canada into a national strategy on abandoned and wrecked vessels. This strategy was announced as part of our unprecedented \$1.5 billion oceans protection plan in November 2016.

In May and September 2017, two funding programs for the removal and disposal of small priority boats were launched, including one with a public education component and a vessel recycling and design research component.

We worked with other levels of government to identify options to improve vessel ownership identification systems and initiated a study on identifying gaps in our vessel registration systems for large vessels.

We have worked with the Canadian Coast Guard to develop a national inventory of abandoned and wrecked vessels and a methodology to assess the risks associated with these vessels.

We have also been engaging Canadians in discussions on options to create a robust polluter-pay approach for future vessel clean up with owner financed funds.

Very important is the fact that on October 30, 2017, our government tabled Bill C-64, the wrecked, abandoned or hazardous vessels act, the key legislative component of our plan.

Bill C-64 is extremely comprehensive in its approach to tackling the issue of wrecked, abandoned or hazardous vessels. The proposed legislation will bring the Nairobi International Convention on the Removal of Wrecks into Canadian law and strengthen vessel owner liability. It will address irresponsible vessel management, including a prohibition on abandonment. It will enhance federal powers to take proactive action on problem vessels.

We will continue to collaborate with provincial, territorial, and municipal governments; indigenous groups; and coastal communities to implement our comprehensive national strategy on abandoned and wrecked vessels. We look forward to all members' support of Bill C-64 as it goes through the parliamentary process to implement this important legislation that will help protect our coasts and shores.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** Mr. Speaker, I think maybe my friend opposite did not hear the first four minutes of my speech.

There is a lot to support in the transport minister's Bill C-64, but it is missing the entire program I have just described. I have not heard any rationale from the government about why it is leaving it out. It was described by the Washington State derelict vessel removal program, which has been in operation 15 years, as now an integral part of its prevention program.

Knowing there is nothing in the transport minister's bill to deal with the backlog of abandoned vessels, will the government accept the amendment I am going to propose in committee to introduce a voluntary turn-in program for abandoned vessels to deal with the backlog?

**Mrs. Karen McCrimmon:** Mr. Speaker, our government has heard the concerns of Canadians, asking for a more robust and comprehensive approach to address the issue of wrecked, abandoned, or hazardous vessels.

On October 30, we did introduce the wrecked abandoned or hazardous vessels act, or Bill C-64. The proposed legislation is intended to protect coastal and shoreline communities, the environment, and infrastructure.

The proposed legislation will fill gaps within our legislative system by making owners legally responsible for their vessels that reach end of life. Ultimately, it is about prevention, helping to reduce future occurrences of wrecked, abandoned, and hazardous vessels and the impacts of those that do occur.

We invite all members to support this innovative and important bill as it goes through the parliamentary process.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

[*Translation*]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota):** The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted.

Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:24 p.m.)

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