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(HANSARD)

Thursday, April 26, 2018

—

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, April 26, 2018

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1005)

[*Translation*]

PARLIAMENTARY BUDGET OFFICER

The Speaker: Pursuant to subsection 79.2(2) of the Parliament of Canada Act, it is my duty to present to the House a report from the Parliamentary Budget Officer entitled “Patent restoration and the cost of pharmaceuticals”.

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[*English*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

LIBRARY OF PARLIAMENT

Mr. Gagan Sikand (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the first report of the Standing Joint Committee on the Library of Parliament, entitled “Committee's Quorum and Mandate”.

[*Translation*]

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 60th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs in relation to its study of the main estimates 2018-19.

[*English*]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the ninth report—that is how hard-working our committee is—of the Standing Committee on International Trade, entitled “E-Commerce: Certain Trade-Related Priorities of Canada's Firms”.

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

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the co-chair, I am honoured to have the opportunity to present, in both official languages, a supplementary report from the

Conservative Party on e-commerce and trade. We support the bulk of the recommendations in the main report but must disagree on the tax recommendations. The main report effectively recommends that Canadians be forced to pay a Netflix tax and a tax on every song they download on iTunes and every movie they watch on YouTube. We recommend otherwise.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 44th report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, entitled “Main Estimates 2018-19: Vote 1 under Office of the Auditor General”.

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[*Translation*]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties and, if you seek it, you should find consent to adopt the following motion:

That, at the conclusion of today's debate on the opposition motion in the name of the Member for Timmins—James Bay, all questions necessary to dispose of the motion be deemed put and a recorded division deemed requested and deferred to Tuesday, May 1, 2018, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

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

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?

Hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

[*English*]

PETITIONS

CANADA SUMMER JOBS PROGRAM

Hon. Diane Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to table four petitions from 299 constituents. The petitioners are calling to the government's attention that, as it is now written, the application form for the Canada summer jobs program forces employers to choose between their charter-protected freedoms and eligibility for government programming.

Business of Supply

They are calling on the government to remove the discriminatory attestation requirement from the Canada summer jobs application and to respect the charter of rights of all Canadians, even those Canadians whose views differ from the political ideology of the government of the day.

This brings the total number of petitioners to 1,161.

Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to present a petition on behalf of many of my constituents in Battle River—Crowfoot. These constituents are petitioning the House of Commons to oppose the Liberal government's plan to discriminate against faith-based employers and students in the summer job program, and they are doing so with the belief that all Canadians should be allowed to hold different beliefs from that of the government of the day.

IMPAIRED DRIVING

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure to table a petition signed by 4,456 Canadians calling on the government to bring forward legislation to provide for mandatory sentences for impaired-driving offences. It could not come at a more timely time. Given that on average, the sentence for impaired driving causing death is in the range of two years, and the current government has done absolutely nothing to tackle this issue—

The Speaker: The hon. member knows that presenting petitions is not the time for debate or for commentary about whether members are pleased or not. It is simply to present petitions. Those are the rules.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North.

VISITOR VISAS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I table today a petition signed by many constituents in regard to Canada's super visa related to individuals coming to Canada being able to stay for up to two years. The concern the petitioners are expressing is that on the second re-entry, people are not necessarily being allowed to stay the full two years in many situations. The petitioners are bringing that to the attention of the House.

FILIPINO CANADIANS

Mr. Randeep Sarai (Surrey Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, *kamusta*. I am honoured to present this petition to the House. It has accumulated 762 signatures. The petitioners call upon the government to recognize the contributions Filipino Canadians have made to Canadian society, the richness of the Filipino language and culture, and the importance of reflecting on Filipino heritage for future generations by declaring June every year Filipino heritage month, also known as Motion No. 155. I would like to honour the MP for Scarborough Centre, who started this petition.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

•(1010)

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—PAPAL APOLOGY ON RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP) moved:

That, in responding to the call of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to move our nation on a path of true healing for the crimes of the residential school era, the House:

(a) invite Pope Francis to participate in this journey with Canadians by responding to Call to Action 58 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report and issue a formal papal apology for the role of the Canadian Catholic Church in the establishment, operations, and abuses of the residential schools;

(b) call upon the Canadian Catholic Church to live up to their moral obligation and the spirit of the 2006 Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement and resume best efforts to raise the full amount of the agreed upon funds; and

(c) call on the Catholic entities that were involved in the running of the residential schools to make a consistent and sustained effort to turn over relevant documents when called upon by survivors of residential schools, their families, and scholars working to understand the full scope of the horrors of the residential school system in the interest of truth and reconciliation.

He said: Mr. Speaker, as always, it is a great honour to stand in this House representing the people of Timmins—James Bay, and today particularly, with my colleague from Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, to also be speaking with the support of the survivors, who are watching this Parliament do the right thing.

[Translation]

Today is a historic moment for the Parliament of Canada. It was the Parliament of Canada that created the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to examine the evidence, the documents, and the testimony concerning the residential schools era. In the course of its investigation, the commission found that the policies of the Government of Canada and the Catholic Church at the time constituted a genocide.

The word “genocide” is very specific and very important. Why did the commission declare the residential school system a genocide? Based on the definition of “genocide”, it is clear that the policy of taking women and children away from their families in order to erase their identity constitutes a genocide. It is therefore crucial for the Parliament of Canada to respond to the commission, specifically by inviting Pope Francis to take part in our reconciliation process.

Today we are very confident that the Pope is capable of understanding the importance of this motion, because he has a vision of reconciliation and justice for all. The Pope must play a positive and proactive role with the Parliament of Canada and indigenous communities by issuing a formal apology.

Business of Supply

[English]

In beginning this morning, I want to say that I never talk about faith or my own personal faith in the House. I do not believe it is appropriate. I feel that politicians often cheapen faith when they use it. However, I want to say how thrilled I was when Pope Francis was appointed, because he was a Jesuit.

I have had the great honour in my life of being influenced by and knowing Jesuits: the great Jim Webb, who worked in the co-operative movement in Cape Breton and worked in the third world and the inner cities of Toronto; Father Martin Royackers, murdered by gangs in Jamaica when standing up for the homeless; and Father Michael Czerny, who married my wife and I, who went into El Salvador in the face of the death squads to defend the poor.

What I learned from the Jesuits is that as Christians, faith is not good enough to be charity. It has to be systemic. It is about changing the systems that keep people down.

I am very confident that Pope Francis, who has spoken up on justice around the world, will hear the call of the Parliament of Canada and the cry of indigenous people to do the right thing now and close this dark, horrific chapter.

I want to say that I have been appalled by the line I heard from the Canadian bishops. They have tried to evade their role in working with us on reconciliation. We will talk today about the collusion of the federal government and the church. They have followed a pattern time and time again of defending, covering up, and hiding for each other. It all comes back to liability. It all comes back to money.

Does anyone think the survivors are here for money? When we talk with the survivors of St. Anne's residential school, who suffered such depravity, such horrors, and we see their dignity, they are not here for money.

• (1015)

As one man said to me last night, he came 12 hours to hear three words. This is about that. They have shown more reconciliation in the face of legal obstructions, challenges, and horrific crimes.

As another person said this to me. Imagine the worst horror story ever made and put children in it and that would not begin to cover what happened at St. Anne's Residential School. That was done through the deliberate policy and collusion. It is not just about St. Anne's, but I am speaking about it because I know the survivors and it is in my region.

The Hill Times said:

...Pope Francis, who has worked to make compassion and justice the guiding light of his pontificate, would be more at home with the St. Anne residential survivors than he might be with some of the Canadian bishops who...to care more about its wallet than the Gospel.

Let us talk about how this started. We learned that policy was established to destroy the Indian people in our country. That was the finding of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Duncan Campbell Scott articulated the policy:

I want to get rid of the Indian problem....That is my whole point. Our objective is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic, and there is no Indian question, and no Indian Department...

Government officials worked hard to achieve that policy. In 1892, they issued the order in council on funding. They established what was the bare minimum that could be spent to keep a child alive. Then they ensured that the money they gave the church was at least 25% lower than that. The results were horrific death rates.

Peter Henderson Bryce was a civil servant who saw the death rates in western Canada, and was appalled. He articulated a 24% death rate, which was higher than the death rates of Canadian soldiers going into the trenches in Flanders.

At the File Hills Indian Residential School there was a 69% death rate among children, overall a 40% death rate. These were death camps. However, Peter Henderson Bryce began to expose it and because he did, it forced the government to make changes.

He was not the only one speaking out. Church leaders spoke up. I think of Samuel H. Blake of the Missionary Society of the Church of England who was horrified by the treatment of the children. He wrote to Archdeacon Tims who ran the Old Sun Industrial School in Calgary. He said:

How...can you be satisfied with statistics which show that...900 to 1,000 children which pass through our Indian schools 300 of them pass out...to the grave within... twelve years I cannot conceive except upon this hypothesis that we grow callous amidst such a frightful death rate.

In 1945, an American writer, who was analyzing Canada's Indian policy, said simply that the government's policy was the extinction of Indian as Indians.

That is why we are here. For the Catholic Church to state, in 2018, that as a whole it was not involved in the running of the residential schools veers dangerously into the road of historical revisionism. The bishops promoted the policy. The bishops oversaw it. The bishops worked hand-in-hand with the federal government and covered up at every step of the way.

The documents were seized in the St. Anne's investigation. I want to thank the Ontario Provincial Police for the incredible work it did standing up and insisting that the documents be received. It took those documents from the orders and found documents that went all the way to the Curia Generalis in Rome about the crimes at St. Anne's. The Vatican was involved. The Church of Canada was involved. The bishops were involved.

They had a practice called "bleeding the children" to feed the mother house. The minimum monies that were given by the federal government to the residential schools, the orders took a tax so they could pay for their amenities in the mother house of the church. They think they are worried about liability. They got off scot-free. Woe to those who put such burdens when they had the obligation to do right.

• (1020)

Today the Catholic church is involved very deeply. It is cold comfort for the survivors of St. Anne's residential school to know that the church has access to all the documents. The church has access to the names of all the survivors who have been so brave to come forward. The church gets to oversee that as the defendant.

Business of Supply

Therefore, for the church to be surprised that we are here is not good enough. What we are doing today is the call from Isaiah. We are called to be the repairer of those broken streets and city walls to restore communities to dwell. Edmund Metatawabin said that they were not here for reconciliation, that they were here for reclamation, to rebuild their communities, to rebuild their children and their grandchildren so they could move forward. They are not here for the money; they are here for someone to do right.

In the time I have left, it is important we talk about the role of complicity. I want to speak today of 14-year-old John Kioke and 12-year-old Michel Matinas from Attawapiskat, and 12-year-old Michel Sutherland from Weenusk, who never came home. Many children never came home from St. Anne's.

When I went into those communities, they asked me what happened to their uncles and to their cousins. We found out that these boys were so desperate to escape the criminal abuse that was happening that they took their lives in their hands in April 1941, when the James Bay rivers are overflowing, and tried to find their way home. They never got there. Father Paul Langlois told the children to keep their mouths shut about what had happened at the school.

I mention this because it was a year later when the federal government found out about the deaths of these children. It did not call the school; it called Bishop Belleau and asked why he had covered it up. He said that the boys were deserters. Therefore, the bishops oversaw this.

I want to read from a letter of 1968 from teachers who were hired at St. Anne's residential school, because there were good teachers, good brothers and good nuns. However, they were always pushed out because they were not cruel enough or sick enough to stay in those institutions. Six teachers went to St. Anne's and were fired. They wrote to Jean Chrétien and said that they were told by the Department of Indian Affairs that it was easier to replace the teachers than to deal with what was happening at St. Anne's.

In a teacher's handwritten letter, she said, "although we may have not understood the implications of working at a mission school...we were employed by the Department of Indian Affairs." She begged Jean Chrétien. She said, "if there is anything I can do to help these Indian people...and help" the helpless children, "I will happily do it." She continued, it "was not possible to give up basic beliefs about human rights and dignity and still face the children who are forced to live in such a sterile, rigid, unloving atmosphere." Why do I mention that? Because the children had no voice. They had no one to go to. The Government of Canada was not going to help them. Imagine if the government had. Some of the most brutal crimes and abuses were happening then.

I refer the House to an Ontario Provincial Police document from that time, when the children of St. Anne's approached Bishop Laguerrier at a big event to tell him about the sexual abuse. They had no one else to go to other than him. They sat with him and told him what was happening, and the bishop told them that it was the fatherly way. What we know now of course is that Bishop Jules Laguerrier was one of the most prolific predators.

When the federal government was told to turn over the documents for the IAP for the St. Anne's survivors, the government turned over a person of interest report on Reverend Father Jules Laguerrier that was one page long. It was his biographical information saying when he was at St. Anne's. It was not until the survivors starting demanding answers that it turned out the government was sitting on a person of interest report referring to this bishop, a report 3,191 pages long describing the crimes he committed.

● (1025)

The same happened with the person of interest report for Reverend Father Raymond-Marie Lavoie, which had a two-page report supplied to the independent assessment process. It included brief notes, but it not include the fact that the federal government and the church both had the documents, 2,472 pages long, on Father Lavoie that listed his crimes. Sister Anna Wesley's person of interest report was 6,804 pages long.

The children had no one to go to. They were in the hands of these sadists. That is why we are here to do the right thing, to say that this was a policy and not accidental. The fact is that these people were protected, they got away with it, and they are still getting away with it even beyond the grave. The survivors of St. Anne's Residential School had their cases thrown own because these documents were not supplied. They are asking for closure.

We can talk about the financial indemnifications. All the Christian orders have been involved in the formal apologies. All the Christian orders paid their share. We could use the legal weasel words to say that certain dioceses were not involved. However, the greatest amount of money that came from the Anglican Church came through the diocese of Toronto, which did not have residential schools there. The Anglican people of Toronto knew they had an obligation to do the right thing.

The Catholic Church was ordered to pay its share, and most of it was supposed to be "monies in kind". Really, after all that. We do not really have any clue of how much of that monies in kind was ever paid. However, we do know that the church was obligated to pay a \$25 million payment, but walked away from it on a legal loophole. I am not blaming the Conservative or Liberal government on this. There was a legal loophole and the church walked on it.

We have no legal power over the church in Parliament to tell it to pay, but, my God, it is a moral obligation for the church to pay what it owes, because it got off scot-free for the crimes that were committed, and not just at Ste. Anne's but around the country. It is about doing the right thing.

These documents, these letters, this proof that validates what these survivors went through and survived mean something. It is why the Truth and Reconciliation Commission called on each of the orders in each of the Christian faiths to turn over those documents and photos. Children were taken away and never came home, and there is not even a record of them.

I was in Marten Falls on the 100th anniversary of the signing of Treaty 9. We went up the river. Duncan Campbell Scott came in his canoe to sign it with the people of Ogoki Post. On that 100th anniversary, a man stepped forward and started to speak in Oji-Cree. He apologized that he did not speak English. He said that he had never learned to speak it because they came and took his sister away and never brought her home. Nobody ever told him what happened. The next year when the white man came, his parents hid him in bush. They hid him year after year, every time the white man came to take the children.

I think of that man's family and the faith I grew up with where my aunts were nuns, powerful women of justice. I think of the mercy that was shown to me. I think of the fact that nobody even came to tell him and his family that they took their daughter, that she had died and was in some unmarked grave someplace. Nobody had the decency. Those are the crimes for that have to be atoned for.

Today is a good day. It is a hopeful day. It is a day that we come to terms with what was done through the collusion of the church and the state working hand-in-hand to try to destroy the Indian identity. However, that identity has not been destroyed. That identity is stronger than ever. Those people are watching like a jury over this Parliament, telling us to do the right thing, admit the wrong, and then they can move on.

Meegwetch

• (1030)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to go to the truth and reconciliation report. Recommendation 58 states:

We call upon the Pope to issue an apology to Survivors, their families, and communities for the Roman Catholic Church's role in the spiritual, cultural, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children in Catholic-run residential schools.

There is a great expectation in the truth and reconciliation report. Our government, the Prime Minister, and the minister responsible have actually talked a great deal about that reconciliation and understand the expectations of indigenous people and non-indigenous people. I wonder if my colleague could share his thoughts in regard to the expectations people have, in general, as to how important the report and those 94 recommendations actually are.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, I often have a very combative relationship with my hon. colleague in the House, but I want to thank him for his work representing his party. Today, we are all called as parliamentarians for something bigger than any of us individually, bigger than our individual parties.

We have a reckoning with history today, and that reckoning began when former prime minister Stephen Harper stood in the House and made that apology. That was the proudest day of my life as a parliamentarian, to hear that. Out of that, the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement was signed by then prime minister Stephen Harper, which set us on this road. Part of that was the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Senator Sinclair and the commissioners did such a powerful job of gathering what was really hard testimony. So many people came

forward, and when the findings came out, people I know wept, indigenous and non-indigenous. They told me they wept for days because to hear it spoken, to see it put in print, was a moment. Part of that call was the Truth and Reconciliation Commission calling on us to do what we are doing today, which is to reach out to the Pope. We are doing the work of Parliament, which was given the mandate through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. This is our job, to finish the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and we can do that today.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague shared very powerful words in the House today.

As we have been having this conversation, I know some people reflect on what happened in 2009, which I believe was an important moment in terms of the AFN and others meeting with the Pope. I wonder if my colleague could share why this is also important, because some people might say, "Wasn't there an apology in 2009?" There is a significant difference in terms of what we are asking today versus what was certainly an important moment in 2009, but it did not really provide the resolution that was needed.

• (1035)

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, I have great respect for my hon. colleague. We have served on the indigenous affairs committee together. That question is really important.

I had the honour to be at the investiture of Pope Benedict. He talked about the growing deserts of injustice and how we are all called to fight back against the desertification of injustice. When he met with Phil Fontaine and the AFN, he gave a heartfelt expression of his sorrow for what happened, and that was very powerful. What is different about it is that he gave his personal expression of sorrow but did not speak of the systemic role. As my colleague points out, today we are asking the church to talk about the systemic role. It is not about the individuals. These were not a few bad actors. This was a system that was established to destroy Indian identity. That is why what we are calling for today is different. It is not to diminish in any way the words that Pope Benedict spoke on this. It is about closing this chapter once and for all.

Ms. Joyce Murray (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Madam Speaker, on April 9, the Indian Residential School History and Dialogue Centre opened at UBC. President Santa Ono spoke and apologized for UBC's role in that unfortunate educational system. Musqueam elders were present to talk about the long-term impacts that passed from generation to generation.

Could you tell us what impact the apology you are calling for would have on the children and grandchildren of residential school survivors?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I just want to remind the member that she is to address her questions to the Chair and not to individual members.

Business of Supply

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, I was thinking of Edmund Metatawabin. I read his words this morning. Edmund has been a leader in trying to get justice for St. Anne's for so long. He said, "Sometimes you have to say sorry many times for what was done." There is nothing wrong with that. Our Catholic faith teaches us that. We are taught that we have to say sorry. Angela Shisheesh says, "You have to say sorry before you go to bed." Saying sorry is not something onerous.

What it means, though, is that we have to send a clear message that the church understands. All of us were shocked when we read the Pope's comments that he was not going to apologize. There was a misunderstanding that he somehow did not respect the need. That is a result of the bishops not asking him. That is why it is important for us to reach out to the Pope directly. It would be a powerful moment for Canada if the Parliament of this country asked the Pope to listen and respond. That would be powerful, because apologies matter.

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for the important work we are doing today in the House.

My granny went to a residential school from the time she was four until she was 16. My husband also went to a residential school for many years.

What I find compelling is the generosity of our children. What I mean by that is that when I look at the realities my granny and my father faced, as well as my husband, I find that my children have been so generous, especially to their father, because of the gaps he has, as he was not parented in the proper way.

When I think of this apology and what it would mean, not only for the people who lived this experience, I agree that we cannot say sorry enough. We must make room, because all Canadians have to carry this story. We have asked indigenous people to carry this story alone for much too long. Everybody who needs to say sorry should say it so that everyone carries it.

I would ask the member to share with us how this apology would help the children who survived so much because their parents did not know. We are learning with them how to be parents. How would an apology change their lives?

● (1040)

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, obviously my colleague has seen it. She knows it.

This is about the grandchildren. This is not about yesterday and old history. This is about today.

Edmund Metatawabin, who has been such a teacher to me on this, said that money is like ice in the pockets. The St. Anne survivors have been calling for justice for their grandchildren. They want them to carry on, and the children have been so good. Not just parents and grandparents, but families were deliberately targeted and devastated by the policies. One survivor told me about her parents, and she said that the use of the electric chair was to destroy their ability to love. Who would do that? Looking at her and looking at her children, I can see that they are full of hope and love.

That is why what is said is so important. This is about the children. It is about us going forward. We can never repair the damage that was deliberately done, but we can start on this road.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am honoured to have the opportunity to rise today and speak to the motion from the member for Timmins—James Bay. I acknowledge that we are gathered here on the traditional territory of the Algonquin people.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the member for bringing this important motion before the House of Commons. I am pleased to have worked co-operatively with him on some of the language. As always, we also want to thank the member for Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou for his ongoing support of and advocacy for the survivors of residential schools.

[*Translation*]

Our government also wants to take this opportunity to show that reconciliation is not a partisan issue.

[*English*]

This motion reflects the previous and ongoing actions of the government on the three broad issues it addresses, and we will, therefore, be supporting it.

The residential school system was a systemic plan to remove indigenous children from their homes, families, and cultures, and to facilitate the stated policy of "killing the Indian in the child". Students endured unconscionable physical and mental abuse, and generations of indigenous peoples were left emotionally scarred and culturally isolated.

Over a period of more than a century, an estimated 150,000 indigenous children attended those schools, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission estimates that at least 6,000 died. This calculated act of cultural genocide inflicted unimaginable long-term harm on the indigenous children who were forced to attend these schools, and created severe intergenerational trauma that indigenous communities and our country continue to confront.

This shameful part of our collective history spanned seven generations, many governments, and different political parties. I did not know when I was first elected to this House in 1997 that the last residential school had closed only in 1996. Healing the damage of residential schools would require the sustained action not only of involved governments and organizations, but of all Canadians. We must all continue to work toward educating ourselves about this dark chapter in Canadian history.

The work of the TRC has opened the eyes of many Canadians to the horrific truth of residential schools, but we now have so many new resources to teach us. For example, the truly important book *Indian Horse*, by the late Richard Wagamese, is something every Canadian should read, and it is now a film that every Canadian should see. It is the heart-wrenching account of the horrific abuse and its consequences.

Business of Supply

[Translation]

Reconciliation is not an indigenous issue or a partisan issue. It is an issue that affects all Canadians.

[English]

In May 2005, the then justice minister Irwin Cotler appointed former Supreme Court Justice Frank Iacobucci to move the resolution of residential school legacy from the courtroom to the negotiating table. With good will from all sides, an agreement in principle was reached in November 2005 and signed by all parties.

This agreement in principle set out all the significant components of the settlement, including compensation for the survivors, commemoration of these tragic events, and the creation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The final agreement was concluded in 2006 by the Conservative government, and was subsequently ratified by the courts.

The Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement is the largest class action settlement in Canadian history. It was signed by all parties following negotiations by representatives for Canada, former students, churches, the Assembly of First Nations, and Inuit representatives to resolve thousands of individual claims brought by former students across Canada.

In moving forward in the spirit of reconciliation, we need to ask forgiveness for past wrongs and acknowledge our mistakes.

● (1045)

[Translation]

Our indigenous partners and the survivors have also emphasized how important an apology can be to a renewed relationship.

[English]

When Prime Minister Harper apologized to residential school survivors on behalf of all Canadians right here in this chamber in 2008, it represented an essential step on the path toward healing the intergenerational wounds of these appalling historic wrongs.

The power of an apology can be profound. It is not only the acknowledgement of a past wrong, but often the first step toward healing and closure for those who were impacted. It is so much more than resolving legal liabilities or following the articles of an agreement. It is about providing those who have been hurt with the words they need to hear in order to forgive.

In 2006, I had the honour of apologizing on behalf of the Government of Canada to the Sayisi Dene for the government's role in forcibly relocating their community 60 years ago, a forced relocation that caused death, hardship, and devastation. It was truly poignant in Tadoule Lake, in Churchill, and in Winnipeg. The survivors heard the words they had negotiated in order for the apology to be part of their healing journey and closure.

In 2017, the Prime Minister delivered an official apology on behalf of the Government of Canada and all Canadians to the former students of Newfoundland and Labrador residential schools and their families. At an emotional gathering in Newfoundland and Labrador, he acknowledged the suffering and intergenerational trauma of those who had attended the schools, and their descendants.

[Translation]

One month ago, here in the House of Commons, the Prime Minister exonerated six Tsilhqot'in chiefs who had been wrongly executed 150 years ago.

[English]

The current leaders who were on the floor of the House to hear the apology expressed to me the deep impact of that long-overdue acknowledgement on the members of their community.

This was also true in 2010 when Pope Benedict apologized to Irish victims of sexual abuse, and in 2015 when Pope Francis apologized in Bolivia to the indigenous peoples of the Americas for the grave sins of colonialism. In both of these admirable examples, the Catholic Church was on the right side of history.

It is in that context the Prime Minister formally requested an apology when he met Pope Francis at the Vatican last year. The Prime Minister said, "I told him about how important it is for Canadians that we move forward on real reconciliation with indigenous peoples and highlighted how he could help by issuing an apology."

I have witnessed the deep hurt the survivors and families are feeling as a result of the decision not to issue a papal apology, particularly the many indigenous people who are devout Catholics.

[Translation]

Call to action 58 from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission states:

We call upon the Pope to issue an apology to Survivors, their families, and communities for the Roman Catholic Church's role in the spiritual, cultural, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children in Catholic-run residential schools. We call for that apology to be similar to the 2010 apology issued to Irish victims of abuse and to occur within one year of the issuing of this Report and to be delivered by the Pope in Canada.

● (1050)

[English]

Our government continues to believe an apology from the Pope on behalf of the Catholic Church to survivors of the horrors of Canadian residential schools is an important step in acknowledging the past and moving toward reconciliation.

As Grand Chief Willie Littlechild, a former TRC commissioner and himself a survivor of three residential schools, has said:

It will give survivors that expression of regret. They want the Pope to say "I'm sorry"....

I hope it will happen. It gives people the opportunity to forgive, and that's important too. Many survivors will feel a sense of justice and reconciliation.

Business of Supply

I am committed to continuing work with the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, our indigenous partners, and the survivors on this shared journey of reconciliation. I have written to the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops and offered to help facilitate a meeting between the CCCB and survivors to personally hear what an apology would mean to them and how crucial it is to reconciliation in Canada. I am hopeful that the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops is seized with the issue of the apology and will undertake further outreach to communities, but an apology alone will not fix the harms of the past.

[Translation]

Today's motion reflects that.

[English]

The second part of the motion calls upon the Canadian Catholic Church to live up to its moral obligation and the spirit of the 2006 Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement and resume best efforts to raise the full amount of the agreed upon funds.

Pursuant to the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, the Catholic entities had three financial obligations: one, make a cash contribution of \$29 million; two, provide in-kind services worth \$25 million; and three, use best efforts to raise \$25 million to support healing and reconciliation programs. While the Catholic entities have met the first two financial obligations, they have raised only \$3.7 million of the \$25 million to support the healing and reconciliation programs that are necessary.

In response to a court decision releasing the church of further legal liability, the previous government initiated further negotiations with the Catholic entities in the summer of 2015.

[Translation]

These discussions led to an agreement signed on October 30, five days before the current government came into power. This agreement released them from all additional legal responsibilities.

[English]

While the government acknowledges the Catholic entities no longer have a legal obligation to raise the balance of the committed funds for healing and reconciliation programs, we believe they still have a moral obligation to fulfill the spirit of the settlement agreement. All parties to the settlement agreement have a critical role to play in renewing the relationship with indigenous peoples in Canada. Since 2016, our government and I have publicly urged the Catholic entities to resume fundraising efforts to meet those moral obligations, and we will continue to do so.

The last component of today's motion calls on the Catholic entities "to make a consistent and sustained effort to turn over relevant documents when called upon by survivors of residential schools, their families, and scholars working to understand the full scope of the horrors of the residential school system in the interest of truth and reconciliation."

There is a body of documents related to residential schools litigation which predates the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. Some of these documents are subject to a legal restriction called "settlement privilege", which renders them confidential.

[Translation]

In a number of rulings, the court has confirmed that the documents in question are subject to settlement privilege.

● (1055)

[English]

In order to have these documents, at the request of the residential school survivors, placed in the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, all the involved parties must waive settlement privilege. Our government recognizes the importance of preserving the truth-telling of the survivors, while acknowledging an obligation to respect directions provided under agreements and to protect survivors' privacy rights. In January 2018, I wrote to the head of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation confirming that Canada waives privilege over these protected documents so that a survivor's wish to share and preserve his or her story with the centre can be respected. I also wrote to the Catholic Church strongly encouraging it to do the same.

[Translation]

We must never let this dark, painful chapter of history be forgotten.

[English]

As I said earlier, and as I will keep saying, reconciliation is not only an indigenous issue, it is a Canadian imperative. It is not up to the federal government alone to advance this journey. We all have our own roles to play. All hon. members in this House have an opportunity now to demonstrate their commitment to reconciliation by supporting this motion.

This motion does not ask the church to do anything the government has not already done itself. It is not about the church versus the government. This is about doing what is best for residential school survivors and helping them along the healing journey.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have enormous respect for the minister and her work, and I was so pleased that she was talking about the construction of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement and the importance that this is more than legal liabilities or following the wording of an agreement.

We have unfinished business, as my hon. colleague knows, which is the need to address what happened with the St. Anne's residential school survivors. It was the decision of the justice department to suppress the evidence that upended the hearings which resulted in the hearings being thrown out. There was evidence of horrific crimes, yet our survivors continue to go to the Ontario Superior Court and to the B.C. Superior Court to face every possible legal roadblock one could imagine. Some of them did not even have bus fare to go to the hearings.

Business of Supply

The issue today is I am asking the minister to meet with the survivors. I am asking that we put the goddamn lawyers to the side. We can reach out. The survivors are not here for anything more than just healing. I am asking the minister to sit down and meet with survivors like Angela Shisheesh and Evelyn Korkmaz, and all the survivors who come time and time again.

I want you to do the right thing. Would you do it?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind the member for Timmins—James Bay to address the questions to the Chair and not the member directly.

The hon. minister.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his heartfelt words and ongoing advocacy.

Our government is committed to justice for all of the Indian residential school survivors. It is important and I look forward to meeting with these survivors.

We know that we must maintain the integrity of the settlement agreement for the sake of all other survivors. We want to work to make sure that all of the claimants get all of the assistance and support that they can in terms of their seeking of justice and support, particularly around language, culture, and healing, which are so important to so many of the survivors and are not easy for them to achieve.

As the member knows, 95% of the claimants from St. Anne's have received compensation and we are working with the others to do what we can. The courts have shown us that we have kept our promise and continue to keep our promise, but we know we can do more.

● (1100)

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Madam Speaker, it was a pleasure to serve with the minister when she was a member of the aboriginal affairs committee in the last Parliament and I was the parliamentary secretary. As she mentioned, one of the proudest moments for me as a Conservative was the June 2008 apology by Prime Minister Stephen Harper. My father was the Indian affairs minister at the time, and I know that was one of the crowning achievements of his distinguished career as a parliamentarian.

In my community, I have worked with local indigenous communities on reconciliation. What I have learned from them is that reconciliation is not something that we will arrive at; we will not one day say that we are finally reconciled. It is an ongoing journey.

I think there are some who believe the apologies happened here in Parliament, so why have we not arrived there yet. Perhaps the minister could share with the House her views on reconciliation and how we as a nation and as individuals need to continue on that journey together.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for the question. I remember that day very well. It is a day that those of us who were here will never forget. There is not a week that goes by when someone does not stop us to say they brought their mother here or they were watching it from the community hall on television, and that the apology from the Government of Canada meant so much.

I too believe that reconciliation is a journey, not a destination, and that we, as Canada, will continue to have to be corrected on our journey of reconciliation.

I think the motion today means that Canada has apologized. The other churches have apologized. The reason the Truth and Reconciliation Commission put out a call to action asking the Pope to apologize is that the Catholic entities have not. It is hugely important that we move on to allow the kind of healing and closure that is, as was said, particularly for the indigenous people in this country who are devout Catholics. They want their church to do better, to be able to apologize so that they can get on with their lives, their healing journey, and their closure.

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.): Madam Speaker, before I ask my question of the minister, I just want to thank the member for Timmins—James Bay for the beautiful angry words that are impossible not to respond to. It is a good day in Parliament when our hearts and our minds are open to new possibilities.

From a personal perspective, and I have seen it in practice, the minister has led many of us to put away the titles of MP, of minister, of lawyer, of bureaucrat, and has asked us as members of this caucus and Parliament to sit and bear witness to history as part of the process of truth and reconciliation. I am wondering what her thoughts are on not just meeting herself with those who may be on Parliament Hill today with this lived experience but for the church itself to put aside its robes, its institutions, its doctrine, and its lawyers and sit down face to face to understand the legacy of what went wrong and the systemic nature of what went wrong. What advice would she give to those members of the church to bear witness to these truths as part of their process of reconciliation? How would she advise going about that?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Madam Speaker, in hearing the stories of what happened to real people, we are changed forever. That is the reason we have now sent a letter to the bishops to ask them to meet with survivors. Correspondence is not going to change the way people feel in the same way a face-to-face meeting would, as the member said. Hearing those stories directly can change people's lives. It was horrific.

I hope that whatever decisions the lawyers take, and how they take those decisions, as so many Catholic churches have done coast to coast to coast to do their part in reconciliation—

● (1105)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry. I need to allow at least for another brief question.

The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay may have a very brief question.

Business of Supply

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, I want to say this clearly and simply so we understand each other. Stella Chapman had her case taken all the way to the B.C. Superior Court to be told the rights to procedural fairness do not exist. Those are legal obstructions. Therefore, will the minister commit to a meeting with Edmund Metatawabin and the survivors of St. Anne's so that we can sit down and find a way through this?

We need to find a settlement. Edmund talks about this being about the children, about putting a plan in place. I am asking for a very clear and simple answer.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Madam Speaker, yes.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I just want to remind members to try to reduce their preamble and go directly to the question as quickly as possible. In the 10-minute spot, we should have enough time for at least five questions, and I had to squeeze four out of there. I just wanted to remind members.

I know this is a very important topic as well as a very emotional one. I just want to try to move things along so that everybody who wants to participate can do so.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to build on the comments of the member for Timmins—James Bay, thank him for bringing this important issue to the floor today, and build on the comments that were made by the minister. I also want to note that I will be sharing my time with the member for Perth—Wellington.

I am standing today to support this NDP motion, and toward the end of my comments I will talk about the specific components of it. What I am hoping to do is share what was a personal journey. Hopefully that will create a better understanding of why our government's apology in 2008 was so important and why a papal apology will also matter.

Some people say that Parliament is asking for an apology and that apologies should come from the heart. Absolutely, apologies should come from the heart, and they can come often. I am hoping that the debate in the House today will be part of what is heard in terms of the decision the Pope will ultimately make.

I also know that we need to respect the independence of religious organizations and their activities; however, I want to note that this is an invitation and an expression of how Parliament feels. An invitation is very different from a direction.

I know we have many survivors from St. Anne's and I want to acknowledge what they have gone through and how connected and troublesome their pasts and histories have been. I think it is important that my comments are going out to the people who perhaps do not understand very intimately what has happened to the survivors and who perhaps have a more limited understanding of the issue.

Like many of us in Canada, I grew up in a suburban middle-class community. As with many new Canadians, our understanding of indigenous culture and the history of the residential schools was

extraordinarily limited. To be frank, back in those days, a university education did little to enhance awareness.

This all changed for me when, as a young nurse of 26 or 27 years old, I was hired in a large first nations community in British Columbia. I look back at that time now as a very unique and intimate privilege that I had when I spent three years as part of that community.

Over those three years, there were many conversations. I want to do a big shout-out to the community health representatives, the NNADAP workers, the court workers, and all those who took me under their wing and wanted to ensure that I understood first-hand not only how the residential school impacted their lives but also how ongoing government policy was so destructive for their people and their community. They knew that for me to do my job effectively, I had to understand their history.

This was 35 years ago, and this conversation was certainly not happening in the broader Canadian public. It is very sad that it has taken so long for us to have these conversations that have been had in the last number of years.

The reason I say it was a unique time is that in the 1980s, the elders of that community had not attended residential schools. As a nurse I was part of the community, and there were four generations. One of the jobs was to visit the elders at their homes to check on their medications. Typically they were working in their large gardens, were off at fish camps, berry-picking, or creating beautiful baskets with the cedar roots that they had dug for, but underlying that there was a deep sadness and a concern.

The concern was for their children who had not come home and for what they saw in their children who had come home and who seemed to be caught in a bit of a vicious and destructive cycle. This was the first generation of children who had been sent away to school.

I always remember the drug and alcohol worker, the NNADAP worker, who talked about his experiences. He talked about how he came home and got lost in alcohol abuse for many years. He talked about how it impacted his children. He talked about how he got sober and then committed his life to helping people deal with their addictions and their pain.

● (1110)

He also had to live with not having provided parenting for his own children, and the loss of some of his children in his life. Then, of course, we had the children's children.

With that experience, I got to witness the magic of the dancing to drums, listening to the stories in the moonlight by the fire, the whole community gathering to support the families after the death of a loved one, many feasts, and also being mercilessly teased for my ineptness with the dabber and bingo sheets. However, this was also a community in pain. On the darker side, in the first week I was there, there were three suicides. I remember clearly the day when three gentlemen went out in a boat; they tipped, and their lives were lost. There was hopelessness, poverty, unemployment, addiction, and overcrowding, and the residential school was very clearly the source of so much pain for that generation and for the generation before them and the generations that came afterward.

Business of Supply

What we have today is a motion that contains three parts. One is to invite an apology. It has been said already today that sometimes an apology has to come in many forms. One of my colleagues said to me that if he did something terribly wrong and said “sorry” to my wife, and she said a week later, “This is still bothering me. We need to talk about how we can make this better”, that relationship is important to him and he would make sure he continued to work toward that relationship and that apology. I see this as being very similar. We need to recognize that it is important.

There are the other two components of the motion, which have been talked about.

Again, what I am saying is focused for the people who might be listening today who do not understand the issue as well as the survivors do. Not everyone can take three years, but I challenge anyone who might be listening and who does not understand the situation to read one of the many books, such as *The Education of Augie Merasty* or *They Called Me Number One*. They should go to see the movie *Indian Horse*, which was recently released. The author, Richard Wagamese, is from my riding. They should attend a powwow or national aboriginal day.

Let us all commit to a better understanding and the continued hard work of reconciliation.

• (1115)

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague, for whom I have enormous respect. We worked so well together over the years.

I want to talk about this being bigger than parties. The minister alluded to it. This is a history of Canada, and everyone has had their part to play.

I want to go back to my remembrance of the apology in Parliament. Being of Scottish background, we have a policy of only crying over battles we lost 300 years ago, and the Leafs. However, I wept when I heard Prime Minister Stephen Harper give that apology. It was such a moving moment, because Parliament was changed that day. Prime Minister Harper thanked Jack Layton for working with the Conservatives to find a way to make this not just an official parliamentary thing but an act of respect for the elders and leaders who came right into Parliament, into the people's House, so he could give that apology directly.

Does my colleague feel we are carrying on that tradition today—that for all the wrong that was done, Parliament is trying now to find a way forward together?

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Madam Speaker, to have the opportunity to truly understand the issue, the pain of the residential schools and the destruction it caused for too many families and communities, we need to look at how we can move forward together. There are many ways. Certainly the apology and the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, as we talked about, are things we are all very proud of.

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the previous speakers and thank the hon. member for her eloquence on this file. It really is a good day for Parliament when we can discuss matters of such importance and

sensitivity. The member for Timmins—James Bay is to be commended for bringing this motion forward.

The key issue here is the request for an apology. An apology, by definition, means a sincere request in connection with an offence that has been committed. For whatever reason, the Catholic Church has chosen not to apologize. At the end of the day, regardless of this motion, presumably it will still not have apologized. I wonder whether the hon. member cares to reflect on the state of affairs if there is either no apology or an apology that may be something less than sincere.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Madam Speaker, of course, none of us can speculate on what will come from today's motion. However, I think apologies need to come from the heart. They need to matter.

The Prime Minister has asked for an apology. Some of my colleagues have expressed concerns. They believe that an apology should be offered, but should Parliament even have to ask that question? That is a reasonable comment, and I think the issue of it coming from the heart is absolutely critical.

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her leadership in our caucus and in our movement on this file. I want to recommend to parliamentarians as well a book called *Stolen from our Embrace*, written by Chief Ernie Crey, from my riding. He was a survivor himself and lost one of his sisters on the Pickton farm as part of that cycle of despair that came out of the residential schools.

I want the member to talk about the intergenerational nature of this. This was not something that ended a while ago and is not still having an impact. Perhaps she can touch on how this is still impacting communities today.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Madam Speaker, having had the extraordinary privilege of sitting down with elders who did not attend residential schools and then witnessed three generations that came after that suffered the enormous impact, I think it is going to be an extreme challenge for us to continue to do this very important work to help communities heal.

• (1120)

Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to begin by thanking our colleague, the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, for her eloquent words on this matter and for sharing her personal story in connection with this important issue. I would like to thank as well the member for Timmins—James Bay for bringing forward this motion today and giving this House the opportunity to debate this important matter.

As Canadians, we rightly have much to be proud of. We have a proud history and a great record of accomplishments, whether they be in the military, science, technology, sports, or medicine. However, while we celebrate our successes as a nation, we must also recognize and acknowledge the times we have failed. During our history, we have done wrong. The institutions established by past governments were responsible for great harm and great pain, and it is for this reason that I will be supporting the motion brought forward today by the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay.

Business of Supply

The residential schools were a horrific, dark mark and chapter in our Canadian history. The numbers themselves are appalling. One hundred and fifty thousand first nations, Inuit, and Métis children were removed from their homes, removed from their communities, and forced to attend these schools, and thousands of them died.

In 2008, in this place, Prime Minister Stephen Harper officially apologized for the Government of Canada's role in the Indian residential schools. At that time, he said:

The Government of Canada built an educational system in which very young children were often forcibly removed from their homes and often taken far from their communities.

Many were inadequately fed, clothed and housed. All were deprived of the care and nurturing of their parents, grandparents and communities.

First nations, Inuit and Métis languages and cultural practices were prohibited in these schools.

Tragically, some of these children died while attending residential schools, and others never returned home [again].

I was struck by the comment about the languages. I have the privilege of serving as a member of the procedure and House affairs committee. We are currently undertaking a study of the use of indigenous languages in this place, and it was interesting to hear testimony from different witnesses about indigenous languages and their vitality in the current age. According to UNESCO, from one of the witnesses who appeared before us, of the 90 indigenous languages it surveyed, 23 were deemed to be vulnerable, five were definitely endangered, 27 were severely endangered, and 35 indigenous languages were critically endangered. Much of this endangerment to these languages stems from the fact that so many indigenous children were prohibited from using their languages after they were sent away to residential schools. This was wrong, and it was acknowledged that it was wrong in 2008 when the official apology was issued.

In 2007, the former Conservative government established a truth and reconciliation process and a commission as part of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, and it recognized that the Indian residential school system had a profound, lasting, and damaging impact on so many aspects of indigenous culture, heritage, and language.

In 2015, the commission released its report, entitled "What We Have Learned: Principles of Truth and Reconciliation". In this report, the commission outlined a number of principles of reconciliation. It is pertinent to the debate today to highlight a couple of those principles of reconciliation. The report states:

Reconciliation is a process of healing of relationships that requires public truth sharing, apology, and commemoration that acknowledge and redress past harms.

● (1125)

The commission goes on to state, in point 10, that:

Reconciliation requires sustained public education and dialogue, including youth engagement, about the history and legacy of residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal rights, as well as the historical and contemporary contributions of Aboriginal peoples to Canadian society.

I hope that today's debate will contribute to that reconciliation.

I would note that efforts at reconciliation happen across our country. In my community of Perth—Wellington last summer, Stratford Summer Music, a great cultural institution in our riding, highlighted some of the indigenous musical and cultural practices

that are so important, and it was able to share that with so many in our community. I thank the organizers for taking that important step.

Today's motion is divided into three key points. The first part of the motion is that the Pope be invited to participate in the journey. As we have already heard so many times this morning, this is a journey. It is not an end location but a journey and a process.

Reconciliation is not easy. It requires many difficult conversations and reflections by individuals, organizations, groups, religious entities, and, indeed, government. As Conservatives, we believe that any group or institution that had a significant role in the residential school system should apologize and help ensure that Canada moves toward reconciliation. Many have already done so. This part of the motion stems from call to action 58 from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which reads:

We call upon the Pope to issue an apology to Survivors, their families, and communities for the Roman Catholic Church's role in the spiritual, cultural, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children in Catholic-run residential schools. We call for that apology to be similar to the 2010 apology issued to Irish victims of abuse and to occur within one year of the issuing of this Report and to be delivered by the Pope in Canada.

The second part of the motion calls on the Catholic Church to respect its "moral obligation and the spirit of the 2006 Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement and resume best efforts to raise the full amount of the agreed upon funds". Under that agreement, \$25 million would be provided for programs to aid in the healing of survivors. As has been mentioned earlier and has been well reported in *The Globe and Mail*, a miscommunication between a federal government lawyer and counsel for the Catholic Church led to the church believing that it could walk away from this commitment. This is a profoundly unfortunate error. While the Church may not have a legal obligation, I believe we can all agree that there is no question that there is an urgent moral obligation. Certainly money alone will not heal the pain. Money and an apology will not fix all the problems, but it is an important acknowledgement.

Indeed, last year, our colleagues on the indigenous and northern affairs committee completed a difficult study on the suicide and mental health crisis that far too many indigenous communities are facing. Many witnesses spoke of the intergenerational trauma that has overwhelmed the limited services available.

The report, at page 29, states:

Substance use and mental illness were identified by witnesses as factors which contribute to mental health issues and suicide, affecting youth and their parents. Some discussed substance use as a means to cope with unresolved trauma due to residential school, experiences of abuse or violence, or to forget about difficult living conditions such [as] poor housing or hunger.

This funding and these resources are still needed.

The third point talks about "a consistent and sustained effort to turn over relevant documents when called upon by survivors of residential schools, their families, and scholars". Again, we believe that these documents will help survivors, their families, and researchers find answers to long-unanswered questions. If it helps in some way to find closure, if it helps in some way with reconciliation, if it helps in some way with healing, we believe that this should be done.

Business of Supply

I am pleased to speak in favour of this motion today. I am pleased to vote in favour of this motion. I hope that it will, in some way, help to further reconciliation with Canada's indigenous communities.

• (1130)

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, in some ways when we speak in this institution, Parliament, our voice can be more powerful than that of the government. The government becomes the government by virtue of the fact that it is made up of the party with the most seats in the House, but collectively, each one of these 338 seats in here represents every single geographic area of Canada.

I am wondering if the member could comment on how powerful it would be if the House of Commons could speak with a unanimous voice and deliver this message on behalf of the people of Canada.

Mr. John Nater: Madam Speaker, the member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford is right. We as parliamentarians do not speak just for ourselves. We speak for the 100,000 constituents that we represent, and collectively, we speak for the 35 million Canadians who live in this great country.

As Canadians and as parliamentarians, we all have a role to play in reconciliation. We all have a role to play in ensuring that the proper services, the proper funding, the proper resources are available to those who have survived the residential school system, those who have suffered because of the harms of the system.

One of the reasons the residential school apology in 2008 was so powerful was that it was truly endorsed by all members of the House and by all political parties. That apology acknowledged that as a government, as a country, we did wrong. It was a simple acknowledgement that we did not live up to our obligations as a country and as a society. As the House, as the place where we meet, it is our duty to do so.

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, two-thirds of the 130 residential schools in Canada were run by the Catholic Church, and all other denominations that were involved in residential schools have apologized.

In 2010, a papal apology was issued to Irish victims of sexual abuse. In 2015, Pope Francis apologized in Bolivia to the indigenous peoples of the Americas for the grave sins of colonialism.

The voices of Canadians are strong. Individuals that form the Catholic Church in Canada are strong. Would my colleague join me in asking all of them to call for a papal apology?

Mr. John Nater: Madam Speaker, my response is yes. Any institution, the Catholic Church, the entities involved with it, any institution that had a significant role to play in Indian residential schools in Canada must issue an apology. They must issue an apology for the harms that were done. It is important that this apology happen to allow for further reconciliation.

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciated the recap the member gave about the residential schools. It is important to get back to that.

As a father, I often ask myself how I would have reacted and how my life would have changed if my son had been taken from me and horrible things done to him in a residential school setting. I know the

member is a proud father as well. I wonder if the member would have been as polite as today's motion is in inviting someone to apologize should that kind of harm have come to any of his children in such a school setting.

Mr. John Nater: Madam Speaker, the member for Chilliwack—Hope has raised an important point. I would not be nearly quite as polite as the motion is.

We are talking about 150,000 kids. I cannot put into words the feelings of the parents who had their children forcibly taken away from them, the other siblings and other family members, and in so many cases never to see them again. It is tough to put into words how that would affect someone.

It is so important now that we move forward with a reconciliation to try to at least provide some element of closure, some element of acknowledgement.

• (1135)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Resuming debate, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs.

[*Translation*]

The member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue on a point of order.

Ms. Christine Moore: Madam Speaker, would it be possible to check the rotation? We heard from the member for Timmins—James Bay, then from the minister and two Conservative members. I think it would normally be the NDP's turn next, but unfortunately I was not recognized, so I would like to know what is going on with the rotation.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I will look into it. In the meantime, we will continue with the speech already in progress, but we will come back to this.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs has the floor.

[*English*]

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to acknowledge that we are on the traditional territory of the Algonquin people. I would also like to acknowledge the member for Timmins—James Bay, who has brought forward an important motion. I also want to commend the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, who has been a strong leader in all indigenous issues in our country, especially for those recommendations that were included in the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

As an indigenous woman and a proud Canadian, how happy I am to be a member of a government that has made it clear that it is determined to build a new relationship with indigenous people based on the recognition of rights, respect, co-operation, and partnership.

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However, Canada also understands that it cannot move forward in full partnership with indigenous people and make progress on a national journey of reconciliation without first acknowledging the wrongs of the past. To truly advance nation-to-nation, crown-Inuit, and government-to-government relationships, we must recognize the historical past of our country and try to make amends for the wrongs that were suffered by so many indigenous people. All Canadians must be part of this process, the process of changing the future of this country for the better, and for everyone who lives here.

In order to move forward with reconciliation, we must also understand the role of residential schools in our history. It was a historic day in the House of Commons when the former prime minister apologized to residential school survivors in Canada here in this very chamber. However, at that time, as excited and happy as I and Canadians whom I represent were, we certainly felt excluded because Newfoundland and Labrador residential school survivors were excluded from that apology.

• (1140)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry, but I just want to interrupt the member.

There appears to have been a technical issue, so if the hon. parliamentary secretary would allow me, I would like to recognize the member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue on debate, and I will come back to the hon. parliamentary secretary later.

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Madam Speaker, for clarity, when the speaking rotation returns, I would expect to have my full time to be able to—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): For your speech, yes.

[*Translation*]

I apologize to the hon. member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue for the mistake.

The hon. member can begin her speech.

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Madam Speaker, as we have just seen, it is easy to apologize when we are willing and able to acknowledge our mistakes. Thank you for the apology. I should mention that I will be sharing my time with the member for Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River.

Today, we are debating an important motion, which contains three key words for understanding the essence of the motion itself. Those words are “truth”, “reconciliation”, and “healing”.

Getting to the truth is one of the major problems experienced by many indigenous residential school survivors. Sadly, even today, many Catholic institutions still refuse to grant access to documents about their operations and what happened in the residential schools. Their refusal to make this information available is extremely detrimental. It is also incomprehensible to many Catholics, because the truth is a central tenet of Catholicism and a core value for all Catholics. There is a reason why lying is considered to be a sin.

If these entities were to allow access to these documents, it could really help people from various communities understand the situation and why things were done that way. Terrible things happened in residential schools. Many members have talked about

that. Mothers and fathers do not know where their children are buried, for example. Having access to those documents could help them finally find out the truth and would fill in a missing part of their family's history.

As I said before, what happened in the residential schools is unspeakable, and the effects are still being felt today. Young people in indigenous communities are still feeling the effects. Children were taken away from their parents, and residential school survivors have had trouble developing parenting skills and remembering how to raise children according to their traditions. Not enough time has passed by to make any generation forget the residential schools and what they were about.

These were all tragic and terrible events. These people cannot move on unless they get an apology. When the Conservatives were in office, prime minister Harper apologized in the House on behalf of the government. That apology was made in co-operation with the party leaders at the time, particularly Mr. Layton, who offered his advice about how important an apology was for many residential school survivors.

Religion is still very important for many indigenous seniors who were raised in the Catholic Church. It has strong roots in indigenous communities. I have been to funerals where many indigenous seniors were in attendance. I saw how important their faith was to them. An apology from the Pope on behalf of the Catholic Church would mean a lot to them and would help them to move on to reconciliation and healing.

Through reconciliation, people are able to accept that, although what happened to them will unfortunately always be part of their lives, they can move on.

• (1145)

It is an extremely difficult part of the process that requires a great deal of work. Acknowledgement of what happened in the past and an apology would help people to move on to the healing stage. Healing is an extremely important part of the Algonquin traditions in my community. The Pope's acknowledgement of past events would go a long way to helping elders in indigenous communities feel supported and understood.

I am therefore calling on all members in the House to put themselves in the shoes of the traumatized residential school victims. Sadly, some members in the House are among those victims and can attest to what they experienced. Many of them can clearly articulate why a papal apology is so important.

Business of Supply

Personally, I am a Catholic. I was baptized. I never expected the progress we have seen under Pope Francis. He has talked about homosexuals. I hope that Pope Francis will understand what we are asking for and offer an apology. I have seen him venture into territory that I never would have expected him to have the courage to enter into. I am hopeful that he will apologize if the House sends him a unanimous message and clearly explains why it is so important for the indigenous peoples in our ridings. It would be a significant step toward truth and reconciliation. It is not always easy to get an apology, but in this situation a united front would send a clear message. I hope that every one of us understands that it is important for the victims to turn the page.

We often talk about physical and psychological healing, but spiritual healing is extremely important. I sincerely believe that spiritual hearing, for all those who are still Roman Catholic, requires a papal apology. It would help them heal and reconcile with their faith. Many sick seniors are asking for this apology, and I sincerely believe that by receiving it before they die, they will be able to live out their last days in peace.

For Canada in general, this apology would signify that the Pope acknowledges the events of the past and understands what indigenous people went through. Although the means we use may be different, I believe that we all want to embrace truth and reconciliation. I sincerely hope that we are ready to rise to ask for this apology in the hope that the Pope is listening and will understand the message of indigenous peoples.

• (1150)

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her comments.

This is a very special day. Although we are used to debates in the House, I have the distinct impression and even the certainty that there has been true dialogue this morning. Not only is there a consensus, but there is near unanimity on this motion.

We have near unanimity on a motion asking for an official papal apology for the reasons mentioned and calling on the Catholic Church to recognize its obligations. Therefore, as parliamentarians, what further gesture of support should we make in addition to voting for this motion? I am talking about a gesture of support and not a request.

Ms. Christine Moore: Madam Speaker, one simple way to show support is to take the time to listen to the stories of elders in our indigenous communities, to really listen. That is not always easy. Those stories may make us cry, but it is important to be present, to listen to the stories, and to give elders as much time as they need. All parliamentarians can engage in the simple act of opening our hearts to what happened and reaching out to those communities for reconciliation.

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have been listening very closely to my colleagues' stories since this debate started. It is interesting to see a consensus emerging. Today we will witness a very important moment in the history of Parliament.

Parliament has done its part by officially apologizing on several occasions, but as my colleagues have aptly demonstrated, the government and the Catholic Church were complicit in the

residential schools saga, so I feel it is important to say that this involves all of us as parliamentarians. There is no reserve in my riding, so I cannot talk about my constituents' experiences like my colleague did. However, we each have a responsibility here.

Since my colleague lives in a riding that is also home to indigenous people, what message does she have for all those members who, like me, represent a riding with no indigenous community but still feel that this concerns them and want to be part of what we are doing here today?

Ms. Christine Moore: Madam Speaker, we need to recognize the contributions made by indigenous communities. If they had not been there when Abitibi—Témiscamingue was settled, it is likely that none of my ancestors would have survived and I would not be in the House today.

We are here today because indigenous peoples have done so much for us from the time Canada was founded. By recognizing the historical impact they have had on all our lives, we can better understand why it is so important to issue an apology for what was done to them. They made many sacrifices to help us in the past, and we betrayed them atrociously.

An apology by Pope Francis is something that is definitely missing, but, besides that, there is still a lot of work to be done towards reconciliation. The next step is to formally ask Pope Francis for an apology, to continue the reconciliation process, and to recognize how much indigenous communities have contributed and helped us become what we are today.

• (1155)

[English]

Ms. Georgina Jolibois (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, NDP): Madam Speaker, today I rise not only in support of my colleagues in the New Democratic Party, but also as the representative for the Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River riding, as a Dene woman with friends and family who survived the residential schools system, and as a practising Catholic who is calling upon the leader of her church to apologize.

Before beginning, I would like to thank the survivors of the families of St. Anne's Residential School for being in Ottawa to join us on this day.

Today we speak as politicians, inviting the Pope to join our process of reconciliation, but no voice is more important than that of the survivors. If Canadians are to take any message away from the proceedings today, let it be the voices of the survivors who have spoken up and want the process of reconciliation to move forward in a positive way. Let it be the voices of survivors and their families that are heard loudest today. I thank them for being here. *Masi chok.*

Business of Supply

As I am sure the members of the House are aware, His Holiness Pope Francis has decided he can not personally apologize for the systemic racism experienced by survivors and victims of residential schools. The decision by Pope Francis is incredibly disheartening to me, the people in my riding, first nations, Inuit, Métis, Catholics, and people from all across Canada. The pain carried by the survivors today is real. It is in the spirit of moving forward, of relieving that suffering, and building a relationship based on love and understanding that we invite the Pope join us and to reconsider.

As I said, I am a practising Catholic woman. I have very fond memories of growing up in the church and participating in the church-led community programs. The church is incredibly important to folks in Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River. Not only does it provide a sense of unity among our small communities, but the space the church creates gives us a gathering place to join together and help our communities. The Catholic church back home gives spaces for families to celebrate, mourn, rejoice, and forgive. It runs summer camps, community drives, food banks, and hosts garage sales. All of this is in addition to the regular Sunday mass and daily church services.

Furthermore, because our communities are so isolated from the rest of Canada, we can find common ground with folks in the big cities through the practice of our faith. At the end of the day, we all belong to the same Catholic family.

In 1987, the people of Fort Simpson in the Northwest Territories were ecstatic for the visit from Pope John Paul II. The Pope's visit to the Catholic Dene community was thrilling and showed that we were members of the same community.

Whether one walks the halls of the Vatican adorned by artistic masterpieces or looks at the drawings one's children made on the refrigerator, our shared belief humbles us and returns us to our sense of belonging in God's love. Even though Catholic Canadians live far apart and our communities are quite different, we are all united through our shared faith.

While I was not there that day in Fort Simpson, I did have the privilege to see the Pope in 1993 in Denver, Colorado. For several days that summer, I led a group of youth from northern Saskatchewan communities to World Youth Day, and we met young Catholics from across the globe. We shared stories, shared pieces of our homes, and prayed together. It was a moving experience, and I think back to those days and remember how the experience changed my life.

For that reason, I hope Pope Francis accepts the invitation to come and visit Canadians. I know how life changing seeing one's spiritual leader can be. In his visit here, I hope the Pope will acknowledge the influence of Catholic spirituality on the lives of survivors, and that he will apologize on behalf of the Catholic Church to the families and survivors of those who experienced the tragedy that was the Indian residential school program.

I would like to emphasize my appreciation for the Pope and Catholic Bishops of Canada in considering the invitation from the Prime Minister. Back in my riding, we have a very strong relationship with the archbishop. I hope they view the motion today

as a meaningful and earnest request to include the Pope in our process of reconciliation.

• (1200)

I understand the position the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops has communicated through its message to us a few weeks ago. I hope it will take the time to reconsider and support us by listening to the stories we have heard today.

I have heard from many of the families and the survivors of residential day schools and boarding schools in Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River. Their message is clear: if we, as a faith-based community, want to move forward in reconciliation, then we must continue to ask for an apology and have the documents we need so that the truth can come out.

It is not easy to move on from the statement put out by the Catholic bishops. I was frustrated and disappointed, like many friends and family back home, that the Pope decided he could not personally apologize. I hope that the bishops and the Pope understand our persistence. The indigenous families and survivors in my riding, many of whom are practising Catholics, turn to our spiritual leader for guidance and advice. However, without an apology, without hearing the words come from the Pope himself, we feel no sense of closure. That is why we ask this directly now. Will the Pope respond to call to action 58 from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and issue a formal papal apology for the role of the Canadian Catholic Church in the establishment, operation, and abuses of the residential schools?

Now that the truth and stories of the residential school program are public knowledge, meaning that Canadian society at large knows at least something about residential schools, we all have an obligation to acknowledge in some way the role of the institutions and social systems, which we are a part of, that were complicit in allowing the abuses and the elimination of culture to happen.

I call upon the Pope to acknowledge his position as a historic figure and to apologize on behalf of those who came before him. I invite the Pope, in his capacity as the leader of the present-day Church, to apologize. I call upon the Pope to understand, as the spiritual leader for young Catholics, that in residential schools it was to our God that students appealed for salvation and hope, only for salvation and hope to be forgotten.

I know that the Catholics in Saskatchewan would appreciate an apology from the leader of their church. An apology at this level is not unprecedented, so our request is not unreasonable. Previous popes apologized for Catholic abuse in Ireland in 2010. They apologized to the indigenous peoples of the Americas for colonization in 2015 and to the victims of abuse in Chile just this past year. An apology now would be no different and would provide the same reassurance and respect owed to the victims and survivors in Canada.

Business of Supply

We are all on this road to reconciliation together. However, to move forward down this road, we need to know the pathways from which we came. Survivors of residential schools need co-operation from the Church and its entities so they can see their own documents. Scholars should have access to historical documents where appropriate. Everyone in this country, both our current and future generations, should have access to the full record of what happened in the residential school system. I invite the Pope to share the documents the Church has with regard to residential schools. I invite all people in Canada to read and understand the knowledge that has been gathered already and to stay aware of the information that has yet to be shared.

I reiterate that our request is made out of the deepest respect and reverence for the members of the Church, the bishops, and the Pope. At this point in the reconciliation process, we know that finger-pointing and laying blame only breeds hostility and further divides those on all sides of reconciliation. Instead, we invite the Pope and all Catholics, in the spirit of moving forward, to join us in reconciling the past. Sharing our knowledge, expressing remorse, participating in dialogue, and listening to survivors are meaningful ways to move forward together as a society and as a community united by our common faith.

•(1205)

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for her speech, made ever more eloquent by the fact that she is a practising Catholic, and may I even say a disappointed Catholic. I am not a Catholic. In fact, my ancestors were so upset with the Catholic Church they all became Protestants, which means protest-ants.

I want to talk about the day after this motion passes. It is pretty obvious that there is almost unanimity in the chamber. The key issue is the request for a papal apology. It is pretty clear that at this point, the papal apology is not going to be forthcoming. The member used the word “finger-pointing”, and there is some element of that in our conversation today. The question becomes this. Does this conversation, which I think is an important one, move us further along the path of reconciliation, or does it, in effect, freeze us in place or move us back from reconciliation?

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: Mr. Speaker, for the process of reconciliation to occur for all survivors, families, friends, communities, everyone in Canada and around the world, the Catholic Church, the Anglican Church, the United Church, and the list goes on, it is significant that we continue to talk. However, beyond talking, we need action. That is why we are having the debate today.

We are asking, I am asking, as an indigenous woman from northern Saskatchewan, on behalf of my constituents, that the Pope come to Canada. I am also asking, as the MP for Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, that the Pope visit us, as Pope John Paul II did, and issue an apology. I think everyone in Canada, as well as all the churches and all the survivors, has a role to play in reconciliation.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague on her very thoughtful comments today.

The NDP has chosen to focus on one call to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, obviously in response to some disappointing news a few weeks ago. I wonder if she could comment on the tracking of the progress being made on all 94 calls to action. Perhaps she could speak briefly about movement on the other areas of the 94 for which the federal government is directly responsible.

Ms. Georgina Jolibois: Mr. Speaker, I will answer the question in different areas. As an indigenous woman from northern Saskatchewan, as a Dene woman, and when I speak my language, Dene Tsuut'ina, in my community, I think Canada has made very little progress when it comes to reconciliation. We see evidence of that in the justice system. Families continue to be hurt. Funding is cut to first nations. The 2% cap the Prime Minister promised to cut is still in place. In reserves across Canada, infrastructure for drinking water is still an issue. There are issues around housing for first nations, employment, and youth opportunities, and the list goes on. Canada has so much work to do in apologizing and working with first nations, Métis, and Inuit families across Canada. I will leave it there.

•(1210)

Mr. Dan Vandal (Saint Boniface—Saint Vital, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a great honour to rise in this chamber, as it always is, to speak in favour of this important motion. I would like to thank my colleague from Timmins—James Bay for putting this important motion forward as well as for his powerful commentary earlier this morning.

Before I begin, I would like to note that I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Labrador, with whom I serve on the indigenous caucus and who has devoted her life to advancing indigenous rights and reconciliation.

Reconciliation is a complex, extremely significant process, in which I believe every Canadian has a role to play. Reconciliation to me begins with respect. We must respect each other's cultures, languages, traditions, and distinct identities to advance toward reconciliation.

[*Translation*]

Reconciliation is the reason for this debate today. The Prime Minister stated in 2015 that, in partnership with indigenous communities, the provinces, territories, and other vital partners, he planned to fully implement the calls to action issued by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. I know that, as a government, we still remain committed to fulfilling this promise, and we must do so correctly.

Not all the calls to action will be easy or quick to implement. We must not treat the calls to action as simply a checklist, but rather a true pathway to reconciliation.

[*English*]

The Prime Minister committed to working with all other important partners in completing these calls to action, which include the Catholic Church and the Pope. Call to action 58, in the Truth and Reconciliation report, is very clear and deliberate in its request:

Business of Supply

We call upon the Pope to issue an apology to Survivors, their families, and communities for the Roman Catholic Church's role in the spiritual, cultural, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children in Catholic-run residential schools.

Our Prime Minister has worked diligently to try to secure this apology from the Church. He requested the apology personally from the Pope while in a private audience. It is unfortunate that in the last few weeks we have seen a reluctance on the part of the Church to issue such an apology.

I would like to focus the short time I have to speak on the process of healing that our communities must go through to work toward reconciliation. It is important to remind people of the history of residential schools and of the cultural genocide that was undertaken by the Government of Canada through its various policies and laws, all with the aim of destroying indigenous peoples' spirituality and individual cultures.

Residential schools were one such tool of genocide and were designed to "kill the Indian in the child". The role of the Catholic Church and other Christian faiths in the schools is undeniable. While they were funded by the federal government, they were run almost exclusively by churches and religious orders. The schools were created because of the government and churches' belief that indigenous children had to be indoctrinated into Euro-Canadian and Christian ways of living as a means of assimilating into mainstream Canadian culture.

Indigenous children were not allowed to speak their language or to practise their spiritual and traditional customs. For many students, their ancestral spirituality was forcibly replaced with Christianity.

When speaking about residential schools, we often neglect to speak about the impact of the forced assimilation to Christianity and the loss of traditional spiritual teachings. Unsurprisingly, Christianity and its teachings were a fundamental aspect of residential schools by virtue of the fact that they were administered and run by churches and religious orders. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report references the spiritual violence the students endured at the schools. The report states that the Christian teachers saw the students as pagans who were inferior humans in need of being raised up through Christianity. Students were taught to reject the traditional spiritual traditions and beliefs of their families and communities in favour of Christian religions.

• (1215)

The Aboriginal Justice Inquiry of Manitoba, which I believe was completed in the late eighties, also wrote about the impact of the forced spiritual assimilation in residential schools, citing Grand Chief Dave Courchene Sr., who said, "Residential schools taught self-hate. That is child abuse.... Too many of our people got the message and passed it on."

The report of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry also said:

Many Aboriginal grandparents and parents today are products of the residential school system. The development of parenting skills, normally a significant aspect of their training as children within Aboriginal families, was denied to them by the fact that they were removed from their families and communities, and by the lack of attention paid to the issue by residential schools. Parenting skills neither were observed nor taught in those institutions. Aboriginal children traditionally learned their parenting skills from their parents through example and daily direction. That learning process was denied to several generations of aboriginal parents.

The abuse and forced assimilation have led to intergenerational trauma, which is the lasting legacy of the residential school system. By removing children from their traditional family structures and subjecting them to violence, abuse, and forced assimilation into Euro-Canadian values and cultures, a cycle of abuse was created, which is still affecting far too many indigenous families today. The abuse the children faced in residential schools is as undeniable as it is shockingly cruel and undeserved. These young first nation, Inuit, and Métis children deserved far more from government.

This leads me back to reconciliation and the need to heal our communities and our people. It is only through healing and full reconciliation that we will be able to bring peace to indigenous communities and break the cycle of violence that we too frequently see.

We can do our part as government in helping to revitalize indigenous culture by empowering and giving the necessary tools to indigenous people to learn about their own culture, language, and traditional spiritual beliefs. However, the government cannot replace the simple power of an apology when it comes to healing. The government has formally apologized for its role, but it was not the only institution responsible. All actors must now apologize for their role in these schools, just as the Protestant churches have done previously.

[*Translation*]

It is vital to take a survivor-oriented approach to healing. We need to listen to residential school survivors and their families when making decisions about reconciliation. That is what the members of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada did, and that is what led to the commission's report and the calls to action.

These calls to action reflect not only the survivors' wishes, but their needs. They take into account what survivors need to make the journey to healing.

[*English*]

In closing, it is very clear that the survivors are requesting an apology and the survivors deserve an apology. That is why I am supporting the motion today, to call on the Pope to issue a formal apology to the residential schools survivors and their families.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the debate we are having today and the very specific nature of the debate, but I want to look at the larger picture. There were 94 calls to action, and the Liberal government committed to moving forward on all 94, about 45 of which, I believe, are under the direct jurisdiction of the federal government. Today, we are talking about something that we hope to encourage, but there are 45 recommendations that the Liberal government has committed to.

Business of Supply

If my colleague looks at the CBC tracker in terms of the job the Liberals are doing, he will see that there are many on which there has been no action, and the Liberals have had a number of years. I would not want to see communities disappointed again by an enormous commitment but little on the delivery.

I am wondering if the member could speak to what his government intends to do to make good on its promise, which, to date, it is clearly failing on.

●(1220)

Mr. Dan Vandal: Mr. Speaker, I do not accept the assumptions of that question. I do not believe we are failing on the calls to action. There were 94 calls to action. Our Prime Minister and our government are fully committed to implementing all of them, and we are taking on some very significant recommendations as we speak. I sit on the indigenous and northern affairs committee. Right now, we are debating the merits of UNDRIP. We are having a very significant discussion, with many legal experts coming forward. We believe that UNDRIP is a significant enough recommendation. We have to take the time to do it properly. It would be impossible to do all 94 calls to action within the first mandate, so this is a process that is going to continue well into the second mandate.

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize the member's experience as a member of the Métis nation from the homeland that he represents here in Parliament.

One of the most troubling points of reconciliation is that we tend to look backwards to see our mistakes, as opposed to realizing them in real life and in real time. Not just the Catholic Church, but social institutions still remove children from families and from communities, still separate children from their culture, and do it in a way that may be bathed in good intention, as I am sure previous generations thought they were doing the right thing. There is a lack of recognition of that and of the impact of those tragedies that unfold day by day, a lack of change on that file. Tina Fontaine's name is perhaps at the top of the list right now.

I wonder if the member, being a member of Parliament from Manitoba in particular, could reflect on the fact that as we ask for an apology from the Catholic Church, we also need to demand better of our own social institutions right across this country, whether it be municipal, provincial, or federal, as the colonialism continues in many people's lives.

Mr. Dan Vandal: Absolutely, Mr. Speaker. I am ashamed to say that in the province I come from, Manitoba, there are well over 10,000 indigenous children in the care of child and family services. That embarrasses me. We should all be collectively ashamed of that fact.

This is a priority for our government. Through the Minister of Indigenous Services, we have put forward a plan to partner with the provincial government and with indigenous child welfare organizations to turn that around. At the end of the day, it is not government that is going to do that. It is the people on the street. It is the people on the ground. It is the families and communities throughout our country, including Manitoba. Therefore, we need to put maybe even half of the dollars into prevention rather than apprehension. We need

to put a significant amount of money into community development, to develop those young parents, those young fathers and mothers, and really build capacity within indigenous communities across the country.

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I would like to acknowledge that we are on the traditional territory of the Algonquin people.

I would like to acknowledge the member for Timmins—James Bay, who has brought forward an important motion to the House of Commons today. I would also like to commend the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, who has been a strong leader on all indigenous issues in the country.

As an indigenous woman myself and as a Canadian, I am very proud to be part of a government that has made clear its determination to build a new relationship with indigenous people that is based on recognition of rights, respect, co-operation, and partnership. However, Canada also understands that it cannot move forward in full partnership with indigenous people and make progress on the national journey of reconciliation without first acknowledging the wrongs of the past. To truly advance the nation-to-nation, Inuit-to-crown, and government-to-government relationships, we must recognize the historical past of our country and try to make amends for the wrongs that were suffered by indigenous people. All Canadians must be part of this process of changing the future of this country for the better, for everyone who lives here.

To move forward with reconciliation, we must also understand the role of residential schools in our history. That is why the former prime minister apologized to the survivors of residential schools in this country, and did so right here in this chamber. However, at that time, my constituents were excluded, and I remember the hurt they suffered during that period. That is why, on November 24, 2017 in Happy Valley—Goose Bay, the current Prime Minister delivered an official apology on behalf of the Government of Canada and all Canadians to former students of Newfoundland and Labrador residential schools and their families.

Children in my riding were taken from their homes, from their families, and from communities like Cartwright, Black Tickle, Goose Bay, Hopedale, Makkovik, Nain, Natuashish, North West River, Postville, Rigolet, and so many other parts of our province. Children were isolated from their families, uprooted from their communities, and stripped of their identity. They were subjected to abuse. They were punished for speaking their own language and prohibited from practising their own culture.

The consequences of colonialism have been felt far beyond the walls of these schools. They have persisted from generation to generation and continue to be felt today by so many Canadians: so many in my own riding, and so many more across the country. These are the hard truths that are part of our country's history. These are the hard truths that we have to confront as a society and as parliamentarians.

Business of Supply

An apology not only is the first step toward healing and closure, but it provides a profound opportunity for people to forgive. That apology must be sincere and honest, and it must acknowledge the hurt and the pain that have been done. Of the 130 residential schools in this country, one third were owned and operated by the Catholic Church. It is about assuring survivors that their experiences will not be forgotten. It is time to make things right, accept responsibility, and acknowledge the failings so that survivors can finally begin to heal.

I was in Happy Valley—Goose Bay on the day when the Prime Minister delivered an official apology on behalf of the Government of Canada and all Canadians to those in that room and the many other former students of Newfoundland and Labrador residential schools and their families. I was surrounded by so many of my friends, including my mother, who is a survivor of residential schools.

● (1225)

That apology was heartfelt, it was sincere, and it was real. It was about understanding and feeling the pain and the suffering that had been inflicted on so many in this country. It was about feeling the emotion.

The moving words from survivor Toby Obed showed the real power of an apology. He told those gathered that day in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, “This apology is an important part of the healing. Today the survivors in Newfoundland and Labrador, we can finally feel part of the community of survivors nationwide across Canada. We have connected with the rest of Canada. We got our apology.”

Those were the words of Toby Obed, a residential school survivor, in finally receiving the words of the Prime Minister of Canada, “We are sorry. We are truly sorry for what has happened to you and so many others.”

We know that the delay in that apology caused greater pain and suffering. The absence of an apology in recognizing experiences has been an impediment to healing and reconciliation for long enough.

Over the past years, there has been a shift in the way that this country and this government views its relationships with indigenous peoples, but that is not by accident. That shift is led by our Prime Minister and indigenous and non-indigenous Canadians all over this country. This is a pivotal time. This is an opportunity to create real change to ensure that indigenous communities are engaged and that there is a genuine desire among Canadians to see things change.

I want to mention the minister's special representative, James Igloliorte, who is a retired provincial judge, a former class member of residential schools, an Inuk man, who has been a lifetime resident in Labrador. I want to acknowledge and thank him for the work that he has done around residential schools with so many people in my riding.

As a government, we recognize that the intergenerational harms that have been caused by residential schools and the consequences of colonialization continue to be felt by so many people. We cannot change the past, but we can right past wrongs for a better future. We ask the Catholic Church and the Pope to be a part of that process, as so many of their loyal followers in this country have already done person to person, individual to individual.

As the Prime Minister stated on November 24, 2017, in his speech:

Let this day mark the beginning of a new chapter in our history – one in which we vow to never forget the harm we have caused you and vow to renew our relationship.

Let this new chapter be one in which Indigenous and non-Indigenous people build the future they want together.

Those are the words of our Prime Minister. That is this government's mission. That has been the work of reconciliation of all Canadians.

There are so many people out there today who felt such a tremendous awakening within them with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. It was born out of a negotiated settlement and an agreement that included compensation for survivors. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, in all of its calls to action, aimed to create a better society for all of us in this country, and call to action 58 called upon the Pope to issue an apology to residential school survivors and to their families and communities.

● (1230)

We continue to believe that an apology from the Pope on behalf of the Catholic Church, as he has done for others in the world, is a very important step in acknowledging the past and moving towards reconciliation.

Canada has apologized for its role in residential schools. We expect others to do the same and to do so with sincerity, speaking words of truth and allowing the journey towards a new chapter to continue for all people.

● (1235)

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the speech by the parliamentary secretary. These opposition day motions can be fleeting moments in time, but based on the speeches I have heard today, there is a consensus in this House among all the parties that getting behind this motion is important. When the vote comes on Tuesday of next week, I hope that we find a unanimous voice in this chamber to give it the force that it truly deserves.

In previous exchanges, it was noted that just the passage of this motion may not end in a papal apology. Would the member not agree that as members of Parliament and as leaders in our respective communities, it is incumbent upon us to use the spotlight that we have shone on this issue today and continue in the weeks and months ahead to engage with our constituents and to engage with the Catholic community? I know there are some very progressive Catholic voices out there who are hoping the Pope will do the same thing.

Would the member not agree that this is a conversation we need to continually engage in, and not just forget it after this one day that we are debating it in the House of Commons?

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Mr. Speaker, I think it goes without saying that many of those who have survived residential schools are also faithful followers of the Catholic Church. I know many of them personally.

Business of Supply

I know they desire nothing more than to see this apology. However, as Canadians, we all have a collective right, and that right is to ensure that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the calls to action of that commission are implemented in a way that is supportive of residential school survivors and also of all Canadians.

There is no more powerful voice than that of a country's citizens. I would say to the member that I agree. I agree that all Canadians need to take words to truth in asking for this apology.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am going to follow up with a question I asked an NDP member earlier. It is something I have heard somewhat consistently since the motion came up.

It has been asked with all sorts of respect and in puzzlement. People are asking, "Did the Pope not make an apology in 2009?" It is important for people to recognize that what happened in 2009, which was a private audience with a number of first nations people, was very important, but what is happening today has a slightly different request to it.

I am wondering if we can hear the Liberal perspective so that we, including those people who are asking about the apology in 2009, could understand and reflect on what the difference might be.

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for making that important observation and that important point.

Many Canadians have heard this, but there has not been a public apology. There has not been a papal apology that has been inclusive of survivors of residential schools in Canada with the same inclusiveness of the papal apology issued to Irish victims of sexual abuse in 2010 or the apology in 2015 in Bolivia to the indigenous peoples of the Americas for the grave sins of colonialism.

Canadians expect no less. They expect an apology that would be truthful, reflective of the harm and the damages inflicted by the residential schools in Canada, and sincere.

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, could the hon. parliamentary secretary offer a reflection on the remarkable adherence of indigenous folks to Christianity?

By this stage in the evolution of history and given the levels of abuse we heard about, one would have thought that indigenous people would be rejecting adherence to the church and adherence to the faith. However, it is quite to the contrary. The numbers and the enthusiasm of indigenous people who embrace Christianity are quite remarkable.

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Mr. Speaker, the comment made by my colleague is a true reflection and a true comment. Many indigenous cultures, such as the ones I represent, are very devout Christians in many ways. It is fair to say that regardless of the challenges any of us face in our lives, some much greater than others, we all look to a greater power. We all look to a more spiritual and uplifting leadership within our society, within our world, within our universe, within the sphere in which we live. Indigenous peoples, like all people in this world, believe truly in those things that can inspire and uplift them. Indigenous people have been no different.

• (1240)

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am tremendously honoured to rise in this House to speak

in favour of a powerful opposition day motion that I am proud comes from our party, the NDP, and to acknowledge the work of my colleague, the member of Parliament for Timmins—James Bay, and my colleague, the member of Parliament for Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou.

To be clear, today's opposition day motion is responding to the call of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to move our nation on a path of true healing for the crimes of the residential school era. We, the House, invite Pope Francis to participate in this journey with Canadians by responding to call to action 58 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report, and issue a formal papal apology for the role of the Canadian Catholic Church in the establishment, operation, and abuses of residential schools.

We also call upon the Canadian Catholic Church to live up to their moral obligations in the spirit of the 2006 Indian residential school settlement agreement and to resume best efforts to raise the full amount of the agreed-upon funds, and we call on the Catholic entities that were involved in the running of the residential schools to make a consistent and sustained effort to turn over relevant documents when called upon by survivors of residential schools, their families, and scholars who are working to understand the full scope of the horrors of the residential school system in the interest of truth and reconciliation.

I come from northern Manitoba and grew up in Thompson, which is on the traditional territory of the Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation on Treaty No. 5 territory. Anyone who grows up in our north has been exposed to the trauma and the devastating experiences that so many faced going to residential schools and that so many generations following residential school survivors have faced as well.

I remember at a young age visiting with elders across our north, who talked about the residential school system and what it meant to be ripped away from your family and to go to a school where children were punished for speaking their own language. I also remember hearing references to a kind of abuse that we could not even imagine.

I grew up with kids who talked about their grandparents going to residential schools, what that meant in terms of losing their bonds to culture and traditions, and their absolute interest and passion to reconnect with those traditions, languages, and roots. It was a reconnection that they wanted to make because it was so important to them. Unfortunately, it had to be made as a reconnection, because for decades the Canadian state, in co-operation with churches, broke that critical connection.

As I began to pursue activism in the political realm, some of my most inspiring mentors were residential school survivors, people who went through unspeakable abuse and trauma, yet went on to find great strength in leading their people and their nations in fighting back.

Business of Supply

I am reminded of people such as Elder Raymond Robinson in Cross Lake, a residential school survivor himself. Having gone through all of the challenges that so many survivors have gone through, he went on to be one of the people who helped create the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood. He talked about the importance of being engaged, the importance of reconnecting with tradition, and the importance of fighting for self-determination. He went on to be an incredible champion when it came to fighting against the devastation we saw from Manitoba Hydro and in fighting the ongoing colonial policies put forward by Ottawa in successive governments.

His legacy continues to live on. In fact, many of his children have gone on to be leaders, both elected and community leaders in Cross Lake and in other communities across our province. I am reminded that out of great difficulty came an immeasurable strength that inspired me and many others to carry on the struggle to build a better world for first nations and for northern Manitobans.

● (1245)

I visit communities, as I have visit over the years, I have spent a fair bit of time hearing stories about the devastation of residential schools in our area. I am sad to say that many of those residential schools were run by the Catholic Church. It is extremely disappointing, frankly, it is angering that the Catholic Church is putting up barriers when it comes to making the most simple act of reconciliation, the act of an apology, a reality.

It really hits home because a lot of the time that I spend in our north, I cross the areas in which the residential schools once stood, places like where the Guy Hill residential school used to be, a school that existed in northern Manitoba from 1926 to 1979. Just three years before I was born, this residential school continued to exist, a residential school that thousands of young people from across our region attended and one where many experienced unbelievable abuse.

The Guy Hill residential school is known for many things, but when we spend just a few moments looking at its records, we can tell very quickly that a lot of what happened there was completely unacceptable. There are records from 1951 that indicated, "This school is woefully overcrowded and I note that the double deck beds which were recommended are still lacking. From a health point of view though would be of material benefit to the children." The documents at that time in 1951 also noted that there was a "rather serious epidemic which has affected 19 boys of various ages. This may turn out to be tuberculosis...".

In 1958, the records at that time indicated that water at the new school was contaminated and "found to be dangerous as it contains bacteria usually found in sewage." A year later, in 1959, the water at the school was still unhealthy to consume, yet the children who attended that school were forced to consume it and were forced to live in those conditions.

I am reminded of the work of Ian Mosby and other researchers and academics. They have talked about the way in which children underwent not just treacherous conditions but oftentimes were forced, without their knowledge of course, to undergo experiments with respect to malnutrition and to living in substandard condition. It was known that this was the reality in some of these schools and was

on record at that time, yet the conditions persisted and that kind of abuse continued.

There were other residential schools in our area. The Fort Alexander residential school was in the south end of my constituency. A 1963 letter indicated that a Fort Alexander student expressed fear at returning to the institution because he alleged frequent rebukes by staff and the likelihood of corporal punishment upon return. These are the stories we hear all too often: of beatings, of physical abuse, of sexual abuse; abuse that would not be imaginable, never mind tolerated, in any setting let alone an educational setting.

I have heard many of those stories and they have everlasting impacts on survivors. I have heard how many have struggled with the trauma that has come from that. Some have turned to alcohol and substance abuse to get away from those traumatic memories and experiences. Here we are, knowing that in 1963 and 1958, and on the record, students, young people, were forced into these conditions. This is unacceptable, without question.

● (1250)

One residential school that is well known in our region for the kinds of inhumane conditions that existed, another residential school run by the Catholic Church, was the one in Cross Lake. There is a fair bit of information on the record from 1918 all the way to 1949 that shows there were serious issues taking place at the residential school.

The record states that in 1943:

...a doctor insisted that the spread of tuberculosis at the Cross Lake IRS was the result of poor air quality and overcrowding in the dormitories. As a result, the federal government advised the Church that no more than 80 children be kept in residence at the Cross Lake IRS during the 1943-44 school year

It further states that in 1944-45:

During the late fall and early winter, almost all the children at the Cross Lake IRS were infected with...Jaundice. A medical officer linked the epidemic to overcrowding in the dormitories, with the school population at 96 pupils, which he "strongly condemn[ed]."

Respected professionals were on the record of saying that these were inhumane conditions and that children were getting sick as a result, yet the church and the government continued to oversee those inhumane conditions.

The story of Cross Lake is one we hear often back home up north. Many people felt a real sense of justice when the students actually set fire to that residential school. Although everybody was able to get out safely, there was talk of how the students took it in their own hands to put an end to a place that was causing them so much hurt.

Just the idea that children lived in those conditions, away from their families, ripped apart from their culture and community, and forced to face inhumane conditions and unspeakable abuse is shocking.

Business of Supply

That brings me back to what we are discussing today, a motion that really reflects the desire of certainly our party, and I understand of other parliamentarians as well, to begin to address the wrongs through a formal apology from the Catholic Church. We know other churches have taken the step, and it is deeply frustrating for many people, those who are of the Catholic faith, as well as others, that the Catholic Church is still not willing to apologize. I know many people are hopeful, given the fact that the current pope, Pope Francis, has been rather progressive and open-minded when it comes to notions of reconciliation, and his work in Latin America has indicated such. Therefore, we feel there is an opening, a possibility there to begin that road of reconciliation with respect to the survivors of Catholic residential schools.

Because of certain barriers placed by senior officials in the Catholic Church, it is disappointing that it is up to Parliament to reflect where Canadians are with this, and to ask for this apology, but here we are.

It is time for us to show leadership on this front. Parliament has done so a few times on this important issue. I am reminded of the national apology in 2008. I am reminded of the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which had the support of Parliament. It is only fitting that, despite the challenges, we once again call for this kind of action by the Catholic Church, and it is incumbent on us to do so, given the fact that Parliament unfortunately oversaw this kind of unspeakable abuse through its support of the residential school system.

What we are doing here today is one very small step in saying that we know the history that has come before us is one where many wrongs had been done, and that we as parliamentarians today, in 2018, must take leadership and encourage those who had the ultimate responsibility to take a moment to say they are sorry, and to begin that path of reconciliation.

• (1255)

The government apologized in 2008 and the various churches, except for the Catholic Church, have apologized. It is important to know that call to action 58 of the Truth and Reconciliation indicated explicitly that a papal apology was seen as key for the process of reconciliation. It is time the Pope deliver one. Popes have made similar apologies, such as the apology in 2010 to Irish victims of Catholic abuse, in 2015 by the current pope to the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas for the church's role in colonization, and on April 11 to victims of abuse in Chile.

The residential school system was created by religious organizations and governments together. Through this motion, we in Parliament are calling on our fellow partners in the residential school system, the Catholic Church, to apologize formally.

The Government of Canada inappropriately let the church off the hook for a significant part of its financial obligations under the 2006 Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement. It was obligated to pay \$79 million and was discharged from paying back \$37.8 million. The government and church were both defendants in the actions that led to the Indian residential schools process for survivors and we believe it was wrong that they were let off the hook when it came to paying this money back.

[*Translation*]

We need to recognize that we have an opportunity, as members and as a Parliament, to do the right thing. This is not about fixing a traumatic and very negative chapter in our country's history, but about encouraging those responsible to start the reconciliation process. That is why we urge Parliament to unanimously support a motion calling on the Pope and the Catholic Church to give survivors an opportunity to take a step towards reconciliation, together.

[*English*]

I rise in the House thinking of survivors, including my colleague, the MP for Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, the survivors at home, so many who have passed, those children and grandchildren of survivors, some of whom, as friends of mine, have told me about the devastating intergenerational impacts of residential schools.

As a new parent, the idea that so many parents had their children ripped away from them, had their culture and their traditions stolen from them, were faced with unspeakable abuse is unfathomable. That is why I take this opportunity as a member of Parliament, as someone who is proud of where I come from, to say that this is our moment in time to show leadership. This is our moment in time as parliamentarians to send a unanimous message that the Catholic Church and the Pope must apologize and must begin this journey of reconciliation with survivors. It is time. Survivors deserve it. First nations deserve it. We hope, through this motion, that this day will come soon.

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite's wise words clearly have linked the experience, the trauma, the tragedy, and the horror of the residential school system to the ongoing systemic problems that continue to plague the country as it moves toward truth and reconciliation, and quite clearly has not arrived there yet.

I draw attention to call to action 1, which is focused on child welfare and the reduction of children in the child welfare system. The member from Manitoba drew parallels from the residential school system to the situation in Manitoba now. Manitoba has had one of the most aggressive and tragic child welfare systems. Good people trying to do good work, but we have effectively outsourced the residential school system. We have privatized it in the sense that we have apprehended close to 11,000 children in her province over the last 10 or 15 years. It is a provincial government, with good intention but with clearly bad practice, that also has taken children from their families, from their culture, from their communities.

As we move toward truth and reconciliation, it is not just the Catholic Church that needs to revisit apologies. The provincial government made one, but over the last 10 years has replicated the system of taking children from their families. We know that of the 11,000 kids in Manitoba, close to 86% are of indigenous heritage.

Business of Supply

Does the member opposite have words for the previous provincial government and its cabinet with respect to what they should do to revisit their apology to ensure we do not replicate the system in a new form and not simply focus on the bad deeds of the Catholic Church here today?

• (1300)

Ms. Niki Ashton: Mr. Speaker, there is no question the intergenerational trauma of residential schools, the broken nature of many families, the struggles many parents face, are still with us today. Yes, we can see it through the child welfare system, a system that has too often hurt rather than helped.

I acknowledge that many have had to learn from the mistakes of how things were run. However, I represent a number of the communities where children are taken away from, and I will speak to the fact that we will hear from parents that the reasons they are unable to raise their kids with the support they need is that they are struggling with addictions or are struggling in abject poverty.

Where has the federal government, the successive Liberal and Conservative governments, been when it comes to addressing the absolute underfunding of key services like housing, education, and health care? Why is it that, unfortunately, too many first nations live in third world conditions, which renders the raising of strong families and healthy children a major challenge?

If we are going to get at the root of preventing apprehension, we need to talk about building stronger communities by addressing underfunding immediately. That starts with the federal government stepping up and living up to its obligations.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have talked briefly about the three components of this motion. One is the apology and another is the financial part, but the third is about the records. I am wondering if my colleague could talk a little more on why the NDP felt that having that was an important part of the motion we are talking about today.

Ms. Niki Ashton: Mr. Speaker, access to records is an important component. My colleague, the member of Parliament for Timmins—James Bay, has been a very strong advocate with respect to the survivors of the St. Anne's residential school. Time and time again he has pointed out that despite the government's commitment to reconciliation and working with survivors, it is fighting the St. Anne's survivors in the courts. If we are really going to talk about reconciliation, that kind of action is unacceptable.

That is why we have included the measure with respect to access to relevant documents. What we are saying is that the survivors, whether it is of St. Anne's or any other school, deserve to see justice done and certainly do not deserve to be fought by their own federal government.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in the past couple of weeks we have seen a little confusion coming from the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, who have tried to explain the lack of an apology or no apology forthcoming from the Pope. The CCCB's explanation is that the residential schools fell under different orders of the Catholic Church, but I think to Catholics and people who are non-Catholic, when they look at the institution of the Catholic Church, everyone

universally agrees that the recognized spiritual head of the Catholic Church is the Pope.

Would my colleague agree with me in saying that the explanations of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops are a little misplaced? We are looking for a way to go forward. We are not trying to assign blame, but part of moving forward as a country means accepting the responsibility of one's organization in the administration of this school system in Canada.

The Pope, with what he has done around the world acknowledging and apologizing for previous abuses, could very well find it within his heart to come forward in this. I would just like to hear my hon. colleague's comments on that, and just why this particular apology from the Pope, as the recognized spiritual head of the Catholic Church, is so important for us to move forward as a nation on this very issue.

• (1305)

Ms. Niki Ashton: Mr. Speaker, that is an important question.

Why our motion is very much focused on the Pope is that the Pope has indicated some real openness when it comes to apologizing for past wrongs and for beginning a process of reconciliation. He has done so in other parts of the world, and it is time that we see that in Canada. We know that other churches have done that, and it is time for the Catholic Church to begin on this journey as well.

It is deeply frustrating to see senior officials try to dodge this responsibility for quite some time. Survivors want an apology. It would not be in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action if that were not the case. We need to take that very seriously. It is a call to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. That is why we are pushing for it here in Parliament. It has to be done. It is something that has been asked for by survivors, and it is part of that road to reconciliation.

For many survivors, an apology is definitely not enough, which is why we have indicated that there is a moral obligation to live up to. The church needs to make its best efforts to raise the full amount of the agreed-upon funds. We have also called for documents to be made available with respect to the St. Anne's case in the ongoing battle for justice from residential school survivors.

What we are calling for here is what we have heard time and time again from survivors. It is time for Parliament to respect these wishes. It is time for Parliament to stand up and defend the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. This is why this motion is before us today. I could not be more proud that it is the NDP that has put it forward.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the things I have really appreciated thus far in the debate today is the sense of non-partisanship in looking at the issue. It appears the motion could potentially get unanimous support, and that is important as we communicate our message. We hope that the Pope will respond favourably, given the dynamic of what has taken place in the House of Commons today.

I would ask my colleague and friend across the way to provide her thoughts on that.

Business of Supply

Ms. Niki Ashton: Mr. Speaker, it would be a powerful message for us to show unanimous support for this motion.

As I mentioned earlier, Parliament for decades oversaw the running of the residential school system. It is time that we begin a different journey, one of reconciliation, in the case of the Catholic residential school survivors, and there could not be any stronger message than one of unanimous support. Many of us believe that there is an openness from the Pope to begin this process of an apology. If we all come together, the message could not be stronger.

• (1310)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Scarborough—Rouge Park.

What a pleasure and privilege it is to stand today and talk about such an important issue. It is an important issue to indigenous and non-indigenous people alike. Obviously, there are some who are following the debate more than others. Some are impacted far more than others.

It is so encouraging when members on all sides of the House stand in their place trying to achieve a common goal. That goal is recommendation 58 from the truth and reconciliation report.

In the last couple of years, we have seen a number of gestures and actions that have had a fairly profound and positive impact on building the relationship. This has been long overdue. We have to recognize that when we talk about truth and reconciliation, it does not take one day, two days, a month, or a year. It is in fact an ongoing discussion that takes place among people in all regions of our country. It is not one level of government or in fact an issue between government and indigenous people. It is an issue which all of us in many different ways have to come to terms with, and hopefully agree to continue to advance reconciliation in whatever way we can.

The motion proposed by the NDP is a good one. I see a lot positive things in it. We could virtually go through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report's 94 recommendations and identify recommendations we could be talking about in the House virtually for the next 40 to 50 days, all of which would be well warranted and genuine. That is why I said I have really enjoyed the discussions we have heard today.

I want to highlight specifically what the Truth and Reconciliation Commission put in the form of recommendations. It is interesting how it starts off with calls to action. We heard a number of people in the chamber today talk about the importance of the calls to action. Here is what it says:

In order to redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission makes the following calls to action,

There are 94 of them. The nice thing is that anyone who is listening and wants to get a sense of the 94 calls to action, the report is easily accessible on the Internet, in different formats, such as a PDF or a booklet. It is a fairly well-publicized report, and justifiably so.

Recommendation 58 is really what we are debating today. It is under the heading "Church Apologies and Reconciliation". It states:

We call upon the Pope to issue an apology to Survivors, their families, and communities for the Roman Catholic Church's role in the spiritual, cultural, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children in Catholic-run residential schools. We call for that apology to be similar to the 2010 apology issued to Irish victims of abuse and to occur within one year of the issuing of this Report and to be delivered by the Pope in Canada.

This was not a matter of a few people sitting down and coming up with this suggestion. This was something that came about as a result of consensus. Individuals met with survivors and others. They came to the conclusion that if we want reconciliation, this has to be one of the calls to action.

• (1315)

I do not quite understand the hierarchy and how that process works in the Vatican or the roles the Catholic bishops play here in Canada. What I do know is that Pope Francis is an individual who has already done so much for society around the world. I truly believe he is sympathetic to what is being asked of him but, for whatever reason, there is a certain level of discomfort within that hierarchy.

I am hopeful that with today's debate and the continuing lobbying that will take place something will come of these efforts. It is not just the House of Commons that is dealing with this. We have indigenous leaders who at times are underestimated in terms of their potential contributions made to date and the potential they have for the future. I believe that collectively our indigenous people have had a very positive and profound impact on ensuring that reconciliation continues.

We know that the Prime Minister met with Pope Francis at the Vatican, and raised the issue of call to action 58. I know, as I believe all Canadians are aware, that the Prime Minister, like everyone else, was disappointed when the decision was made, for whatever reason.

There was disappointment, but we are not going to give up. We will continue to work in the best way we can. I believe it is only a question of time before we will see that apology. I do believe we will be that much further ahead in terms of reconciliation the sooner that we get that apology. I hope, and I have faith, that we will see the Pope here in Canada some day to give that apology.

For me, it is about the future generations. Tina Fontaine is not a name that is unknown to members in this House. Hers is a very tragic story. When we think of the 1,000-plus murdered and missing indigenous women and children, how can we not think that the residential schools had some significant impact on that?

We had a wonderful announcement from the Minister of Indigenous Services. I truly applaud her going to Winnipeg and making an announcement about a facility which Tina Fontaine had attended, and the fine work that Tina's Aunt Thelma and the community around there did to turn the facility into a 24-hour youth centre.

There was a consequence, and this is the reason I raise it. There was a very real and tangible consequence of residential schools. We all have a responsibility to better understand that, to look at ways we can achieve reconciliation not only with the apology from the Pope, but also with the other 93 calls to action.

Business of Supply

The goodwill of the Prime Minister and many members of Parliament will see each and every one of those calls to action acted on. I believe what we will witness in the coming days, weeks, months, and years is a journey that will allow more reconciliation to take place. I only hope that we understand some of those consequences. I would encourage people to look at the Tina Fontaine file, or one of many other examples, including a few which we have heard about today, to get a better understanding of our child care system and what is happening there today. My colleague from Toronto made reference to the 10,000-plus children, the vast majority of whom are indigenous.

• (1320)

Those are the types of consequences we are living with today. If we did that, we would get a better understanding and then maybe the hierarchy within the Vatican would have a better understanding of why it is so important to provide that apology.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to see that it looks like we might be on our way to a unanimous vote in favour of this very important topic.

A number of speakers throughout the day have talked about the challenges of reconciliation and how difficult and complex it really is. I am wondering if the member could explain his thoughts on that and why it is so important that this particular step in terms of the government asking the Catholic Church to make this important apology be a part of that process of reconciliation.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, it was pointed out earlier during the debate that it is right that the Government of Canada puts in that request. Not only has the Prime Minister met with Pope Francis on the issue but our minister has written to the Vatican, from what I understand. It was also pointed out earlier that it would speak volumes if we could pass this motion unanimously in the House of Commons. Equally important are the voices we hear from indigenous people who are appealing for a papal apology. Putting a face to the reality of the injustices that have occurred speaks volumes.

We need to recognize that it is good to have a debate here in the House where hopefully the motion will pass unanimously, but this goes further than just elected officials here in the House of Commons. I would like to think that indigenous and non-indigenous people and different levels of government are engaged in looking at not only this particular recommendation but the 93 other recommendations.

I like to focus my attention on the first recommendation, the one which deals with children. It is about children in care. It is a serious issue. I hope that we will have an opportunity to have a more substantial debate in the future. Maybe that could come in the form of an opposition motion.

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this is a historic moment we are seeing once again in the House of Commons. The tone of the debate we have heard thus far has been very moving and important.

From the speeches that I heard earlier, I think we are all hopeful that the motion will pass and we will have the support of every member in the House.

I am wondering if the member could comment about the process of reconciliation, how we are on the path toward healing, and what other initiatives the government is going to put forward to help.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the member across the way said it right. I like that she said we are on the path toward healing. I like to hear the word “journey” in regard to reconciliation, because that is what it is.

Never before have we seen such a fantastic interest in moving the issue of reconciliation forward. It is being talked about in the House of Commons more than we have ever heard in the past. Reconciliation is talked about a great deal at many community events that I attend. The journey could take two to three years, because reconciliation will be ongoing. It is very much a holistic approach at righting a serious and profound wrong from the past, but there seems to be a tremendous amount of goodwill for us to move forward.

Today the focus seems to be on a papal apology. We all hope that not only will we receive it in time and the Pope will come to Canada but we will also see continuous progress being made on the other recommendations.

• (1325)

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Scarborough—Rouge Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by acknowledging that we are gathered here on the unceded lands of the Algonquin people.

I am very pleased to speak today on such an important topic. There are three issues that are outlined in the opposition motion brought to us by the NDP. I will focus on the one that relates to the apology from the Pope and the Catholic Church. Before I address that, I want to outline why this is important to me.

As a practising Hindu, I believe it is important that I acknowledge that I was raised in many ways in the Catholic school system. My first four years of schooling, both in Sri Lanka and Ireland, were in the Catholic school system. That is very important to me, because that faith taught me a great deal about life, about values, and about important rights and wrongs. I have nothing but good things to say about my education.

Unfortunately, that has not been the case in the history of Canada. The Charter of Rights and Freedoms gives us the right to believe what we believe in and the right not to believe. As such, I think it is important to say that the conversation today is really to focus on the issue of residential schools and to look at how we, as a country, can move forward with the issue of reconciliation.

Reconciliation is very difficult to talk about. It has been attempted by many countries. South Africa stands as one example, and I know other countries in Africa have undertaken it. Canada has also undertaken this process, and I think the Truth and Reconciliation Commission serves as a foundation for that discussion, that journey, as my friend said earlier.

That journey begins on a number of fronts. There are calls to action that require governments and different institutions to do their part in addressing and advancing the issue of reconciliation. I think we have made a number of different achievements on that front, one of them obviously being the current discussion and debate we had with respect to UNDRIP, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and Bill C-262, the private member's bill that was brought forward by the member for Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou. That is also very important to the concept of reconciliation.

With respect to institutions, there are a number that play a very important role, most notably the Catholic Church. Before I talk about what is being asked of the church, when I was preparing for this debate, I really took to heart that I have two young girls who are seven and nine. We live in a home where we speak Tamil, or broken Tamil to some extent because my kids and my wife are not fluent. However, we try to impart a sense of language, culture, and faith to our children. It is fundamental to me, my family, and my children. It is what grounds me on a day-to-day basis.

I really thought about what happened with the residential schools. Oftentimes, at the age my children are, or maybe even younger than that, the kids were taken away, placed in a residential school setting, and were prevented from speaking their language. As we know, language is so important to us. Our mother tongue is essential to us. Tamil people in my community lost over 100,000 lives defending their language, the right to speak their language, and the right to advocate and go to school in their language. It is very important. When those children went into the residential schools, they lost their mother tongue.

● (1330)

Then we have culture. Again, this valuable, important thing defines each and everyone of us. All of us in the chamber come from different backgrounds, many from very different backgrounds. That really takes away from our practices, our understanding of the world, the baseline concepts we take for granted because we are grounded in that culture. When kids are taken away, when that culture is taken away from them, it really does take away the heart of that child.

All religions, all indigenous communities have very rich traditions of spirituality that are so important. We try to do it oftentimes in a symbolic way. We try to do it in Parliament. We try to do it when we have events in our ridings or national events. We try to incorporate some of the spiritual practices of religions, but it is in many ways symbolism. We have lost the core of that spirituality, and young people who went into residential schools lost that.

I do not want to talk about the abuse, but imagine bringing that child back into the community eight to 12 years later. See if that child can have a relationship with their parents, their grandparents or their community or they with that child. It is disturbing and fundamentally wrong to do that, yet we did it with government sanction, with government-run programs to support residential schools. This did not happen because of a choice. It happened because of decisions that were made in the House and religious institutions were tasked to carry out those duties.

Business of Supply

We now see 150,000 people who have gone through this and many generations of indigenous people have been affected by it, have been broken by it. We are here today to correct that.

A number of institutions have been involved and implicated in this, most notably the churches. I want to point out that a number of different churches have addressed this issue over the past several years. For example, in 1993, the Anglican Church made that apology. The Presbyterian Church made that apology in 1994. The United Church made two apologies, one in 1986 and one in 1998. The Missionary Oblates apologized in 2001. In 2008, the Government of Canada formally apologized.

In the indigenous affairs committee one of the studies that made me understand the effects of residential schools was the study on suicide, which was tabled in here about a year ago. That study essentially looked at some of the contributing factors. Well over 100 people talked about the effects of residential schools on their lives and on their relationship with families and communities.

Today we are here because all of these have contributed to the socio-economic factors about which we often talk, about the continuance of colonialism in our society. Standing here I always look at my friend across, the member for Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, someone who I have the utmost respect for and look at as a teacher more than as a colleague. We have travelled together on a couple of occasions. At times, he would share his experiences, the effects on him, his family, and community. It always comes back to that.

Today, I would respectfully ask the church and the Pope to do the right thing. I hope the Pope visits Canada soon. At that time, I hope he gets to meet a number of the people who have been affected by this directly, including my friend from Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou. To me, the Catholic faith is about doing the right thing. I have no doubt this will happen. I call upon them, as do my colleagues across the way, to do the right thing.

● (1335)

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the words of my colleague. I work with him on the indigenous affairs file. This motion has three components. I think the NDP added the third component about the importance of the documents and the production of documents, because there were real problems with that part of the healing and the understanding processes.

Could my colleague clarify why there have been challenges with the production of documents and what they will do to ensure this motion is complied with in relation to that?

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Speaker, I have represented individuals in international inquiries who were victims of war crimes. One of the assurances they were given was that the documents provided to the UN would be protected for a period of 80 years I believe. As well, if information needed to be obtained, then individual consent had to that.

Business of Supply

I understand the complexity of where we are with respect to documents. I know ultimately that the people who own the documents are the people who gave them in as evidence. Without their consent, I personally do not think they should be released. There is an important element of protecting the integrity of the process and ensuring that in future investigations and undertakings people are freely giving documents based on a set of assumptions they had when first gave the documents .

Mr. Romeo Saganash (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, you may have noticed I have not put my name forward to speak on the motion, although I seconded it. The reason for that is pretty simple. I have gone to residential school, 10 years in my case. When people are being invited to speak about that experience, they are being invited to relive that trauma. I was not prepared to do that. I do not think I am capable of doing that.

However, I want to thank my colleague from Scarborough—Rouge Park for his comments and support for this motion. I truly appreciate him, not only as a colleague but as a friend and co-worker on the committee. I appreciate his words of support.

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Speaker, again, I want to reiterate my admiration for my friend from Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou.

Mr. Nick Whalen (St. John's East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for all the great he does in international human rights. I hope he can further elaborate on the comments he raised in his remarks about his family's journey, but also about the importance of apologies in the truth and reconciliation process, how that plays out on the international stage, and why it is important for it to also play out in Canada in with respect to the Catholic Church extending an apology to residential school survivors.

• (1340)

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Speaker, I have been grappling with the issue of reconciliation. One of the things I am increasingly coming to conclude is that reconciliation is very difficult for an individual who is the subject of this experience, someone who has gone through residential schools. It will be virtually impossible for those people to ever forget what happened to them in their lifetime. If they were victims of a war or war crimes, they will never forget. We cannot forcefully have people reconcile just for the sake of the term reconciliation.

Reconciliation needs to be genuine. It needs to be backed up by an actual acceptance of what happened by the perpetrator. In this case, it is really an acknowledgement. It is to say that this happened. There is overwhelming evidence, and I do not think it is really an evidentiary issue, to suggest that what happened is true. It is about taking ownership of it and saying that we are sorry for what happened. It allows the institution to move on and it allows all of us to look at other ways we can elaborate and work on this journey toward reconciliation.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for North Island—Powell River.

I have only been in the House for a short while. I am on my first term. However, every now and then there are moments in the House

that make us fully aware of the privilege we bear in this place, the freedom of speech that we have in this honoured chamber, and the voices we represent in our communities. Often those voices are marginalized and put off to the side.

Today's motion is an opportunity for not only me as a member of Parliament but for every one of us to speak up and address a fundamental wrong of our history and to try and get the country on a course of action to make things right by asking the Catholic Church to outline its responsibility and issue that apology from the Pope.

My riding of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford is home to the Coast Salish people. I live on territory that is unceded Coast Salish territory. Before I go on, I want to raise my hands and say *Hych'ka Siam* to each and every one of the elders and survivors in the first nations of my communities. They have gone through so much, but they stand with such strength for their communities today. It is simply amazing to know them, their strength, their courage, and for what they do for their communities after suffering so much. If I can make this day about one thing, it really is about them, and I feel that right to the inner core of my being.

I want to thank the member for Timmins—James Bay for bringing forward this motion and also my colleague for Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou for seconding it. This is an important time where, as the House of Commons, we come together in trying to get a course of action.

What are we are trying to do today?

The motion before us is inviting Pope Francis. I like the word “inviting”, because there was a lot of consternation among the Catholic community and even some members of Parliament that we could not force the Catholic Church to do this, and they are right. That is why we are inviting the Pope to participate in this journey, to respond to call to action 58 of the report from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, TRC.

If we look at the long, sorry history of residential schools in the country, it was a genocide, and there is a fundamental reason why it went after the children. The children of any community are its future. When we try to extinguish the children and remove them from their culture and language, in a sense we are trying to eliminate those people, and in many cases we succeeded. We are finding our way through that.

I am a father and I cannot imagine the trauma it would cause people to see their children taken away at such a young age and come back as broken beings, and the intergenerational trauma that represents.

The legacy of residential schools in our country has been very well documented, which is important documentation. However, with all of the steps we have made coming toward reconciliation, there is still an important part we have to come to. We have to acknowledge that the residential school system was created by religious organizations and the government together. They worked hand in hand. Through this motion, as Parliament, we have to call upon a fellow partner in the residential school system, the Catholic Church, to apologize formally, just as the Government of Canada did in 2008.

Business of Supply

For my constituents back home, so they have a better understanding of the debate today and what we are going through, I want to formally read into the record what TRC call to action 58 states. It reads:

We call upon the Pope to issue an apology to Survivors, their families, and communities for the Roman Catholic Church's role in the spiritual, cultural, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children in Catholic-run residential schools. We call for that apology to be similar to the 2010 apology issued to Irish victims of abuse and to occur within one year of the issuing of this Report and to be delivered by the Pope in Canada.

● (1345)

It has been unfortunate in recent weeks that certain Catholic bishops in Canada have been muddying the waters in trying to explain why it would not be possible for the Pope to issue an apology. There have been various reasons, such as that different orders and dioceses were responsible for the schools and the fact that many of them have apologized. However, they are missing a fundamental point in this whole argument, which is that to any Catholic or any non-Catholic, when we look at the entity that is the Catholic Church, we uniformly recognize that the spiritual head of that church is the Pope. The Pope is the church, the Bishop of Rome. Yes, we have had apologies from various orders within the Catholic Church, but I do not think we can understate what a papal apology, delivered here in Canada, would mean to us as a country going forward, especially when so many first nation people still hold onto the Catholic faith, despite having gone through all those horrible abuses. One of my colleagues claims that she is a first nations woman and a Catholic, and I was so honoured to be present in the chamber earlier today to hear her speech.

The government apologized in 2008, and various churches, except the Catholic Church, have apologized, but we need to have that papal apology. When Pope Francis began his term as Pope in 2013 and assumed the papacy, he was really motivated to right historical wrongs and to be a Pope who addresses issues of social justice. Given what he has done and said in various parts of the world, if he is not listening to the specifics of the debate, I hope he hears the motion that this House, I hope, will eventually pass on Tuesday, preferably unanimously. I hope he hears that it would be the right thing to do, and I hope he will find it in his heart to step forward and make that important apology. I hope that Catholics across this country take the message to heart that we are not here trying to put a spotlight on them to pressure them. We want them to come forward with us and look into each and every one of their hearts to know that this is the right thing to do. Maybe they can speak to other members of their community and speak to the bishops to get that message to the Vatican that this is really what we need to see.

This is one of those debate topics we could go on for hours talking about, but I want to end on this. The government apologized in 2008, but in some ways, the voice of Parliament speaking out on this issue is even more powerful. The government is the leading party in the House of Commons. It is currently the Liberals, and they represent a slice of the electorate. However, if this House of Commons were to unify around this motion and pass it unanimously, the message to Canadians and to the rest of the world would be that all 338 ridings, and the members of Parliament who represent them, are speaking with a unified voice. Canadians are speaking with a unified voice. That very fact would amplify the message and makes it hit home.

I want to conclude by recognizing the trauma that is ongoing from this issue. We want to continue to stand by survivors and with successive generations to bring first nation, Inuit, and Métis people in as full, equal partners in this country, as is their rightful place. Only when we achieve that will this country assume the greatness we are so capable of reaching. We have come a long way, but we still have a long way to go to see the end of this dark chapter in our history. I hope members will find it in themselves on Tuesday next week to vote unanimously for this motion to send a clear and strong message to the Catholic Church that we hope the Pope will deliver an apology.

● (1350)

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend from Cowichan—Malahat—Langford for his eloquent words, as usual. In terms of how he framed the issue of the Catholic Church, I think he shares the perspective I have, which is that this is not in any way an attack on the Catholic Church. We in the House appreciate the enormously important work the Catholic Church does across the country and across the world every day, and we hold nothing but the highest respect for the bishops of the Catholic Church in Canada and the Pope. It is only because we respect the institution and the Pope so much that we recognize the importance of their sharing our view that we need to make amends and apologize to the victims of the residential schools in Canada.

I wonder if my colleague could address the issue that this is by no means an attack on the Church. Rather, it is a symbol of our recognition of the importance of the work of the Church that we are asking for this.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Mr. Speaker, I agree with my colleague. He and I had the pleasure of sitting together on the justice committee, and during the course of some of our studies, we had the bishops appear before the committee as witnesses. I know they are sincere in their goodwill. I just think perhaps some of their remarks in the last few weeks muddied the waters, unfortunately.

I agree with the member completely. This is not an attack on Catholics or Catholic institutions. It is about the House recognizing that this is one of the key items we need to do. That is why I really like the wording of the motion. We are not forcing the Catholic Church to do anything. The wording of the motion is that we are inviting the Pope. Really, I just hope the Pope and the Vatican hear this message. Perhaps members of the Catholic community in Canada, and we as members of Parliament within our communities, can help amplify this message. When he hears the message that we are inviting him to do this, I hope he will find it in his heart to join us and travel the remainder of this journey together.

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, human beings are strange at times. The more one asks, the less one gets. I wonder whether the hon. member has contemplated the irony of a potential debate like this. It is pretty obvious at this stage that the Catholic Church is unwilling to give an apology. The ironic effect may be that we move further from actually obtaining what is the desire of the House by asking for an apology once again.

Statements by Members

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Mr. Speaker, I agree with my colleague that it is unfortunate that we are debating this motion today, because I think all of us would have hoped that the Catholic Church and the Pope would have arrived at this decision of their own volition.

I do not think, however, that by debating this issue and passing the motion in the House of Commons we are going to set the issue back, because this has put a much-needed spotlight on the issue. The national media are covering this.

It is incumbent on us as members of Parliament not to let the issue die on Tuesday next week when we vote on it, but, as leaders of our respective communities, to continue to have those conversations, especially with members of the Catholic community. I know that many of them would dearly like to see their Pope carry forward with this. By keeping those conversations going in the weeks and months ahead, and by using the language of an invitation, I am optimistic that we can one day get to that spot where the Pope comes to Canada and makes that formal apology. My oh my, what a day that would be for the survivors of the system to hear that coming from the Holy Father of the Catholic faith.

• (1355)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Resuming debate, the hon. member for North Island—Powell River. I just want to inform the hon. member that she will have approximately five minutes, then she can resume her debate once we get back from question period.

The hon. member.

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I just want to thank the member for Timmins—James Bay and the seconder of the motion, the member for Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, for putting this very important discussion on the floor for us today.

One of the most compelling realities across this country is how many indigenous communities address the issue of residential schools. In the area where I live, there is a community, Homalco First Nation, that traditionally comes from the Campbell River territory all the way up to Bute Inlet. A long time ago, they had a community in Bute Inlet they called Church House. The Homalco were losing their children. Their children were being taken away to residential schools. What the community did was come together to raise money. They raised money and built, in their community, a church and a school. Because they built a church and a school, they were able to have their children at home until grade six. The priests and the nuns came right into the community. They lived in the community, and there are some good memories of that. Sadly, there are also some very unfortunate and sad memories of that time.

One of the realities we forget is that indigenous communities were incredibly strong in how they dealt with this. Earlier one of the members talked about people coming home broken, and that is true. I could name people from my community and from the communities I represent who came home broken because of residential schools.

I just want to remind everyone here that they also found ways to survive and to thrive. The reality that indigenous people are still so strong is because of the strength they had. I want to recognize this.

We are inviting the Pope to come forward and do the right thing, which is apologize to all the children, families, and communities that were immensely impacted by their decision to work with the government to do that job. It was a very direct job. The job was to take the Indian out of the child.

In one of the schools in the riding I represent, a middle school called Southgate, there is a mask called “taking the Indian from the child”. It has a mask on the outside. It is a transformation mask. If anyone does not understand what that means, I am happy to share it with them. It is a way of showing a story. It has a white face that opens up to reveal the Indian child inside.

I know that my time is up. I just want to recognize the resilience of the indigenous communities of this country.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. member will have seven minutes to finish her presentation when we resume after question period.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

CULTURAL HERITAGE

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we learned today that the National Gallery of Canada will no longer be selling off its Marc Chagall painting to buy a Quebec treasure. The Bloc Québécois was the only federal party that called for the painting of Saint Jerome by Jacques-Louis David to stay in Quebec. Worse yet, the Minister of Canadian Heritage, herself a native of Quebec, shirked her responsibilities and used the museum's so-called independence as an excuse to avoid taking action. As it happens, everything worked out this time around. Federal institutions did not succeed in selling off Quebec's cultural heritage, but that is no reason for us to be naive. As long as Quebec is a province of Canada, the federal system will keep working against us.

* * *

• (1400)

[*English*]

WILLSON INTERNATIONAL LTD.

Mr. Gagan Sikand (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, small and medium-sized businesses are the backbone of the Canadian economy, and today it is my pleasure to recognize one of them. Under the vision and leadership of William Willson, Willson International Ltd. was started in 1918 as a customs brokerage and logistics company. Today, 100 years later, at the helm of the company is the great-grandchild of its founder, chairman and CEO Peter Willson.

Headquartered in my riding, Willson International Ltd. not only continues to be a market leader and quality employer across the country but also has deep-rooted community engagement.

I want to express my gratitude to Peter Willson, his entire team, and his family. I congratulate them on their centenary and wish them another successful 100 years.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

PLESSISVILLE MAPLE FEST

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, spring has sprung. Signs of spring are all around us. The sap is running so it is time for a sweet treat at the sugar shack. I would like to invite all Canadians to come see us in the maple capital of the world for the 60th annual Plessisville maple fest. In 1959, more than 8,000 people attended the first maple fest at École Saint-Édouard 60 years ago today, April 26.

With all due respect to my colleagues and the syrup of which they are so proud, Mégantic—L'Érable produces the best maple syrup and puts on the best maple festival. Over the next two weeks, the tradition will carry on: an evening parade, maple syrup tasting, lawn tractor pull, a maple syrup roast, shows, and endless maple taffy.

Our maple water is the purest, our syrup the most golden, our taffy the tastiest, but the jewel in the crown of the maple festival for the past 60 years is the volunteers. This year, the president, Nathalie Bouffard, and her entire team await you in Plessisville, the one and only maple capital of the world.

Happy maple fest, Plessisville.

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[English]

LGBTQ COMMUNITY

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Scarborough—Rouge Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to remember Skandaraj Navaratnam, Selim Esen, Abdulbasir Faizi, Majeed Kayhan, Andrew Kinsman, Dean Lisowick, Soroush Mahmudi, and Kirushna Kumar Kanagaratnam. These men were murdered by a brutal serial killer. Many of these men were racialized members of the LGBTQ community, and they represent some of the most vulnerable in our society with multiple intersectionalities. Kirushnakumar was a refugee who came on the MV *Sun Sea*. He was forced to go underground by the fear of being deported to Sri Lanka. As a society, we have failed all of these men.

I would like to recognize the tireless advocacy of groups like the Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention, or ASAAP, and its executive director, Haran Vijayanathan; the 519 community centre; and others who have been working day and night to seek justice and accountability.

My heart grieves with the families and loved ones of these men, and with the LGBTQ community.

* * *

WORKPLACE INJURIES

Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on April 28, we recognize workers who have been killed or injured on the job. The Day of Mourning, created by the Canadian Labour Congress in 1984 and officially recognized by the House of Commons in 1991 through an NDP-sponsored bill, is recognized in many communities across Canada.

As a steelworker, I am proud to have been part of the campaign that resulted in changes to the Criminal Code in 2003 to protect workers in what became known as the Westray law after an

explosion rocked the Westray mine 26 years ago in Nova Scotia, killing 26 workers and forever scarring the workers' families and the surrounding communities.

Health and safety is still a big problem in Canada, as 1,000 Canadian workers are killed each year. Many of these deaths are preventable. In the 15 years since the Westray law was passed, only one person has been convicted under the law. That is not good enough. In memory of all those lost each year, I call on the government to stop the killing and enforce the law.

* * *

JIM NUTTALL

Mr. Kyle Peterson (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Jim Nuttall, a community hero in Newmarket—Aurora. Mr. Nuttall passed away peacefully on April 16 at the age of 84. He is survived by his sister Mary, his nephew Jonas, and his niece Nicole.

Jim was a pillar of Newmarket, always lending a helping hand to improve the lives of others. He embodied the spirit of volunteerism that is at the core of our town and dedicated his life to his community and to our country.

Jim was a Scoutmaster for 60 years, a lifetime member of the Salvation Army, and a recipient of the Diamond Jubilee Medal and the Canada 150 medal for volunteer service. In 1995 he was honoured as Newmarket's Citizen of the Year, and in 2012 he was the Senior Citizen of the Year for Ontario.

Jim loved Newmarket and Newmarket loved Jim. He helped countless people and his legacy will live on in all of us. Jim will be missed. May he rest in peace.

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● (1405)

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Mr. Guy Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia touch so many families from coast to coast to coast. It does not discriminate.

Last year I was proud to stand in the House and declare that my office had been recognized at the first dementia-friendly constituency office in Canada. With the help of our local Alzheimer's society, we received training to help our staff to understand dementia and to feel more confident when offering assistance to those who are living with dementia and to their caregivers.

Today I am pleased to share that our local Alzheimer's society in Cornwall has received a grant that will allow them to expand on the success of the pilot program. I am also honoured to welcome my colleague and friend, the hon. member for Milton, along with her husband Bruce, to Cornwall to shed more light on how we can grow stronger together in understanding Alzheimer's disease.

I would like to invite anyone interested in Alzheimer's disease to the Ramada Hotel in Cornwall at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, May 8, for this wonderful free event.

*Statements by Members***JIM MARMINO**

Mr. Anthony Rota (Nipissing—Timiskaming, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Jim Marmino was a good friend and a volunteer extraordinaire. He was always there to help his community, his neighbours, his friends, and his family.

He was a former boxer. Many of us knew him as “Champ”, and he was a champion of many causes. Whether it was coaching sports at West Ferris Secondary School, where he was a teacher; setting up an event at the Davedi Club; or supporting Nipissing University, Alzheimer's awareness, the Nipissing Serenity Hospice and many more causes, Jim was always there to help.

Jim's passion and love for his community was an inspiration. He was always looking for more ways to make North Bay a caring, supportive place for youth, families, and seniors. He was a true friend to all who knew him.

As the Italian poet Dante Alighieri said, “*Noi non potemo avere perfetta vita senza amici*,” meaning “We cannot have a perfect life without friends.” Jim was the perfect friend.

I thank his wife Cathy and the Marmino family for sharing Jim with us. He will be missed and never forgotten.

* * *

GENDER EQUALITY

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos (Saint-Laurent, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has made advancing gender equality and women's empowerment a central theme of Canada's G7 presidency.

This week Canada hosted the W7 Summit, bringing together feminist leaders and experts from Canada, all G7 countries, the EU, and the global south to discuss and form policy recommendations to help advance gender equality globally.

[*Translation*]

Women have spearheaded innovative solutions to address major global challenges. We also know that by investing in women everyone benefits from a stronger economy.

We would like to thank the W7 Summit and the Gender Equality Advisory Council, co-chaired by Ambassador Isabelle Hudon and Melinda Gates, for their global leadership in raising the bar and finding creative solutions for promoting gender equality throughout the G7.

* * *

[*English*]

HILDA NOBLE

Hon. K. Kellie Leitch (Simcoe—Grey, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness that I rise today to pay tribute to a wonderful woman from Simcoe—Grey.

Hilda Noble was an amazing person. She was the kind of person who brought a smile to everyone's face every time they met her.

She and Wayne, her husband of 30 years, were active in the business community through Noble Insurance, a well-respected firm.

She was known best for her charitable work, especially in her home community of Collingwood.

Hilda was a life member of the Collingwood General and Marine Hospital auxiliary and past president of the Canadian Cancer Society. She fundraised for cancer research for decades and was co-chair of a breast cancer support group. She loved the arts and was a board member for the Blue Mountain Foundation for the Arts for over 40 years. Hilda was instrumental in raising money for Crime Stoppers. This woman did it all.

Hilda was a kind, generous, and loving woman. I am honoured to have known her. She will be missed dearly by her husband, her family, and our entire community.

* * *

● (1410)

CLIMATE LEADERSHIP AWARD

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, climate change is undoubtedly a defining issue of our age with our collective leadership determining the future of the planet and the well-being of generations to come. Fortunately, Canada is leading by taking action to reduce our greenhouse gases while also appreciating the vast business opportunities that lie ahead in the technology economy.

That is why I am happy to share with the House that the City of Guelph received a GLOBE Climate Leadership Award at the GLOBE Forum in Vancouver. The royal city, Guelph, once again showcased its true innovative spirit and forward-looking leadership by winning the Large Municipal Trailblazer Award.

A big congratulation goes to the entire Guelph community for this prestigious recognition of our commitment to environmental leadership.

* * *

ATTACK IN TORONTO

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Spadina—Fort York, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, part of what binds us as members of Parliament is our approach to home. We share being away from home and we share the pride we have in our hometowns.

What we share in the House is in some sense not being at home. It is a strange kind of loneliness. When tragedy strikes close to our home, as it did in my hometown of Toronto this week, it brings a sense of helplessness when one is far away.

What brought me home this week, as I watched from a distance, were the faces and names of those who were hurt and those who helped, the names and accents of those who did not walk away when strangers needed care, and the backgrounds of those who were on duty who responded with such clarity.

The chorus of diverse voices brought me home and made our home, my home, Toronto, safe again.

But not every soul is safe yet. Some have been lost, many have been wounded, and some are still afraid. They are not alone. All of us will help them heal.

Yonge Street is Toronto and Toronto is Yonge and strong.

*Statements by Members***WINNIPEG JETS**

Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, spring may have sprung in Manitoba, but the Whiteout is still going strong. After our Winnipeg Jets tamed the Wild in round one of the Stanley Cup playoffs, we are onto round two.

I can guarantee that the Presidents' Trophy-winning Nashville Predators are terrified of the firepower our Winnipeg Jets are about to rain down upon them. In round two, the Predators will become the prey. After the painful departure of the original Jets in 1996, the return of our beloved Jets has energized our province. All of Manitoba is buzzing in support of our team.

After the anticipated early exit of the Toronto Maple Leafs, the Jets become the only Canadian team in the hunt. I encourage all Canadians to jump on the bandwagon of Canada's team, and join the Whiteout as our Jets fight to win Lord Stanley's cup.

Go, Jets, go.

* * *

WORLD IMMUNIZATION WEEK

Mr. Raj Saini (Kitchener Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark World Immunization Week. This week, organizations and individuals around the world come together to highlight the work needed to ensure that every person is protected from vaccine-preventable diseases.

[*Translation*]

I am proud to say that immunization and global health are always at the heart of Canadian development efforts. Canadian support for Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, has helped immunize more than 500 million children and saved seven million lives to date.

Our country is also helping to eliminate maternal and neonatal tetanus and contributes to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative.

• (1415)

[*English*]

Canada's contribution to global immunization efforts saves lives. Vaccines save lives here in Canada, too. Vaccines are safe, and they work. They are vital to public health. World Immunization Week is a great opportunity to remind loved ones to make vaccines a priority and to ensure that vaccinations are up to date.

* * *

[*Translation*]

**INTERNATIONAL DAY OF MOURNING FOR PERSONS
KILLED OR INJURED IN THE WORKPLACE**

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, next Saturday, April 28, is the International Day of Mourning for Persons Killed or Injured in the Workplace. This day is a union initiative that we began observing in 1996 around the world; it is a day to pay tribute to the victims of workplace accidents and illnesses.

In 2003, at the request of trade unions, the International Labour Organization began taking part in the April 28 commemorations and honouring workers who were injured or died in the performance of their duties.

I invite all elected members of the House to join me in marking this day, honouring the victims, and providing our support to their families.

I will end by quoting brother Michel Chartrand, who reminded the Asbestos strikers with his legendary eloquence that we work as a way to earn a living, not to lose our life.

* * *

**INTERNATIONAL DAY OF MOURNING FOR PERSONS
KILLED OR INJURED IN THE WORKPLACE**

Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today is the day of mourning for persons who sustained physical or psychological injuries or were killed at work. We pay tribute to all of the workers who have been killed or injured at work, and we honour their contribution to our country and our communities.

[*English*]

I want to express my condolences to the families who have lost a loved one and to the families dealing with the aftermath of a workplace injury or illness.

Overseeing the employment and labour file on our side, I want to stress that we must all continue to work to seek solutions that would make our workplaces safer across this country. Remembering is important, but the way to honour the workers and their ailing families is to take action.

[*Translation*]

Let us work together to create and maintain safe workplaces across Canada.

* * *

[*English*]

WORKPLACE SAFETY

Mr. Vance Badawey (Niagara Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on April 28, we mark the National Day of Mourning to acknowledge and be mindful of the impact of deaths in the workplace on the families left behind. Throughout our history in Niagara we have, unfortunately, experienced many workplace injuries and fatalities. Just two generations ago, 137 workers from around the world perished while building the Welland Canal, the youngest being only 15 years of age. These were the people who built our country, immigrants from Ireland, Hungary, Poland, Italy, and more.

Descendants and citizens will gather at monuments in the cities of Port Colborne, Welland, Thorold, and St. Catharines this Saturday. Monuments are often inscribed with the words "Fight for the living, mourn for the dead."

Oral Questions

Even one workplace death is one too many. Let us think about this as we mark this National Day of Mourning. It is more than a day of remembrance; it is a day when we reaffirm our commitment to all to prevent workplace tragedy as well as ensure the safety of our workplace well into the future.

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: There have been discussions among representations of all the parties in the House, and I understand that there is consent to observe a moment of silence to commemorate the National Day of Mourning and to honour the memory of workers who were killed or injured at work. I invite hon. members to rise.

[*A moment of silence observed*]

ORAL QUESTIONS

• (1420)

[*English*]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday we saw the hypocrisy and deception of the Prime Minister in full view when he stood and defended the government's funding of students to protest the Trans Mountain pipeline. The Liberals are completely two-faced. They do not support Canada's oil and gas sector.

Just how many organizations are receiving taxpayers' dollars to protest or lobby against the Trans Mountain pipeline or any other Canadian energy sector project?

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been very clear with Canadians. We will build this pipeline. We know that the environment and the economy go hand in hand, and that is the approach we are taking.

Funding should never go to pay for work that seeks to remove Canadians' hard-fought-for rights. Voicing opposition over an energy project and putting kids to work distributing graphic flyers of aborted fetuses, as the Centre for Bio-Ethical Reform did, are not the same thing. This is about protecting Canadians' rights, such as women's rights, something that our government will do regardless of what the opposition says.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Natural Resources.

It should come as no surprise that protesting and trying to shut down our energy sector, which is what we are talking about, Minister, fall completely in line with Liberal values.

Liberal members such as the ones for Vancouver Quadra and Burnaby North—Seymour speak for much of their Liberal caucus when they oppose Trans Mountain, and the Prime Minister himself keeps saying how sorry he is that he cannot shut down our energy sector fast enough.

The Liberals are moving farther and farther to the left. Why do they not just admit that they want to shut down the entire Canadian energy sector?

The Speaker: I will remind the hon. opposition House leader to direct her comments to the Chair.

The hon. Minister of Natural Resources.

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): It is okay, Mr. Speaker. I knew she was talking to me.

By our own estimates in the Department of Natural Resources, there are approximately 140 oil and gas projects under construction or planned in the next 10 years, worth an estimated \$400 billion in capital expenditures. When we consider the whole energy sector, including electricity, that number is nearly \$530 billion.

We support the energy sector in Canada. We wish the—

The Speaker: The hon. opposition House leader.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister and the Liberals have managed to kill energy east and northern gateway, and now they are paying students to protest Kinder Morgan.

My question is for the natural resources minister. Does he agree that students should be paid on the public dime to protest Canadian natural resources and projects that go along with them? If he is opposed to it, will he stand up to the Prime Minister and say that the funding of paid protestors is wrong?

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Harper government supported the very same groups. As a matter of fact, the Harper government gave twice as much to the very same groups—

The Speaker: Order. I am having trouble hearing the answer. I need to hear both the question and the answer. I have no trouble hearing the question.

The hon. Minister of Natural Resources has a few more seconds.

Hon. Jim Carr: Mr. Speaker, in addition to the jobs the member referred to, there will be jobs going to the Alberta Oil and Gas Orphan Abandonment and Reclamation Association, Gforce Oilfield Services in Lakeland, Dean Smith Oilfield Contracting—

The Speaker: I am afraid those seconds are now gone.

The hon. member for Richmond—Arthabaska.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the energy resource sector employs 740,000 people across Canada. The Kinder Morgan project will have a considerable impact on our country, creating 15,000 new jobs during construction and more than 37,000 more jobs over the following 20 years.

In the meantime, what is the Liberal government doing? It is using taxpayer money to fund students who want to destroy our energy sector.

Oral Questions

My question is simple. When will the Prime Minister stand up for honest Canadian energy workers?

• (1425)

[*English*]

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I had the pleasure of joining the Prime Minister and the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities in Fort McMurray just two weeks ago to do exactly what the hon. member wants us to do.

I can make the same arguments that the hon. member has made about the jobs created, about getting a better price for our oil, and about expanding our export markets. However, I would like to hear members opposite talk about the oceans protection plan. I would like to hear the members opposite talk about a world-class marine response. Why can the members not think about those two things and put one paragraph—

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

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister is talking out of both sides of his mouth.

Canada has the strictest environmental standards in the world when it comes to natural resource development. Our energy resources account for 11% of our GDP. The Trans Mountain project would bring in \$46.7 billion in tax revenue over 20 years to help fund our social programs, and yet the Prime Minister would rather buy oil from foreign countries than support the Canadian workers who develop our natural resources.

What is the Prime Minister waiting for? When will he act like a real leader and protect our economy?

[*English*]

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite has actually said that he thinks the environment is important. That is some progress. Now, why do we not talk about indigenous consultation? Why was it necessary for this government to add many months of consultation with indigenous communities? It is because the Harper government failed. The Harper government was told that it had failed by the Federal Court of Appeal, so we had a choice: repeat its failure or install a better process. We did the sensible thing and established a better process.

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, let us talk about indigenous consultations. In late October 2016, weeks before the pipeline's public approval, assistant deputy minister Erin O'Gorman of the Department of Natural Resources instructed her staff to “give cabinet a legally sound basis to say yes” to Kinder Morgan's pipeline. However, only minutes before, first nations representatives were assured by federal officials that the government had not made a decision on the pipeline.

None of the six organizations that were present actually denied that O'Gorman gave those instructions. Is the minister denying it?

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am sure, as the hon. member knows, this was a historic consultation with indigenous peoples.

Let me remind him that we appointed a ministerial panel, which, by the way, included a former NDP premier of Yukon. It heard from 650 Canadians at 44 public meetings in Alberta and in British Columbia. There were 20,000 email submissions. The online questionnaire received over 35,000 responses. This project was subject to the most—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques.

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the minister calls it historic consultations; I call it deceptive consultations.

[*Translation*]

Either the minister is complicit in this charade or he does not know what is happening in his own department.

His own associate deputy minister, Erin O'Gorman, ordered her staff to give cabinet a sound legal argument for saying yes to Kinder Morgan, while public servants were assuring first nations representatives that a decision had not yet been made. I am not making this up. The media is not making this up. That is what it says in internal documents that were obtained through an access to information request.

Does the minister still dare to deny it?

[*English*]

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are literally dozens of access to information requests that come in to all departments every day and they are available for the Canadian public to look at. As a matter of fact, if people want to go to the NRCan website, they will see literally thousands of emails and opinions that have been offered. Why would the hon. member not just assess what was actually done rather than what he is alleging was said, and he will know that this was the most exhaustive consultation on pipelines—

• (1430)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Salaberry—Suroît.

* * *

[*Translation*]

STATUS OF WOMEN

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's symbolic gestures and words are wonderful, but they are not enough.

We are still waiting for pay equity legislation and it is now 2018. Several women's groups that came here for the G7 summit took the opportunity to remind the government that it is not doing nearly enough to achieve equality and to protect the most vulnerable women.

The Prime Minister stated that he wanted to lead by example at the summit, but what is his plan? How will he convince his G7 counterparts to adopt feminist measures when his own credibility is being called into question?

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government understands that we cannot move forward when half of us are being held back, and that is why we have made gender equality a priority.

With budget 2018, we are taking leadership to address the gender wage gap, to institute proactive pay equity legislation, to enhance parental leave options, to tackle gender-based violence and harassment, to introduce a new entrepreneurship strategy for women, to invest in the sustainability of grassroots organizations that advocate on behalf of women, and so much more.

This is a government that takes gender equality extremely seriously and puts its money where its mouth is.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we have heard that the attack in Toronto may have been inspired by the misogynistic and hateful movement “incels”.

We must acknowledge that attacks from these groups are a form of violence rooted in misogyny. We must believe women and end the hate that they face online and off-line. Saying one is a feminist is simply not enough. We must take action. The special rapporteur for the UN said that the government's fragmented approach to gender-based violence is not working.

The Prime Minister is all words. Where is the concrete plan, with resources, to end gender-based violence in Canada?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is a profoundly serious issue.

I would note that in the last two budgets, there have been specific increases in resources from the Government of Canada to tackle problems of exactly this kind. I also had the opportunity at the beginning of this week to discuss this issue with G7 security ministers, with a view to making sure that those who provide communication services are aware of their responsibilities to work with government and to work with civil society to bring that foul and vile material off the Internet.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the good news is that the government has performed a calculation on the cost of the carbon tax to the average family. Further good news is it has released that document to me. The bad news is all the numbers—

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member knows it is one thing to read something and it is another to use something as a prop and that is not referring to notes.

The hon. member for Carleton has the floor. I am sure he will continue without props.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the government's memos, I can understand why you might mistake them for props.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: The hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot.

*[Translation]***PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT**

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thought we had already said everything there was to say about Phoenix, but apparently I was wrong. Two thousand grievances later, the Superior Court of Quebec has handed down a very important ruling that allows some of the employees affected by the Phoenix fiasco to launch a class action suit for damages.

It makes no sense that federal employees, who simply want what they are owed, should have to go through a grievance process and now a long and costly legal process. This should be a simple matter to resolve.

When will the government compensate all federal employees for the emotional and psychological distress they have suffered because of the Phoenix fiasco?

• (1435)

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her question.

Fixing Phoenix pay system problems remains our highest priority. We have dedicated human, technological, and other resources to fixing the problem. All I can say is that we will not comment on a case before the courts. What we can say to reassure public service employees is that we are committed to looking after them, to fixing the Phoenix problems, and to cleaning up the mess the government left behind.

Some hon. members: Shame, shame!

[English]

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

The Speaker: Order. The House will be suspended for a few minutes to the call of the Chair.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 2:36 p.m.)

SITTING RESUMED

(The House resumed at 2:37 p.m.)

The Speaker: We have order in the House, so we will resume.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

[Translation]

Mr. Steven MacKinnon: Mr. Speaker, I was loudly interrupted by my colleagues on the other side, and I want to reassure public servants that fixing the problems with the Phoenix pay system remains our biggest priority. We are dedicating human, technological, and financial resources to this issue. There is indeed a case before the courts, on which we cannot comment, but what we can say is that we will fix the problems we inherited from the previous government. We will fix the Phoenix pay system for the good of Canada and our public servants.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Quebec Superior Court handed down a very important ruling for workers burned by the Phoenix fiasco. This ruling allows them to file a class action lawsuit against the federal government for damages, but this process will be long and expensive.

In budget 2018, the Liberals committed to compensating all federal public servants for psychological and emotional damage they have suffered. Workers have waited long enough. Instead of fighting them in court, will the government compensate all workers now?

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the problems associated with the Phoenix pay system, of course, were not created by this government, but we are determined to resolve those problems. That is why we are putting the utmost priority on devoting financial, human, and technological resources to fixing that problem.

We cannot comment on the case that is before the courts, but I can reassure all public servants in Canada that we will fix the problems associated with the Phoenix pay system and avoid repeating the problems that were left to us by a government that neglected them.

The Speaker: Order. I think members should know that it is not appropriate to challenge the Chair or to ridicule decisions of the Chair. With that in mind, and assuming it will not happen in the future, I go to the hon. member for Carleton.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government has blacked out the numbers relating to the cost of the carbon tax on middle-class Canadians. The Liberals could tell Canadians today. They could end the carbon-tax cover-up, and tell the truth. How much will this carbon tax cost the average Canadian household?

• (1440)

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in 2015, Canadians made a choice. They chose a government that understands that the environment and the economy go together.

Let me talk about the costs. The costs of climate change by 2020 will be over \$5 billion a year to Canadians. Let me talk about the economic opportunity. It is \$30 trillion.

Why does the Conservative opposition, which understands full well that we need to grow our economy while protecting our environment, not support doing the right thing: put a price on pollution, create the investments in public transit, investments in energy efficiency, the investment in Canadians—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Carleton.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the question was how much this carbon tax would cost the average family. We know through the finance department's document that the costs will “cascade through the economy”. It will raise grocery bills, home heating bills, gasoline costs at the pump, and in thousands of other ways force Canadian families to pay more.

Will the government end the carbon tax cover-up and indicate how much the average family will be forced to pay for this carbon tax?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, interestingly, the document in question was prepared in 2015, before our government came to power, so I assume the party opposite knows the answer. We do not do ATIPs. Our public servants do. We do not interfere with them.

The previous government, I am sure, knows that putting a price on pollution makes sense. It is a way to reduce pollution, increase innovation, and grow our economy.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the document in question was produced the day after the last election when finance officials were calculating how much the Liberal plan to impose a carbon tax would cost Canadians. They produced a briefing document on income deciles to determine how much people would have to pay for the carbon tax.

Now, the government is in continued possession of that document, and surely the Liberals have done other calculations since. It is a simple question: How much will the carbon tax cost the average Canadian family?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 80% of Canadians live in a jurisdiction where there is a price on pollution. Let me say what is happening there. They are the fastest growing economies in the country: Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario, and Quebec.

We need to take action on climate change, because climate change is real. There is a real cost. I wish the party opposite would understand that we need to leave a more sustainable future to our kids. We also need to make sure they have good jobs, and that goes together, so get with the program.

[Translation]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government is in possession of documents that show the costs for middle-class families. It has calculated how much it would cost. Why is the government keeping this information secret instead of sharing it?

I am calling on the government to disclose today how much the carbon tax will cost the average family.

[English]

The Speaker: I will go to the hon. Minister of Environment. I remind her to direct her comments to the Chair.

The hon. Minister of Environment.

[Translation]

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as my counterpart on the other side well knows, the provincial governments are the ones that decide how they will put a price on pollution.

Oral Questions

Take British Columbia, for example. It put a price on carbon and returned revenues to the people. We can do this and invest in clean energy. The provincial governments can do this. I encourage the member opposite to talk to the Conservative Manitoba government, which recognizes that we need to put a price on—

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Carleton.
[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, well, it will be news to anyone who has read 200 pages of the recent government budget that the provinces will decide what the price on carbon will be. In fact, it is the government that is imposing that price, a \$50-a-tonne price, nationwide, so it is not a provincial decision. Every time a budget bill is introduced, finance officials do the calculations on what it will cost taxpayers, which means the government has those numbers.

Once again, how much will an average Canadian family pay under this new, nationally mandated Liberal carbon tax?

•(1445)

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, how many times can I repeat it? It is up to provincial governments to determine what to do with the revenues from carbon pricing. They can return the revenues in a tax cut. If they like tax cuts, then they should support putting a price on pollution and returning it directly back to people. Maybe they want to invest in innovation. I am not sure the party opposite does. However, if they want to invest in clean innovation, they can do that.

There is a huge price on pollution right now. I have three kids. They are demanding, kids are demanding, that we take action to protect our environment and create good jobs. I really wish the party opposite would do that.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it will be further news to the Premier of Saskatchewan that provinces have full discretion about this carbon tax, as the minister has just indicated. Rather, he has been forced to go to court to fight against the Liberal government's national imposition of a carbon tax. Ironically, the participants in that lawsuit will be deprived of information on what the tax will cost.

For the sake of our legal system, will the Liberals at least reveal how much the average Canadian family will have to pay?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not know how much more clear I can be. It is up to provinces to determine what to do with the revenues.

The Province of Saskatchewan is well within its right to take the revenues and do a tax cut, to take the revenues and reduce its PST. It could make investments in innovation. In fact, it actually would help in Saskatchewan where it uses carbon capture and storage. It would incent people to use that technology. It would be cheaper. It would allow a made-in-Saskatchewan solution, like we are doing across the country

. We are going to grow a clean economy. We are—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Carleton.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): All right, Mr. Speaker, this question is for the justice minister.

The justice minister will be appointing lawyers to fight Saskatchewan and the people of Saskatchewan in a court of law. Obviously, people from that province are standing up, fighting for their rights, and opposing this nationally-imposed carbon tax.

The justice minister will be heading up the litigation. Will she provide evidence to the court so it can carry out a proper deliberation on how much this carbon tax will cost the average Canadian taxpayer?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, putting a price on pollution is well within the right of the federal government. However, we want to work with provinces and territories. We want to build a cleaner future. We want to make sure we grow a clean economy, and this is the opportunity.

I do not understand why the party opposite refuses to see this. We are in the clean growth century. Clean solutions will create good jobs. The innovations we do in Canada, in Saskatchewan, in British Columbia, in Ontario, are innovations that we can use across the country and across the world to build a more sustainable future, to grow our economy, to—

Some hon members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I remind the hon. member for Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies and other members that it is not appropriate to be interrupting when someone else is speaking.

The hon. member for Battlefords—Lloydminster.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals continue to strong-arm Saskatchewan. They refuse to recognize that this carbon tax will have a devastating impact on my province.

The Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan has said that the federal government does not understand basic agricultural economic realities. Farmers will be unable to pass along their increased costs to their customers, yet the government continues to threaten the province, and now they have landed themselves in court.

When will the Prime Minister stop being a bully and quit forcing a tax on Saskatchewan?

•(1450)

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have made very clear, it is well within the right of Saskatchewan to make a tax cut, putting money back into the pockets of the people of Saskatchewan. Then we could reduce pollution and put money back in their pockets.

When I go to Saskatchewan, I see the amazing innovations in the agricultural sector. Farmers get it. They are seeing a drought that is impacting on their crops. However, they know how to use zero-till agriculture and climate-resilient crops, all these innovations that we are able to export to the world and create jobs right in Saskatchewan.

Oral Questions

The Speaker: Order, please. I am having trouble hearing the answers when members like the member for Yorkton—Melville and others are yelling throughout the answers.

The hon. member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands.

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is no opportunity. This Liberal carbon tax punishes farmers in rural communities. APAS president Todd Lewis said, “Carbon taxes do not work”, and “producers cannot pass along” the increased costs. The federal government has no idea about this basic economic reality.

Saskatchewan is unique. It has a climate change strategy that will work for us, and it will work for agriculture. We should not have to go to court to protect that.

The Liberals are running roughshod over the provinces where the economy is still working. How can the Minister of Public Safety look his constituents in the face as his government's carbon tax drives them right out of business?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can continue to try to explain basic economics. Putting a price on pollution is a Conservative concept. It is putting a price on what we do not want, pollution, so we get what we do want, innovation.

The Government of Saskatchewan can take the price on pollution and put it back into the pockets of farmers. Farmers are feeling the impacts of climate change. They are seeing droughts. They are seeing flooding. That is impacting on their crops. We all are in this together, and I wish the Conservative Party would join us too.

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: Order.

I know the hon. member for Beauce respects the institution of the House of Commons, and I would ask him to refrain from shouting while questions are being answered.

[*English*]

The hon. member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Natural Resources often stands in the House and proclaims that the Kinder Morgan pipeline will be built. However, his own ministerial panel on Kinder Morgan posed the question on how to square the impact of this project with Canada's climate action commitments.

Since the economy and the environment go hand in hand, can he stand here and proclaim that Canada will meet its 2030 Paris climate targets? If not, why not?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we understand the environment and the economy go together. Unfortunately, we have one party on that side that does not want to protect the environment and another party that does not want to grow the economy. We understand we can do both.

When we made the decision to approve the Trans Mountain expansion, we made sure that we were protecting the environment, that it fit within our climate plans, that we were protecting our

oceans. We also recognized the huge opportunity to create jobs in Alberta, British Columbia, and across the country.

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NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it looks like we have two pipeline ministers.

Today, the Government of British Columbia submitted a reference question to the B.C. Court of Appeal. It seeks to affirm its constitutional right to protect B.C. from the threat of a diluted bitumen spill.

Will the federal government join this new case? If not, why not? If so, why did the government refuse to launch its own reference case regarding federal jurisdiction in this matter?

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are very confident this pipeline is within federal jurisdiction. We have heard this answer from many courts for a long time, including the Supreme Court of Canada. The movement of natural resources from one province to another is a federal responsibility and this government took a decision, because this is in Canada's interest.

Members know the jobs that will be created, the expansion of our export markets, the better price we will get, at the same time that we spend an historic \$1.5 billion on an oceans protection plan. This is a policy that many Canadians—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Richmond Hill.

* * *

INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Majid Jowhari (Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we all know Canada is a leader in research, science, creation, and invention, but when it comes to commercialization of the innovation, we tend to struggle. In my past experience, I have seen this many times.

We invent and create, but can never recapture the rewards of our hard work. For Canadian businesses to grow and create good, well-paying jobs, they need the ability to turn their new ideas into new goods and services that can compete in the world market.

My question is for the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development. What is the government doing to improve the current situation?

Oral Questions

●(1455)

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Richmond Hill for all the advocacy and hard work he has done as a member of the Indo community, promoting intellectual property and talking about the importance of technology transfer. He asks a very important question on World Intellectual Property Day.

We understand and the member is right. We are really good on science and research, but we can and must do better when it comes to commercialization. That is why I am proud to say that our government officially launched the first national IP intellectual strategy today. This strategy will help create a college of patent and trademark agents. It will bring firms together for more patent collective to help them deal with international issues.

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IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last year we saw 50,000 people cross illegally into this country, and experts say this year is even going to be worse, with 300 or 400 illegal border crossers a day expected in Quebec alone.

Law-abiding immigrants and refugees are now stuck waiting months or even years longer, while illegal border crossers cut in line. How is that fair? Canadians are sick and tired of the government doing nothing but throwing more of their money at this crisis.

When will the minister finally act and shut down illegal border crossings?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have taken a responsible approach. We have invested more money into border security operations. We have invested more money into refugee processing so claims can proceed faster.

Those who are deserving of refugee protection get to stay and those who do not get to be removed faster. In fact, the members opposite are on record, calling for more resources to be put into refugee processing. I hope they can join us because that is exactly what we are doing.

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the illegal border crossing problem was created entirely by the irresponsible tweet of the Prime Minister. The government could have fixed the issue, but continues to put it on the backs of hard-working Canadians and legal immigrants to pay that price.

It has been over a year and there is still no Liberal plan except to continue to throw millions of tax dollars at the problem. In fact, the only potential solution that was brought forward so far came from this side of the House.

When will the government give Canadians its plan to deal with this crisis?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we do have a plan. It is called the national contingency plan. It has been developed together with provinces. It has a regionally specific focus. We have been working very closely with Quebec and other provinces in the intergovernmental task force.

What is irresponsible is for that party to pretend it cares about border security operations when it cut almost \$400 million from CBSA. What is irresponsible is for that party to talk about queue jumping and all that when it had a terrible record with respect to processing of asylum claims, family reunification, and so on. The Conservatives have an abysmal record.

The Speaker: I am sure the hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot is familiar with the Standing Orders. He no doubt knows about the rule against interrupting, and he will not do so in the future, I hope.

The hon. member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, despite what the minister says, it is chaos right now at the Canada-U.S. border.

The efforts of our Canada Border Services Agency officers are constantly being undermined by the Prime Minister's naive world view. If the Prime Minister disapproves of our current border laws, he has the power to change them, but until that happens, he has a responsibility to restore order in Saint-Bernard-de-Lacolle. The minister just said there is a plan.

What is the Prime Minister's plan for stopping illegal immigration at the border?

[English]

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government has two prime objectives. One is ensuring that all Canadian laws are fully enforced. The second is to ensure that all Canadian international obligations are fully honoured. We have succeeded on both of those fronts to date, thanks to the excellent work of the RCMP, the CBSA, and the Department of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship. Budget 2018 provided an extra \$173 million to ensure that we can continue to succeed in this endeavour.

I want to congratulate all the officers who do such extraordinary work in protecting our borders.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, despite the minister's answer that there are two plans, no plan has been provided in response to the opposition's request. We asked for a specific plan. There is no plan other than throwing good money after bad. The problem is that people continue to pour in through Roxham Road. No one is telling them that it does not work that way.

What is the plan? We want the Prime Minister's plan.

Oral Questions

• (1500)

[English]

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, those who approach our borders need to understand that irregular crossings are not a free ticket to Canada. If they cross in that manner, they will be arrested and questioned, they will be identified both biographically and biometrically, they will be checked against Canadian and U.S. databases for any immigration, criminal, or security flags that exist, they will be required to prove that they have a legitimate asylum claim, and if they cannot prove that, they will be removed from Canada to their country of origin.

That is what Canadian law requires, and that is what we will deliver.

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STATUS OF WOMEN

Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): Mr. Speaker, women with mental health or cognitive-related issues are four times more likely to report experiencing sexual violence. The government's response to this shocking reality has been with Bill C-65 and social development programs. This is woefully inadequate, due to the harsh reality.

I would like to hear the government explain to us today why it is not taking this issue seriously and what it is actually going to do now.

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we share the member's horror at the experience women have every single day in this country with gender-based violence. That is why, as a former minister of status of women, I was so honoured to be part of creating the very first federal gender-based violence strategy, which we have funded to the tune of at least \$100 million, with more in budget 2018.

My colleague, the Minister of Status of Women, is currently working with grassroots organizations to ensure the full implementation of the gender-based violence strategy.

Bill C-65 is historic legislation in that it will provide protection for federally regulated workers and—

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*[Translation]***TAXATION**

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Europe, Japan, Australia, and several other countries make web giants pay their fair share of taxes. Quebec will soon do the same and Quebec society has been asking the federal government to do so for months now.

Do you know whose name was added to that already long list today? That of the Liberal-dominated Standing Committee on International Trade. The committee just recommended that web giants be taxed and that they charge sales tax. It is high time. I get that we want to talk about taxation at the G7, but when it comes to sales tax we are the last fools to do anything about it.

What are they doing?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, taxing web giants is an important issue. We want to find an approach that will both preserve a fair tax system and support an innovative economy.

That is why the Minister of Finance is working with his partners at the OECD. He promised them that he would come up with a collaborative approach. We do not want to take a piecemeal approach. We want a careful, collaborative, and fair approach.

[English]

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately for the workers in Grand Bank, their Liberal connections do not run deep enough for them to keep their jobs. The town has even had to hire a company here in Ottawa to raise awareness on the issue, because their Liberal MPs remain silent.

Let us refresh. The minister gave a lucrative surf clam quota worth millions to his friends, who did not have a company, did not have a boat, and did not have multiple first nations partners.

Since Liberal MPs from the Rock will not ask the question, could the Minister of Environment please tell the hard-working families of Grand Bank how much her carbon tax is going to cost them?

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Bonavista—Burin—Trinity, actually, who has met with the minister often to talk about this issue and others.

The fact that there is a new participant in the surf clam fishery should be no surprise to the Conservatives. In fact, they started a process three years ago to accomplish the very same thing. The difference is, unlike the previous government, our robust process included indigenous communities. We are proud that the best proposal was selected and that the greatest number of Atlantic Canadians will benefit, including indigenous partners from across five different provinces.

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*[Translation]***FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's disastrous trip to India continues to have serious implications for Canada. Canadian pulse exports have plummeted by 80%, jeopardizing this \$4-billion industry.

Things have gone from bad to worse. The Indian government just announced a three-month embargo on yellow pea imports from Canada. Canadian producers are sick and tired of having to pay for the Prime Minister's false accusations.

What is the Prime Minister waiting for to issue an apology to the Indian government?

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my hon. colleague's question. I am a bit surprised, but I appreciate it. We are aware of India's moves on pea imports.

For a party whose only agricultural idea I heard was how to end supply management, I am surprised that he would ask the question. We have and will continue to make sure that supply management thrives in this country.

• (1505)

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's conspiracy theory has destroyed our trading relationship with India. Canadian pulse producers are already facing 50% duties, and now India has imposed basically a three-month ban on yellow pea imports. Our pea exports to India are down 80%, putting a \$4-billion pulse industry at risk.

When will the Prime Minister apologize to the Indian government, because does he know who is paying for these false accusations? Canadian farmers.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, I am surprised but pleased that he has some interest in the agricultural sector. We have and are going to continue to work with the Indian officials to rectify the situation.

I would ask my hon. colleague and critic to make sure that his party supports supply management, because supply management is vital to the agricultural sector. This government has and will continue to support supply management.

* * *

STATUS OF WOMEN

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada is hosting G7 countries throughout 2018 and at the leaders' summit discussions in June in Charlevoix, Quebec. The empowerment of women is at the head of this agenda, and it is critical in these talks, since the empowerment of women can achieve global peace, can achieve economic empowerment, and can assist economies in becoming more inclusive and more generous.

Now, can the Minister of Status of Women tell us what she is doing at these talks to bring about gender-based analysis and gender-based analysis plus?

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary for Status of Women, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Vancouver Centre for her question and for her tireless advocacy. Advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is a top priority for Canada's 2018 G7 presidency. This week, two key meetings of feminist leaders, the Gender Equality Advisory Council and the Women 7 (W7), were convened in Ottawa. Through their work, grassroots and feminist voices from various backgrounds will help G7 leaders identify the most pressing issues facing the world's women and girls.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, media are reporting that the Prime Minister is weaponizing

the public affairs division of the Canadian Armed Forces. Our military is not a weapon for the Prime Minister to use against members of the media and opposition MPs who criticize and disagree with his government's failing Liberal defence policies.

When will the Prime Minister stop using all the resources of the federal government to attack anyone who criticizes the Liberal government or has legitimate questions for him?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is very proud of the new defence policy, wherein we are focusing on people. We are going to have a 70% increase in the defence budget by 2025. As we consult Canadians across this country, we want to make sure that this defence policy is also now communicated to Canadians, because it was developed by them.

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*[Translation]***FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the Prime Minister has finally raised his concerns with the King of Saudi Arabia regarding the imprisonment of Raif Badawi. I thank him for that.

However, a lot of work remains to be done before Mr. Badawi can finally return to his family in Sherbrooke. Offering him honorary citizenship could provide the government with new diplomatic levers to secure his release. Since his imprisonment, Mr. Badawi has been awarded important prizes, recognitions, and distinctions and has received support from around the world. It is time for Canada to do its part.

Will the government grant Mr. Badawi honorary citizenship?

Mr. Matt DeCoursey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister spoke with the King of Saudi Arabia this week to express his deep concern regarding the imprisonment of Raif Badawi. We are asking that Mr. Badawi be pardoned. We continue to work with Mr. Badawi's wife, a strong and courageous woman. Our objective is to see Mr. Badawi reunited with his family, and we continue to do everything we can to achieve that.

* * *

• (1510)

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Mr. David de Burgh Graham (Laurentides—Labelle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are concerned about rail safety. That is why the Minister of Transport launched the rail safety improvement program.

This program improves the safety of our railways and railway crossings and promotes public awareness of rail safety.

Oral Questions

Could the minister update Canadians on what progress has been made under this new program and what challenges the government is facing?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Laurentides—Labelle for his question and for the good work that he does on the transportation file.

I would like to reiterate that rail safety is my number one priority. I also want to mention that, on March 22, everyone here in the House voted on funding for a number of projects, including the one that the member just mentioned. Fortunately, the government voted in favour of that initiative, which is very important for public safety. However, Mr. Harper's Conservatives opposed it. I cannot understand that. They put partisan interests above the safety of Canadians. I do not understand that.

* * *

[*English*]

TAXATION

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are telling small family-run businesses like campgrounds that they are too small to be a small business. They are faced with crippling new tax bills, yet the minister keeps saying over and over that nothing has happened and nothing has changed, but it was the Liberals that ended a review that would have restored access to the small business tax rate for these small businesses. Even several of their own Liberal colleagues, including the Minister of Fisheries, agree that these tax increases are completely outrageous.

Will the Liberals finally stop their attack on small family campgrounds and fix this ridiculous problem?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government recognizes the important role that small businesses play in creating jobs and growing the middle class.

With respect to the small business tax deduction, I want to point out that we have not changed the tax rules and that the same rules still apply. Of the over 20,000 small and medium-sized businesses reviewed by the CRA, fewer than 20 businesses classified as recreational vehicle parks and recreational camps were denied the deduction.

I would like to remind my colleague opposite that, when his party was in power, consultations were held with sector partners and his government decided not to make any changes.

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IMMIGRATION, CITIZENSHIP AND REFUGEES

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, GPQ): Mr. Speaker, according to the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, asylum seekers may have to wait up to 11 years for a hearing.

Last week, Ottawa promised to bring out a new triage system this week. We are still waiting.

My question is simple: when will we get this triage system?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada remains an open and welcoming country to those in need of protection, but our government is committed to orderly migration.

[*English*]

We have invested \$173 million in border security operations and faster processing by the IRB. Prior to this, the Immigration and Refugee Board had achieved a 40% increase in its productivity rate. We are working very closely with Quebec to make sure that we look at all options on the table with respect to faster processing of work permits and triaging people away from Quebec to other parts of Canada, when they wish to do so.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, GPQ): Mr. Speaker, that will not do. Our resources are overloaded at the border crossings, at Roxham Road, and in the shelters. Everyone is overwhelmed.

The minister promised a new triage system. Eight days later, nothing has changed.

My question is simple: when will we get this triage system?

[*English*]

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member will be happy to know that we are continuing to work with Quebec and Ontario to put together a triage system. Some asylum seekers who received work permits have indicated a desire to live in other parts of Quebec. Others are going to Ontario. We are working on those plans. We have meetings and calls in place to ensure that this plan works through all eventualities. We will continue to be engaged in this issue. We have invested in border security operations and the Immigration and Refugee Board.

* * *

[*Translation*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, at any rate, it is clear we will not get it tomorrow.

The Montreal metropolitan community has just passed a unanimous resolution against the proposed nuclear waste dump in Chalk River. The dump would hold one million cubic metres of radioactive waste that could leak out and contaminate the Ottawa River and ultimately reach the St. Lawrence River.

Nuclear waste management is not a matter to be taken lightly. Quebeckers have no desire to be poisoned.

Is the government aware of the risk? Will it promise to reject this dangerous proposal?

Business of Supply

● (1515)

[English]

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the safety of Canadians and the protection of the environment are our top priorities with respect to nuclear waste management. As a result of robust participation by Canadians in the review process, the proposed near surface disposal facility at Chalk River labs would house only low-level material to ensure its safe, secure, and long-term storage. The environmental assessment, conducted by the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, will look at every aspect of the project to examine any potential impacts. The public will be engaged.

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that was a rather humdrum question period. I am sure you were wishing it could go on and on.

In the spirit of that, I would ask the government House leader if she could please let us know what is going to be happening for the rest of this week, and next week.

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today we will continue with debate on the NDP opposition motion.

Tomorrow, we will take up report stage and third reading debate of Bill S-5, the tobacco and vaping products act.

On Monday, we will commence report stage debate of Bill C-48, the oil tanker moratorium act.

[Translation]

Next Tuesday will be an allotted day.

On Wednesday, we will consider report stage and third reading of Bill C-21, an act to amend the Customs Act.

[English]

Last, discussions have taken place between the parties, and if you seek it, I think you will find unanimous consent for the following motion:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, following Question Period on Wednesday, May 9, 2018, the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole in order to welcome the athletes of the 2018 PyeongChang Olympic and Paralympic Games; provided that: a) the Speaker be permitted to preside over the Committee of the Whole from the Speaker's chair and make welcoming remarks on behalf of the House; b) the names of the athletes present be deemed read and printed in the House of Commons Debates for that day; c) only authorized photographers be permitted to take photos during the proceedings of the Committee; and, d) when the proceedings of the Committee have concluded, the Committee shall rise.

The Speaker: Does the hon. government House leader 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.

(Motion agreed to)

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POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTIONS

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I am grieved by the disrespect that occurred during this question period. It should not go unmarked that I have not ever seen, and I do not know if in the annals of this House any Speaker has ever seen, the disrespect shown by members of the Conservative Party, rising in unison against a ruling of the Speaker. It was unconscionable, undemocratic, and unparliamentary, and they should apologize as a group. The violations of the rules include interrupting a Speaker when speaking, standing when the Speaker is speaking, challenging a ruling of the Speaker, and doing so in a way that brings disrespect and dishonour to this place.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands. This place cannot function without a certain level of order despite differences, and that means, in my belief, that we do have to accept the rulings of the Speaker. I appreciate the intervention from the member.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS*[English]***BUSINESS OF SUPPLY**

OPPOSITION MOTION—PAPAL APOLOGY ON RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. Michael McLeod (Northwest Territories, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs.

I was a little reluctant to stand up today to speak to this motion. However, I felt it was my responsibility as an indigenous member of Parliament to talk about this very important issue, which has left its mark on our history. It is an issue we would rather move past. However, the issue continues to warrant recognition, and it is part of some very important recommendations that were made by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. This is number 58 of the 94 recommendations that were brought forward.

We were all very happy to see the inquiry start in 2008. It was an opportunity to document and talk about the history of the residential schools and their impact. The conclusion of that report is also important to note. The commission found that the school system amounted to what was considered cultural genocide. There were many students who attended the different schools across the country over the years. A total of over 150,000 students attended residential schools. It was for a fairly long period of time. It went on for 120 years. Of those 150,000 students, 32,000 were sexually assaulted.

Business of Supply

Some of those people were my friends. Some were people I knew, people I grew up with. Almost everyone in my community attended residential school. Everyone from my generation or older attended residential school. Everyone in my family attended residential school. Everyone in my wife's family attended residential school. The residential school experience in the north is still very fresh. It is still very new and talked about, and the impacts are huge.

I belong to the Deh Cho Tribal Council. I am a member of the Fort Providence Métis Council. My community is located on the Mackenzie River. We call it *deh cho*, which means “big river” in the Dene language.

When the Catholics first came to my area in the 1800s, they settled along the shores of the Great Slave Lake, and my family, the people of the Deh Cho, were concerned. One of my great-grandmothers talked to the men in my community and said that the church could not stay there because it was not a good place to set up a community or a mission. They sent the men to convince the church to move to the present location of Fort Providence. It was fortunate that they did that, because the church would never have survived in the first location where they set up. It was a flood zone, and it was dangerous for ice. It was not a very good hunting spot.

The church moved, and the small population in my community was very excited that the church was going to build a mission, because it was going to help the community and create opportunity for people to work. The first mission was built with many members of my community and surrounding areas. The different clans also had people working on the mission itself. In fact, we had a second mission built in 1930, and we also had a church built. It created enough activity to help people gain some extra money, because everyone was living on hunting, trapping, and gathering.

There was some opportunity created because of the mission. However, I grew up in the community where the residential school was located. The Dene name for our community is Zhahti Kue, which means “the priest's house” or “the priest's community”. We do not like that. We would rather not use that name. We have told people in our neighbouring communities and everybody else that this is not a name we would like to be known for.

● (1520)

We have a graveyard in our community which is still there. We have erected a huge cement marker and on it are all the names of the people who are buried there. People came from all over the north to Fort Providence to attend the mission. There were many young children who passed away. The names on this monument are names of families from all over the Northwest Territories. Some of the people were very young. Some were babies, and some were two or three years old. I do not know the history of why all these people passed away while in the care of the mission, but there were many. We have made it so people from different communities can come and look where some of their family ended up because nobody was shipped home.

It is also important to note that this graveyard was also used by the mission for the priests and nuns who died while there. When they created a new graveyard they took all the nuns and priests out of this graveyard and set up another one, but left everybody else in the old graveyard.

Soon after the mission was built, people started to realize the mission was not going to bring all the benefits and positive things people had expected. We started to hear the horror stories. I grew up listening to horror stories of children being abused while in the mission's care. Those acts were conducted by priests, nuns, and brothers who were part of the mission, part of the Catholic Church. There were really terrible things done to those children. There were children who were sexually abused and children who had bones broken. Children who had issues like bedwetting were grabbed and thrown in tubs of cold water and scrubbed with brooms. There were all kinds of mind games being played. There were children who were not allowed to sit in chairs and had to stand all day. They were only allowed to sit down when the priest was coming. There were all kinds of things going on.

We are seeing the lasting effects. The fallout of residential schools is still very prevalent in our communities. Addictions are something we know are a result of residential schools. That is not the only cause, and there are other causes, but there is the trauma that was inflicted on the aboriginal population. It has really caused a lot of cultural disconnect such as loss of language, culture, and traditional abilities. Some of the hunting and trapping pursuits are no longer happening. We have lost a lot when it comes to pride in our identity. It has resulted in addictions, in suicides, and in many issues that are going to plague us for a long time.

It really embarrassed us, in a way, to have housed a residential school in our community, a community we are very proud of. At the same time, our adults, our elders, were very helpless to stop the abuse. As a young child, I watched the float planes come in and the children would be gathered up. I watched as some of my family and friends cried and begged their parents not to be put on that plane. It really created a lot of hard feelings between the families.

Our Prime Minister has talked to the Pope about an apology. I have real mixed feelings. We need the church to acknowledge there was wrongdoing. We need to acknowledge that the church has a responsibility for what has happened to many of the people who attended residential schools.

● (1525)

It was very disappointing to have the Pope say that the church did not want to apologize. I think that members of the church have to speak up. We would then be able to accept the apology and be ready to move on.

It is my responsibility to speak here today because historically, the people who made the decision to bring in the residential school policy were sitting in these very seats, one of which I now occupy. We want to make change. We have a number of recommendations to bring forward and things that we need to see dealt with. I am hoping that this will be one more that we will be able to put aside and thank the Pope.

● (1530)

Mr. Jim Eglinski (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was very fortunate throughout my 35 years as a police officer to serve in aboriginal communities, and I have a very good understanding of the hardships and problems that have arisen since the residential schools.

Business of Supply

In 2009, the Pope did apologize to aboriginal leaders at the time. In 2010, the church did apologize.

I wonder if the member could explain to us why it is so important that the current Pope apologize to the aboriginal people of Canada themselves.

Mr. Michael McLeod: Mr. Speaker, it was a huge moment when we had our former prime minister apologize to the people who went to residential schools. It went a long way in acknowledging that there was a wrongdoing. However, although the principles behind the residential schools were established by the government, they were run by the church. The church was in charge of who ran the residential schools, who worked with the children, and which priest or nun worked where. The issues that we are talking about, the abuse that happened, were done by priests, nuns, brothers, and others who were working for the church. They were part of the Catholic religion, and they were the ones carrying out what the government had put together as a policy.

We have many people who are strong Catholics and still part of the church, and they need to know that the church has taken responsibility for its part, like we all have to.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have worked in the north. It is a beautiful place with beautiful people. It is an amazing story of survival after what they have gone through.

As the member knows, many other churches have already apologized: the United Church, the Anglican Church, and some of the dioceses of the Catholic Church.

As the member has mentioned, and perhaps he would like to expand on it a little more, it was the dictates of the Catholic Church at the time to take the Indian out of the child, to treat them as savages and to turn them into civilized beings. Does he not think that, just on the very teachings of the church and the direction to the nuns and priests, that the highest order of the Catholic Church, the Pope, should take responsibility for what the Catholic Church did to the people of Canada?

Mr. Michael McLeod: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated earlier, I had mixed feelings about speaking to this motion and all of us in the House of Commons passing a motion to call on the Pope to issue an apology, because forcing someone to apologize does not really sit well with me. However, I think it is important that we flag the issue that the Pope has not really taken responsibility for what has happened in our communities.

We have generations of people who attended residential schools. It is important to note that there were two phases of the residential schools. There were residential schools run by the church, but for the people of my generation who attended residential schools, by that time, the government had taken them over, and the program was more hospitable and things improved quite a bit. However, the church had a role. The people who worked in the residential schools and did so much damage were working for the Catholic Church, and I think the Pope needs to step up.

• (1535)

The Deputy Speaker: Before resuming debate, I do notice there are quite a number of members who wish to participate in the period

for question and comments, noting most of the time there is only five minutes, so the Chair will do the best job he can to get as many members participating as possible. If members could keep their interventions as concise as possible, that would allow other members to participate.

Resuming debate, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities.

Mr. Marc Miller (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):

[Member spoke in Mohawk]

[English]

Mr. Speaker, these words I spoke in Kanienkehaka, or Mohawk, would have been prohibited in a residential school. The speaker, more often than not a young child, would have faced punishment, often corporal in nature, and sometimes nothing short of torture in order to associate the pain with the speaking of this so-called barbaric language, which, for anyone who attempts to learn it will quickly realize it is an exceedingly rich and complex language, far richer in many aspects than the two languages I was given.

My friend, Elder Satewas Gabriel of Kanesatake, tells of the experience of his mother Oronhiokon, or Gladys, at Shingwauk Home in Sault Ste. Marie where she was taken at age five, miserable because she missed her mother, not to return home until she was 16. There her language was prohibited, but she fought it bitterly sneaking it in private with her sister Wahri, or Mary, at every occasion she was safely out of earshot.

This single act of defiance was key in ensuring that the branch of the Gabriel family in Kanesatake has been able to preserve an unbroken chain of language transmission to this day, thanks to Oronhiokon's deep spiritual belief that the Creator would be offended if her children did not speak the language that was given to them.

On August 6, 1993, Archbishop Michael Peers, because we are talking about an Anglican school, on behalf of the Anglican Church offered in part the following apology to residential school victims of the Anglican-run system:

I am sorry, more than I can say, that we tried to remake you in our image, taking from you your language and the signs of your identity.

I am sorry, more than I can say, that in our schools so many were abused physically, sexually, culturally and emotionally.

On behalf of the Anglican Church of Canada, I present our apology.

This apology, indeed symbolic, put the Anglican church on a long path still incomplete toward reconciliation. This, sadly, has not occurred with the Catholic Church, whose institution left wounds equally deep, which is why we support the motion being debated today. My own frustration with the time being spent on this motion today is the opportunity it takes away from what we can be doing as Canadians and as a government to address the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action.

I will address a number of these actions which will make real concrete differences in people's lives.

Business of Supply

[Translation]

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's calls to action, section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples are guiding our efforts. All the calls to action require us to take meaningful and measurable action to provide first nations, and Inuit and Métis peoples with the tools, resources, and supports they need to overcome the harm done by residential schools.

I would like to note that total federal expenditures for indigenous programs will increase from over \$11 billion in 2015-16 to more than \$15 billion in 2021-22, an increase of 34% over six years.

These investments in education, infrastructure, and training are contributing directly to securing a better quality of life for indigenous people while building a stronger, more unified, and more prosperous Canada.

We are also working with first nations partners to build a new fiscal relationship that will provide first nations communities with adequate, predictable, and sustainable funding.

• (1540)

[English]

Delivering on call to action 11, budget 2016 set aside \$1.53 billion over five years to increase Canada student grants amounts, followed by \$329 million per year after that.

Budget 2017 took further substantive steps to provide the necessary tools, through an additional investment of \$3.4 billion over five years, to advance reconciliation and promote skills and opportunities that would empower indigenous peoples to seize opportunities in today's economy and the economy of tomorrow.

[Translation]

In 2018, we added an investment of \$5 billion over five years to bridge the socio-economic gaps between indigenous and non-indigenous Canadians, including new funding to eliminate tuberculosis in Inuit Nunangat, funding for clean drinking water, funding for first nations and Métis housing and for Inuit-led housing, and funding to recognize indigenous rights and strengthen indigenous communities' capacity for self-determination.

Let us look at the impact these changes will have on first nations children. In response to call to action no. 3, which calls upon all levels of government to implement Jordan's principle, the Government of Canada committed \$382.5 million over three years in July 2016.

From July 2016 to March 2018, over 70,000 requests for products, services, and support for first nations children were approved, in keeping with Jordan's principle. Those include requests for mental health care services, speech therapy, education services, and medical equipment.

We created Indigenous Services Canada in response to call to action no. 5, which calls on the federal, provincial, territorial, and indigenous governments to develop culturally appropriate parenting programs for indigenous families.

In response to funding pressures faced by child and family services agencies, the Government of Canada increased resources for prevention so that children would be safe and families could stay together and proposed additional funding of \$1.4 billion over six years for first nations child and family services agencies.

[English]

In direct response to call to action 41, the Government of Canada created a public inquiry into the causes of, and remedies for, the disproportionate victimization of indigenous women and girls. The Commission of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls delivered its interim report on November 1, 2017.

To that end, I want to salute the courage of the women who stepped forward and publicly shared their grief, in particular my friend Cheryl McDonald, who lost her sister Carleen 29 years ago. These are wounds that are still open and will take much more than the length of the inquiry to heal, but Cheryl needs to know that every member of the House, and all of Canada, is here for her.

From education, to health services, from supports to United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, from protecting languages to asking the Pope to apologize on behalf of the Catholic Church, our government is taking action on advancing reconciliation.

I would like to end by thanking my hon. colleague for bringing forward this motion, for his determination, and for all the work he has done to see call to action 58 and, indeed, all of the calls to action move forward.

I want to reiterate and personally apologize to at least two of the members who I know in the House, who spent time in residential schools, for the wounds this may be reopening. On my personal behalf, I apologize.

[Member spoke in Mohawk]

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for thanking and recognizing me in his speech. I do not need to be thanked.

I am a little concerned that he would use a day like today to promote government budgets. To me, this is still not getting it. Governments, his government and previous governments, have all been part of this.

I would like to ask my hon. colleague a question, particularly about the fact that the government is spending money, in the B.C. Superior Court and in Ontario Superior Court, fighting survivors of residential schools over the basic legal principle of procedural fairness. What does procedural fairness mean? It means that government lawyers suppressed the evidence of the torture and rape of children, had cases thrown out, and then said that they were not entitled to have those hearings reopened. This is what is going on today with that member's government. It has gone on with previous government.

Business of Supply

As a sign of good faith today, would the hon. member call upon his justice minister to call off the lawyers and explain to Canadians why indigenous people, who are survivors, do not have the same basic legal rights that everybody else in the country is afforded? The government cannot continue to fight survivors in court.

• (1545)

Mr. Marc Miller: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member makes a legitimate point. The basic point of it is that we have a lot more work to do as a government, as a people, and as individuals in advancing reconciliation.

The member mentioned the numbers. I have spoken to a number of indigenous people, and I do not purport to speak for them. However, when I talk about this resolution, they acknowledge the symbolic value of it. At the same time, they ask “What are you doing?”, and inevitably the conversation does cover the financial amounts. I believe it is less known how much the government is putting into reconciliation, into health services, into language advancement, and into ensuring we engage significantly.

In my mind, this call to action is not the most important one. In fact, it deflects from what the government can be doing directly to advance reconciliation. A lot of people have questioned whether we should have it. There is some deep symbolic value to it, but I believe our time is better spent advancing the calls to action that this government controls. Indeed to cure what is now going on to a millennium of injustice in four years is unrealistic and we need to take the time necessary to do it properly.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am a bit confused. The member opposite talked about the actions that his government should be taking on the Truth and Reconciliation report, and I truly believe it should be taking action. However, the Liberals are in year three of their mandate. Other than the murdered and missing aboriginal women inquiry, which is in tatters, I am not sure which actions have been accomplished in three years. Could he please enlighten me?

Mr. Marc Miller: Mr. Speaker, I would be glad to sit down with the member opposite, with more than two budgets in hand, and go through the concrete measures that we are putting forward. If the member looks at the boil water advisories, concrete work has been done there.

In answer to the member's comment that we need to do this in three years, we need to do it promptly and we need to keep at it. However, the expectation, as I mentioned in my previous answer, that we can cure what is now running on half a millennium in three years, is not only unrealistic, it whips up sentiment that we do not want to whip up, particularly when we need to make important, detailed advancements in a number of communities that vary widely. Therefore, to expect everything to be done in three years is a perspective I do not share.

• (1550)

Mr. Nick Whalen (St. John's East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member mentioned, today's debate is bringing up a lot of deep emotions for a lot of people.

In my riding of St. John's East, when I was a boy, there was a notorious scandal involving an orphanage and the rape and molestation of boys at the Mount Cashel Orphanage. It had gone

on for decades and was covered up. Subsequently it was brought before a police commission. The Christian Brothers apologized and paid recompense and compensation to the victims. However, the Roman Catholic Church continues to fight it. It still, even to this day, is in appeals before the courts for its role in covering up the molestation and rape of boys at the church.

One of my constituents wrote today “This issue hits close to home in Newfoundland and Labrador. There was an organization founded called Pathways to offer specific supports and services to religious institutional abuse survivors and their families.” The constituent continues, “An apology from the Pope would mean a great deal to survivors and move us further down the path towards reconciliation and healing.”

I wonder if my hon. colleague's own constituents have shared the same feeling, that an apology is required.

Mr. Marc Miller: Mr. Speaker, I believe all of Canada should feel that it is required.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with my hon. colleague and friend from Edmonton Strathcona.

First, I would like to acknowledge my colleague from Timmins—James Bay for tabling this very important motion today. This is a motion reads:

That, in responding to the call of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to move our nation on a path of true healing for the crimes of the residential school era, the House:

- (a) invite Pope Francis to participate in this journey with Canadians by responding to Call to Action 58 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report and issue a formal papal apology for the role of the Canadian Catholic Church in the establishment, operations, and abuses of the residential schools;
- (b) call upon the Canadian Catholic Church to live up to their moral obligation and the spirit of the 2006 Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement and resume best efforts to raise the full amount of the agreed upon funds; and
- (c) call on the Catholic entities that were involved in the running of the residential schools to make a consistent and sustained effort to turn over relevant documents when called upon by survivors of residential schools, their families, and scholars working to understand the full scope of the horrors of the residential school system in the interest of truth and reconciliation.

This is probably one of the most difficult speeches I have been ever been asked to deliver. I was reluctant, like my friend and colleague from the Northwest Territories, to rise today and speak on this issue. I was not sure if it was my place to share the stories of others, especially those who are living with trauma, and the survivors of the residential school system. However, I have always seen my role as a parliamentarian as giving a voice to my community. That is why I sought counsel from my friends, chiefs, elders, and my own family in my riding. They unanimously urged me to rise today and gave me permission to share their stories with Canadians. I want to recognize them for their strength and for bringing forward their message in such an expedient way.

When it comes to the trauma people experienced in the residential school system, I struggle to find the words to relay the horrors of these events that have been passed on to me. I am absolutely floored by the strength and the commitment by these people to share their stories, some of them for the first time, to strangers on how they feel about this. Clearly, they have identified this as very important in their words to me.

Business of Supply

I will begin with my own story. In my family I did witness, but did not live, the effects of the trauma of residential schools and their aftermath. I have seen the pain in my family. It never truly leaves a person.

As a child I was adopted by a stepfather from the Fisher River Cree Nation. For years, I believed my father was the eldest of his siblings. It took years before I realized my father was not the oldest. He had two older brothers who were lost to the residential school system, something so painful that in our family we do not talk about it. I learned this from my aunts and uncles. My grandma lives with this terrible guilt and horror that has affected her. My father, Frank, his siblings, and especially my grandma Mabel, have been deeply affected by the loss of his brothers.

Wayne and Stewart were taken from their mother against her wishes and placed in residential schools in the care of religious orders overseen by the government. The lives of my two uncles were completely destroyed. These are words from my father. They were badly abused in residential schools and it was impossible for them to find any sense of normal at any level of their lives. This had an enormous effect on the family. This is why my father agrees that the Pope should apologize for the role that the Catholic Church played in residential schools, because he is the head of the church.

He also says that it is simply the right and Christian thing to do. It would help those affected directly and indirectly to move one step closer to healing and help them find peace. The Government of Canada has apologized and through Truth and Reconciliation is facilitating a healing process.

It would mean a lot to the survivors and their families to hear an apology from the church. I am honoured that my father, for the first time, had the strength to share these words with me last night. I hope I can honour and remember my uncles, Wayne and Stewart, all survivors, and those who did not survive, by telling their stories today in the House.

•(1555)

A papal apology is merely one of the 94 recommendations identified. However, as everyone in this chamber knows, these recommendations will ring hollow unless we have the courage to meaningfully follow through on them. We are inviting the Pope to be part of this journey and apologize, just as he has to the victims of sexual abuse in Ireland.

My good friend and elder, Wallace Samuel, said, “Many survivors would appreciate a sincere apology from the leadership of the Church and for the churches to take responsibility for the effects of residential schools. An apology would help in the process of healing. The legacy of residential schools still affects many first nation people and communities. It affects the present generation of residential school survivors, their children, grandchildren, and families.

“Residential schools were managed and supervised by the Christian churches—Catholic, United, Anglican churches. Staff were supervised and trained by the churches. Church staff went into communities and took children five years and older from their families and homes. They brought them to a residential school, often miles from their homes. The staff inducted their religious policies

and beliefs upon the first nations children. Children were not allowed to speak their language and were punished when caught not speaking English. The children were in a prison setting, with very strict rules. Many were assaulted by staff and put through very devastating experiences. The goal was to beat the Indian out of a child.”

He said, “Many survivors would appreciate a sincere apology from the leadership of the churches and that churches take responsibility for the effects of residential schools. An apology would help in the process of healing. The residential school is still affecting many first nation people and communities, affecting the present generation of residential school survivors, their children, grandchildren, and families.”

I also heard from my good friend Grace Frank, who said, “My life in Alberni residential school and Tofino Christie residential school was a living hell. I am a survivor of residential schools. To this day, I still live with the horror of being physically, emotionally, mentally, and sexually abused. I live in a small town, where I see my abuser almost every day. I don't understand how this man got away with so many charges and never went to jail. The amount of money I got was a drop in the bucket. A little bit of money and my abuser walks free. I was robbed of my childhood. I was torn from my family, who loved me so much, only to be abused in so many ways. I was forced to learn to speak English. If I didn't, I was strapped and beaten. I carried that abuse with me for most of my life and became an alcoholic to avoid pain. Today I am a strong and courageous woman and proud to be first nation.”

I am also proud to know her.

She added, “I feel an apology from the Pope will help myself and others that suffered so much abuse in residential schools. It is this reason why I dislike church so much. An apology from the church I feel would make a world of difference for residential survivors.”

In the words of Ahousaht Chief Greg Louie, “In the spirit of reconciliation and healing, an apology from the Pope would be so meaningful to acknowledge the wrongs, like being taken away from our families, punished for speaking our language, sexual/physical abuse, and those that died in residential school. This would be the highest church leader apologizing. This would be a new level of reconciliation and healing.” He was supported by the Tye Haida hereditary Chief Maquina in these words.

Business of Supply

Elder Moses Martin wrote to me, saying, “The government should strongly support and fund language revitalization so that our people, young and old, can begin to understand what previous generations were saying about our values, our stories, that were lost because of the horrible treatment we suffered. With all the impacts of the Indian residential school system, including poor nutrition, neglect, hearing loss from being hit in the head so hard and so often that my ear drums were broken multiple times, isolation from our parents as well as poor nutrition and dental health that has led to serious dental and health issues for myself and so many others. And our health benefits keep getting cut back. Our medicines are not covered. I can't get hearing aids. The Pope's apology as well as Canada's is pretty hollow if they don't remedy the issues their actions created. In my opinion, all Indian residential school medical expenses should be covered for the intergenerational survivors as well.”

Judith Sayers, president of the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council, said, “There is no doubt that the Catholic Church representatives inflicted physical, mental, and emotional abuse on indigenous children that attended Catholic run residential schools. It has created ongoing intergenerational trauma and many negative effects on indigenous communities throughout the country. Many indigenous people are still going through their trauma and healing from residential schools. As part of that healing, they need to hear apologies from the Catholic Church, just as they needed to hear the apology from the Canadian government. The apology from the government of Canada provided healing to a lot of survivors and their families but they have not been able to find the same healing, having not received an apology from the Catholic Church. Apologies are a part of true reconciliation and an integral part of moving forward. Indigenous people have been waiting patiently for an apology from the heart, because that is where true reconciliation happens, the heart. When the Pope is ready to apologize, indigenous peoples will be ready to hear it, so they can put decades of pain and suffering behind them. We need and hope that apology will come soon and the years of waiting will come to an end.”

• (1600)

Judith concluded by saying, “The Nuu-chah-nulth people request the Canadian government to ask the Pope to search his heart and find the courage of conviction to make what the Church did wrong right, to publicly recognize the role the Catholic Church played in so many traumas and the hurt of indigenous people, and to bring true reconciliation to indigenous peoples and the church. Indigenous people have suffered long enough. It is time to end the suffering, and the Pope has that power to do so. It is time to act.”

I appreciate her words and the words of all those who brought their testimony to me to deliver on the floor of the House of Commons so they are on record.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for sharing the personal story of his family with this House. As a mother of two non-status Métis children, I cannot imagine the pain of having one's children taken away and sent to a residential school.

The member for Northwest Territories indicated that he had mixed feelings when approaching this debate about forcing the Pope to apologize when the Pope has indicated that he does not want to

apologize. He had mixed feelings, but in retrospect, he felt that still, this would be a healing thing and it would be beneficial. Could the member comment?

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Speaker, that is actually a good question, and I appreciate the member asking me that. When I was asked to do this speech, I had concerns. When I learned about recommendation 58, I learned of the importance and significance of it. When I reached out to the elders in our community, to my own father, who would not speak about this issue my whole life, it did not take long for them to speak about the importance of it.

Its significance is clear. These people moved last night and all night. I was getting messages at four in the morning from these elders who were up all night, when I asked them just yesterday to give me comments. Clearly, this is so important that we have to ask the Pope to do this. It is the right thing. He did this in Ireland. He needs to do this in Canada. He needs to set things straight.

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know my colleague understands this issue very well, having come from a family that has endured such challenges in this country and under the leadership of the Catholic Church. I too am a child of a family, of a mother, who is a survivor of residential school, and I have met and talked with so many people about their experience. I will always remember the emotion in their voices, the grief and sadness in their eyes, and how so many of them passed away without ever receiving an apology from Canada or from the Church.

Because my colleague understands and knows how so many people are feeling, how critical is this apology from the Pope at this time in allowing reconciliation to move forward for so many of those people who have been affected?

• (1605)

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my good friend from Newfoundland for her words and compassion and understanding on this issue. We have both been witnesses to the pain and suffering, but we have not lived the experience of the survivors. Having looked at this and talked to the people in our communities about the importance of this, I was very worried. I was actually concerned about reopening old wounds and traumatizing people by even asking them how they felt about this issue. From the response, it was clear that they wanted me to rise and deliver their message. They want this to happen.

We have seen the look in people's eyes who have suffered through this terrible experience. We have to move forward. Implementing all 94 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recommendations is a pathway forward. This is one of them. We cannot leave one out.

When Senator Sinclair presented the report, he did not prioritize one over the other. It is the whole package if we are going to walk forward with reconciliation. It is absolutely critical that we move forward with this and that the Pope honour our ask today.

Business of Supply

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his talk today. It is very hard to follow, and I very much appreciated it.

I, too, reached out to a dear friend, Tanya Kappo, who has been travelling the country and the world with vamps. Those are the decorated tops of moccasins displayed in a program called Walking with our Sisters. There are over 1,000 of these moccasin vamps that families from around the world have contributed, because they come from families where there are missing and murdered aboriginal women. I contacted my friend Tanya to get her perspective on this, because she has worked with the survivors of residential schools seeking a settlement. However, she was too preoccupied with her dedication to this process. I recommend it to everyone in this place. If they have not had the opportunity to participate in Walking with our Sisters, it is a very profound experience.

I want to recognize my colleague, the member for Timmins—James Bay, for bringing this forward and giving everyone in this place an opportunity to share their perspectives and say that we all stand by those 94 calls for action, including the request to the Pope.

I also want to recognize my colleague, the member for Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, for his strong work in this place in having the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples recognized here in Canada.

I also thank my colleague, the member for Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, for her work seeking support for mental health for many multi-generation sufferers from residential schools; her effort to try to get government support for the revitalization of aboriginal languages lost because of the experience in residential schools; and her struggle to have a statutory holiday for aboriginal day so that, in fact, we can use that day to deliver what the TRC calls for, and that is to educate everyone in Canada about what happened to our aboriginal friends in the residential schools.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established under the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement in 2006. That settlement agreement was intended to settle the many court cases launched by indigenous people who had suffered through residential schools. It was a beautiful mechanism to move forward and do something positive.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission travelled for six years across the country hearing testimony from aboriginal peoples and others. There were over 6,000 testimonies. It was about the people who were taken from their families, in far too many instances by force, and forced to reside, in most cases, for their entire childhood in residential schools, denied access to their families or siblings, denied the right to speak their languages or to practise their culture, severely punished if they disobeyed, and suffering great abuse, including physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. The result was the loss of language, culture, the love and support of their families, and frankly, the simple joys of childhood.

I want to share the words of my dear friend, Grand Chief Wilton Littlechild, who was one of the commissioners on the TRC. He shared this:

One has to remember that this is the first commission in the world that is uniquely focused on children: what happens to a child when you take him or her away from his

or her family, what happens to parents when you take their children away? What is the impact on that family? It is a very serious issue, not just directly on the child and family but also intergenerationally, the trauma that is suffered by the next generation of people because of residential school.

Some 27 of those residential schools operated in Alberta, my province.

I had the privilege of giving testimony at the session of the TRC at Boyle Street, a centre for the homeless in Edmonton. I appreciated the opportunity to extend apologies myself, personally, and to share how profoundly I have been impacted by my experiences growing up.

I grew up next to the Paul First Nation. My family, in fact both grandparents, were friends with the Métis and the Paul Band. As I grew up, it was profoundly hurtful to me to hear other Canadians saying dismissive and offensive things about indigenous people, when I grew up in that loving circle, going to their dances, and appreciating their culture and what beautiful people they are.

● (1610)

I also attended the final national gathering in Edmonton, and I was horrified to hear the testimony from a residential school survivor who was sent alone, at the age of five years, from the B.C. coast to a residential school in St. Albert, near Edmonton, with only a mouldy bologna sandwich to survive, to be abused the moment she entered the door of the school.

At the same moment, I was starting elementary school in a school very near there. That has stayed with me, and it will stay with me all my life.

Based on the six years of testimony, the commissioners issued their report, “Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future”. They issued, as my colleague said, 94 calls to action. The government has committed to act on all 94, as all in this place should be committing to and as my colleagues are.

Four of those were addressed to the churches, seeking apologies and reconciliation. Many of the churches have apologized, but one critical apology remains missing. That is call to action 58, to the Pope:

We call upon the Pope to issue an apology to Survivors, their families, and communities for the Roman Catholic Church’s role in the spiritual, cultural, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children in Catholic-run residential schools. We call for that apology to be similar to the 2010 apology issued to Irish victims of abuse and to occur within one year of the issuing of this Report and to be delivered by the Pope in Canada.

That was in 2015.

Other calls are for the church to educate their clergy and their congregations on the abuses that occurred in these schools, on the need to recognize the history and the culture of indigenous peoples, on the right then and the right now to practice their own spirituality, and for establishing permanent funding for aboriginal peoples for healing, reconciliation, culture, language, and revitalization.

Business of Supply

The Catholic Church has failed to pay the compensation directed by the agreement. Other churches have apologized, as I mentioned: the United Church, which I belong to; the Anabaptists; the Anglican Church; the Presbyterian Church; and some of the Catholic orders, including the Jesuits in Canada.

The former prime minister apologized and the leaders of the official opposition at the time apologized. I am so proud of my former leader, Jack Layton, who persuaded the prime minister to allow the leaders of the first nations, the Métis, and the Inuit, including the Native Women's Association, to be here in the chamber when that apology was delivered, and to respond.

As Senator Murray Sinclair reminds us, the Pope has apologized for past abuses in Ireland and in South America. Certainly Canada's aboriginal peoples have long awaited this overdue papal apology. We have heard from a number in this place whose own families have suffered from this.

I welcome the opportunity to join all members of Parliament in supporting this call. In closing, I would like to share the words of the then-moderator of the United Church, Bill Phipps, in 1998:

As Moderator of The United Church of Canada, I wish to speak the words that many people have wanted to hear for a very long time. On behalf of The United Church of Canada, I apologize for the pain and suffering that our church's involvement in the Indian Residential School system has caused. We are aware of some of the damage that this cruel and ill-conceived system of assimilation has perpetrated on Canada's First Nations peoples. For this we are truly and most humbly sorry.

I add that apology.

●(1615)

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for her powerful words and representing Alberta.

I want to ask her about how the treaties affect this. In our region, we have Treaty No. 9. One of the reasons the Cree and the Oji-Cree signed Treaty No. 9 was they knew their way of life was under threat. They knew the resource industries were coming in and they thought the treaty would give them certainty.

The treaty commissioners promised them education, and they thought that was a good thing. They did not know that the education was going to be in places like St. Anne's residential school.

Treaty No. 9 transferred hydro, timber, gold, and copper wealth, almost the greatest in the world. It transformed Toronto into an industrial powerhouse. The people were put on what became internal displacement camps.

I would like to ask my hon. colleague, who has worked so closely with the indigenous communities in Alberta, about the need to go back to the original issues of what those treaties meant in terms of the sharing of the resources and the rights that are still not being recognized today. The first people were not destroyed in the residential schools; the first people are here and the first people will continue to be here. Maybe long after we are gone, we know the first people will be here. We have to maintain that treaty relationship with them at all levels.

Ms. Linda Duncan: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his lifelong dedication to this. I also thank him for raising the issue of the treaties.

As the member is aware, he has been working with me and with one of the historic treaty chiefs of Alberta, Chief Burnstick of Alexander First Nation. Because he is so frustrated at the lack of respect for the rights under the treaties, he has approached me and asked me to help him arrange a meeting with the Governor General. Many of the chiefs and the elders in Alberta still believe that the crown is represented by the Governor General, as representative of the Queen.

There is a deep sadness across the country that they, in good faith, signed treaties. As the former National Chief, Shawn Atleo, reminded us, we are all treaty people. Therefore, this is one of our many obligations under those treaties to seek this apology from the Pope as one small measure.

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague across the floor for her comments. She is always such an eloquent speaker on many issues in the House of Commons.

Like many others, I realized this when I sat in a room with so many survivors of residential schools in Canada. When they were receiving an apology, whether from the United Church of Canada, the Anglican Church of Canada, or the Government of Canada, there was such a sense of recognition, that someone believed them, someone understood them, and someone accepted that harm had been done to them, harm that never should have happened.

For many survivors, what they are asking of the Pope right now, and I think this is shared by many parishioners and Christians across Canada who recognize this apology is needed to move forward in reconciliation, is that the church recognize harm was done to them and someone should be responsible for that. What we are asking of the Pope is to make right something that has been wrong for a very long time.

●(1620)

Ms. Linda Duncan: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate how profoundly the member believes in her portfolio.

The point is that the Pope is beloved and he speaks up for human rights. Therefore, I think it has come as a bit of a shock to many, including the indigenous people of Canada, that he has rejected this request. We understand there may be complications and maybe there has to be some work done by the church leaders in Canada to approach him for that apology. That is why it is so important for all of us in this place today, elected representatives, to support the indigenous people of Canada, to say that we are behind them, and that the Pope should apologize and deliver on part of the responsibilities for reconciliation.

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to share my time this afternoon with the hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable.

I would also like to thank the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay for the motion that we have discussed throughout the day.

Business of Supply

Today we are debating a motion that would invite the Pope again to respond to call to action 58, issued by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and make a formal apology to those who have suffered from their experience in the residential school system.

The Pope has been invited by the current Prime Minister and by former prime minister Stephen Harper, as well as Canadian bishops, individually but not collectively, to come to Canada. He has not had the opportunity to do so in the five years that he has been the head of the Catholic Church. The answer the Pope sent for call to action 58 was that at this time he was unable to personally respond.

His communiqué says:

Given the sufferings that some indigenous children experienced in the Canadian Residential School system, the Holy Father expressed his sorrow at the anguish caused by the deplorable conduct of some members of the Church and he offered his sympathy and prayerful solidarity. His Holiness emphasized that acts of abuse cannot be tolerated in society. He prayed that all those affected would experience healing, and he encouraged First Nations Peoples to continue to move forward with renewed hope.

The Catholic Church has issued many statements of regret, but I have not seen one that says “I am sorry” or “We apologize”. Pope Francis himself has said, “Inconsistency on the part of pastors and the faithful between what they say and what they do, between word and manner of life, is undermining the Church's credibility.”

The Catholic Church was not the lone administrator of the residential school system. There were many others involved, including the Anglican, United, and Presbyterian churches. Let us look at what each of those had to say over the years.

Back in 1993, there was an apology from the Primate, Archbishop Michael Peers, to the National Native Convocation. It reads:

I accept and I confess before God and you, our failures in the residential schools. We failed you. We failed ourselves. We failed God.

I am sorry, more than I can say, that we were part of a system which took you and your children from home and family.

I am sorry, more than I can say, that we tried to remake you in our image, taking from you your language and the signs of your identity.

I am sorry, more than I can say, that in our schools so many were abused physically, sexually, culturally and emotionally.

On behalf of the Anglican Church of Canada, I present our apology.

The second is the 1986 apology to first nations peoples by the Right Reverend Bill Phipps and the General Council Executive of the United Church of Canada. It reads:

As Moderator of The United Church of Canada, I wish to speak the words that many people have wanted to hear for a very long time. On behalf of The United Church of Canada, I apologize for the pain and suffering that our church's involvement in the Indian Residential School system has caused. We are aware of some of the damage that this cruel and ill-conceived system of assimilation has perpetrated on Canada's First Nations peoples. For this we are truly and most humbly sorry.

To those individuals who were physically, sexually, and mentally abused as students of the Indian Residential Schools in which The United Church of Canada was involved, I offer you our most sincere apology. You did nothing wrong. You were and are the victims of evil acts that cannot under any circumstances be justified or excused.

● (1625)

The apology from the Presbyterian Church in Canada was adopted by the general assembly in 1994. It says in part:

We confess that The Presbyterian Church in Canada presumed to know better than Aboriginal peoples what was needed for life. The Church said of our Aboriginal brothers and sisters, “If they could be like us, if they could think like us, talk like us, worship like us, sing like us, and work like us, they would know God and therefore would have life abundant.” In our cultural arrogance we have been blind to the ways in which our own understanding of the Gospel has been culturally conditioned, and because of our insensitivity to Aboriginal cultures, we have demanded more of the Aboriginal people than the Gospel requires, and have thus misrepresented Jesus Christ who loves all peoples with compassionate, suffering love that all may come to God through him. For the Church's, presumption we ask forgiveness.

It goes on to say:

We ask, also, for forgiveness from Aboriginal peoples. What we have heard we acknowledge. It is our hope that those whom we have wronged with a hurt too deep for telling will accept what we have to say. With God's guidance our Church will seek opportunities to walk with Aboriginal peoples to find healing and wholeness together as God's people.

These three churches have stood up and admitted they were wrong, and they have asked for forgiveness. They apologized. We have no such statement so far from the head of the Roman Catholic Church.

Reflecting back on residential schools, it was certainly a very dark time in our country. I remember when the Truth and Reconciliation Commission toured my province of Saskatchewan. I went to one of the hearings, a public hearing, as the commission members documented testimony. Story after story was told, some witnesses breaking down, others electing not to speak as the scars were obviously too deep to share that day.

A couple of weeks ago in this gallery, we honoured the actors and producers of *Indian Horse*. It is a film about residential school through the eyes of an Ojibway boy who found his escape by playing hockey. That film actually reminded me of Fred Sasakamoose. In fact, the producers brought Mr. Sasakamoose with them that day.

Freddy is a residential school survivor. He is a friend of mine; I've known him for close to 40 years. We have worked together for many years, raising money for kids' sport, giving others less fortunate a chance to play sports.

For those who do not know Fred Sasakamoose, he was the first indigenous player ever to play on the National Hockey League. He lasted only eight games with the Chicago Blackhawks. Why? Because he became homesick and he needed to return home to Saskatchewan. For years and even decades, Freddy never talked about the residential schools, but later in his life, he has taken a lead role in talking about this in the province of Saskatchewan. He missed his real family and his culture. Now, he is a great spokesman for what has happened in the past. I should add, Fred will be invested in the Order of Canada next month in the city of Ottawa. This is one of our country's highest civilian honours and Fred is deserving of this honour.

Business of Supply

In my city of Saskatoon, organizers of the Wanuskewin Heritage Park have a dream. They have a dream that the Pope will some day come to their site and make a formal apology to residential school survivors. They are hoping for this to happen soon, possibly in 2018-19. It actually coincides with Wanuskewin being added to Canada's tentative list for world heritage sites, and reaffirms the importance of this place. The group has already raised over \$40 million in a very short time. It has been working hard to make improvements. I ask, will this be the stage for the Catholic Church and the Pope to apologize, to come to my city of Saskatoon and reach out to first nations peoples? The response of Pope Francis to the invitation so far has been very disappointing, but we are still hopeful.

I will leave the House with another quote from Pope Francis. He said:

But I am always wary of decisions made hastily. I am always wary of the first decision, that is, the first thing that comes to my mind if I have to make a decision. This is usually the wrong thing. I have to wait and assess, looking deep into myself, taking the necessary time

We live in hope.

• (1630)

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for his excellent speech, and also for telling us of the survivors who not only survived the trauma, but have become role models for our country.

The reason apologies matter is that we learn. That was what I was taught by the nuns, some of whom were my aunts. We learn. We have learned from each other today, because there are still parts of the story that have not been told, but when we tell the story, we understand where we have been and where we are going.

My hon. colleague read out the powerful apologies that have come from each of the various Christian denominations, and he expressed his disappointment that we do not yet have one from our present Pope. However, Pope Francis has a clear vision, which he has expressed time and again about justice, sometimes he even has not being worried about the Catholic Church's rules because justice overrides rules. Is my colleague confident that whatever comes out of today, if we ask His Holiness, that we have a Pope that is actually open and understands? I know the member wants him to come to the city of Saskatoon. I would love him to come to the city of Timmins, but I did not think I would get that in this motion, so I left it out. However, if the Pope came to Saskatoon or any other city, I would totally support it.

Does the member feel the Pope is a man who would work with us and walk with us and move forward with us as a nation?

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Mr. Speaker, I was part of the Saskatchewan School Boards Association for 10 years. It serves a lot of northern people in the province of Saskatchewan. I remember when the Truth and Reconciliation Commission came through Saskatchewan. As trustees, we were told that we must attend one of these sessions. It was the most uplifting session I ever attended. I talked about it a little in my speech because I had no idea what some of these people have gone through. There were some horrific stories.

I remember that day very well in Saskatoon Prairieland. It was jammed. There were probably 7,000 or 8,000 people there. Many people lined up. Many wanted to tell their story, but time ran out.

We can hope for acceptance from the Pope. We can only hope, as time will heal.

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his comments today in this debate, and continue to thank the member for Timmins—James Bay for bringing forward this motion to the House.

When the Truth and Reconciliation Commission put out the calls to action, it was a road map for so many people who had been hurt in our country through the residential school system. It was a way we could all enter this journey of reconciliation together. More importantly, it was a journey of reconciliation for survivors of residential schools.

In reflecting on the TRC report and those calls to action, is it the member's belief and understanding that each one of those recommendations is equally important on that journey toward the goal of reconciliation for Canadians?

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Mr. Speaker, it is going to take time for each and every one of us in the country to understand the 94 calls to action. Number 58 is one of them. Today's debate in the House of Commons has brought forth an awareness by each and every one of us, all 37 million in our country, to have a better understanding of the truth and reconciliation process.

We spent six years putting our testimony together. I remember that day in 2008. I was in a newsroom in Saskatchewan when then prime minister Stephen Harper gave the apology. Many members have talked about that day. I remember in the CTV newsroom in Saskatoon, there were tears. Every national network in the country televised the apology that day. It was an emotional day. Members might have had an emotional day here because the leaders were here, but everywhere in the country, there were tears shed 10 years ago, in 2008.

• (1635)

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Kootenay—Columbia, The Environment; the hon. member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, The Environment; and the hon. member for Calgary Rocky Ridge, Canada Revenue Agency.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is with both emotion and a sense of shame that I rise today to speak to the NDP motion concerning residential schools.

I said emotion because I am from a riding where there were no residential schools and there are no indigenous communities, and I have to humbly admit that I was unaware of this dark period of our history, which was uncovered by the media.

Business of Supply

In rising today, I had to find out more about why our NDP colleagues decided to move this motion, a motion that I support because it is the right thing to do. I read articles and reread the testimony and the apology of the previous government. It is not easy reading. We should never have had to read about this history; it should never even have had to be written.

I would like to briefly outline this history for younger Canadians and Quebeckers who may not know about it.

The historical persecution of first nations peoples during the conquests is not something that can be forgotten, even centuries later. From Australia to Mexico to Russia, indigenous peoples all share a common history that was unfortunately forced on them by the Europeans and by us Canadians. Residential schools are a dark legacy in Canadian history.

In an attempt to convert and assimilate indigenous peoples, Canada passed laws, in collaboration with religious institutions, to create residential schools. One hundred and fifty thousand first nations children were taken from their communities. I repeat, 150,000 children. That is five times the population of Theford Mines. That is equivalent to the entire population of cities like Sherbrooke or Trois-Rivières.

The Indian Act of 1876 required the government to educate indigenous children so that they could integrate into Canadian society. The children were meant to receive an education that would help them develop skills to fit more easily into a society dominated by foreigners.

However, the reality was very different. Residential schools subjected first nations children to degrading, abusive treatment that was designed to isolate them. Through testimony from survivors of these residential schools, we have learned the heart-wrenching truth about the horrors that took place within the walls of these schools and that continue to plague generation after generation of indigenous peoples.

Here is an account from Lucie, an Atikamekw woman who was in a residential school until 1958. She was speaking about her experience at a residential school in Amos:

“It was very hard, both physically and spiritually,” she said with sadness in her voice. The plump little girl who had run free all her life grew thin, beaten into submission. She learned to sleep in the broom closets where she was shut up as punishment. The nuns called her a “savage” and forced her to forget her mother tongue. During her residential school years, Lucie suffered contempt for her culture and experienced physical and sexual violence.

The horror did not end there. Not only were the children abused, their living conditions were deplorable. They were vulnerable to disease because the lack of sanitation and poor air quality left them prey to every germ and virus. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada learned that, between 1941 and 1945, the death rate for indigenous students was nearly five times higher than the general death rate for Canadian schoolchildren. The commission also reported that nearly 50% of cases where a cause of death was identified were attributed to tuberculosis. Many deaths were not even recorded. Upwards of 1,000 indigenous children died in complete anonymity. Their names do not appear on any list. They have been completely forgotten.

Life outside the schools has not been easy for residential school survivors. Many have struggled with psychological problems caused by mistreatment and abuse.

Studies on residential school survivors living in Canada show that 64% suffer from post-traumatic stress, 21% have substance abuse problems, and 21% struggle with depression.

Worse yet, many experts confirm that the adverse effects are passed down from the victims to the younger generations.

Drugs, school dropout rates, and mental illness are destroying some reserves. To what degree are today's problems related to residential schools? I do not know. I am no expert, but the reality of the past has left deep wounds that time seems unable to heal.

● (1640)

In Opitciwan, in Mauricie, only 10% of young people will graduate from high school. This colonization also had an adverse effect on first nations peoples, who were robbed of their identity through a forced assimilation that sought to eradicate the culture of their nation.

As a Canadian, as a Quebecker, the idea of being forced to forget my French language that I am tremendously proud to speak, or the customs that my parents passed on to me, is simply unimaginable. Asking me to forget these things and not live by the values I was taught is also unimaginable to me. I could not accept that. First nations children had no choice.

Indigenous heritage is an integral part of Canada's history. It was and still is incredibly important in the eyes of the Conservative Party. On June 11, 2008, former Prime Minister Stephen Harper was the first to apologize to residential school survivors, their families, and their communities for the role that Canada played in the abuse of residential school students.

I would like to quote part of his apology:

The Government of Canada built an educational system in which very young children were often forcibly removed from their homes, often taken far from their communities. Many were inadequately fed, clothed and housed. All were deprived of the care and nurturing of their parents, grandparents and communities. First Nations, Inuit and Métis languages and cultural practices were prohibited in these schools. Tragically, some of these children died while attending residential schools and others never returned home....The government recognizes that the absence of an apology has been an impediment to healing and reconciliation....You have been working on recovering from this experience for a long time and in a very real sense, we are now joining you on this journey.

The following is his apology:

The Government of Canada sincerely apologizes and asks the forgiveness of the Aboriginal peoples of this country for failing them so profoundly.

Those were the words spoken by the prime minister, Stephen Harper, in 2008. Those eloquent words opened the door to reconciliation through the acknowledgement of harm done, particularly through the creation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada as part of the 2007 Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. The commission recognized that the residential school system had profoundly harmful and lasting repercussions on the culture, heritage, and languages of indigenous peoples.

Business of Supply

Following a rigorous study, the commission's report reflected the hard work and determination of the previous government in terms of raising public awareness about residential schools and encouraging reconciliation, understanding, and respect. It is crucial that Canadians and first nation peoples continue to strengthen ties for future generations.

Today's motion has three components. The first part relates to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's call to action 58, calling on the Pope to issue a formal apology to Canada, the survivors, their families, and communities for the Roman Catholic Church's role in the spiritual, cultural, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse suffered by first nations, Inuit, and Métis children in Catholic-run residential schools.

I sincerely believe that any group or institution that had a significant role in the residential school system should apologize in order to help Canada follow the path of reconciliation. That is why the former prime minister of Canada gave an historic apology in the House of Commons in 2008.

The second and third parts of the motion concern the 2006 Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement and a call for transparency.

I also believe that the people involved in this dark period in our history must do everything possible to help turn the page so that the victims, their families, and their descendants can finally find peace.

The people of Lac-Mégantic recently experienced a tragedy. Although it took place five years ago, the wounds have not yet healed. When I compare our tragedy to that of indigenous families, and I see how long it takes to heal, my hope is that certain people will hear this invitation to make every effort to ensure that these people can finally find the road to recovery.

We are bound by the past forged by our ancestors. However, here, in the House of Commons, we have the ability and the opportunity to forge our future.

• (1645)

[*English*]

Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I was born in Churchill, Manitoba, and I lived in Chesterfield Inlet. I started kindergarten—grade 1, actually—in Chesterfield Inlet, about 500 kilometres north of Churchill, and I attended a residential school.

The residential school was on one side of the bay in Chesterfield Inlet and my home was on the other. Remember, I was in kindergarten and grade 1, and I got to home every night. None of my classmates did. All of the teachers were nuns. The head of the residential school was a father, a priest from the Catholic Church.

I have been following the conversation with a great deal of interest, but I am really struggling with the reluctance of the bishops in the various dioceses to actually get the Pope involved in making an apology for what was one of the darkest periods of our history in Canada.

I would like to ask the member a question. What do you think would be some of the benefits to the Pope, to the Catholic Church,

and to the survivors of residential schools to actually hear an apology from the Pope?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question and especially for sharing his experience as a student in one of these residential schools, which took children away from their parents, grandparents, families, and culture.

The healing process must respond to the injury, abuse, and harm inflicted. Some may think that an apology is of no consequence, but the people who were wronged deserve an apology from those responsible. That is quite legitimate.

[*English*]

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, this is an issue that touches on so very much of the deep and searing pain that was experienced by generations of indigenous people across Canada.

For those of us who are practising Christians, it touches on questions of our obligations as parliamentarians with regard to the structure and the institution of a church. I am an Anglican; my church has apologized. I know the Roman Catholic Church and the Pope deserve respect, and the situation creates some conflict for some people I have been speaking with in this place, but I completely agree with the resolution as put forward. I completely agree with the comments of my friend from Mégantic—L'Érable. This is a central recommendation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

As much as I hold the current Pope in the highest respect and find him an inspiring Christian figure and as much as there is separation between church and state, in this case we must follow through, invite the Pontiff to be part of the reconciliation journey, and ask the Pontiff, on behalf of the Canadian Catholic Church, to fully apologize and meet the obligations of reconciliation.

• (1650)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report contains a number of calls to action that still have not been implemented, and it is the duty of the institutions we represent to respond. We owe it to the young victims of residential schools. All those who were involved in one way or another need to take responsibility, look back at what happened, and ask themselves if there is something they need to do. Obviously, the answer is yes.

Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech, his tone, and the time he took to talk about a period in history that was difficult for our indigenous communities.

I would also like to commend all my colleagues and all the parties of the House that met to discuss this issue when the Pope refused to issue an apology.

What does my colleague believe would be the impact of such an apology for us, here, for Canada and the indigenous communities?

Business of Supply

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, it is hard to say because it is personal to everyone involved. Each of them has their own story. Everyone who suffered harm or whose parents suffered harm will react differently to an apology. They all have very different expectations. Once again, I think it is up to every institution that was involved in the residential school scandal to do the right thing.

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP): Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I should let you know that I will be splitting my time with the member for Nunavut.

Today's debate has made for difficult listening, I must say. After hearing today's debate, I feel ashamed that I never took the trouble to truly understand what people went through in the residential schools. The way they were treated was absolutely horrific. Stories are being courageously being told by members who lived through this tragedy or who have relatives or constituents who experienced it. Sometimes, they are just stories that they heard and wanted to share with us.

Today's debate stems from the motion moved by my colleague from Timmins—James Bay and seconded by my colleague from Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, as well as the commendable efforts they put into this file. It shows why it is vital that we call on the Catholic Church to apologize to those affected by the residential schools.

The statements made in today's debate have been both moving and powerful. Given the impact this debate has had in the House today, it is not hard to imagine that an official apology from the Pope, on behalf of the Catholic Church, would represent a giant leap forward on the path to reconciliation.

Today's debate reminds me of something that really moved me as a parliamentarian and made a lasting impact. On a Friday in 2014, a day that often goes by unnoticed on the House of Commons calendar, the NDP forced a debate on a committee report about missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. We debated whether there should be an inquiry. A number of MPs spoke. The first was my seatmate and esteemed colleague from Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, who spoke of his own experience and helped us all understand a few things.

Since I was elected, my work as a member of Parliament has been full of surprises, and it has nothing to do with my age. I expect that all of us experience the roller coaster of political life, but I never expected that hearing such stories would bring us to tears right here in the House. That is what happened to me that day, and I was not the only one. A member told his story, a story that was extremely difficult to hear but very touching, to help us understand the need to do something, something political.

What is interesting, however, is that after my colleague gave his speech, the former member for Nunavut, who was the environment minister at the time and who had also experienced the residential school system first-hand, stood up. As an MP elected in 2011, it was the first time I witnessed a non-partisan debate. There were no ideological points of view being fired back and forth. She also shared her personal story with us. All the members applauded, as did my colleague from Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, who earned the respect of everyone in the House.

The tone of the debate that day and the things that were shared taught me something about the sorrow we feel when we hear about such tragedies and are confronted with such atrocities. These atrocities are experienced differently by everyone, depending on where we come from, our own experiences, and those of our ancestors. Still, there is a sense of community. For us, it is the House of Commons, which represents Canada and our shared history.

• (1655)

For better or worse, that forces us to make decisions. Today, we are asking Parliament to make an informed decision to ask the Catholic Church to do the right thing. Forgiveness, an important concept for the Church, and reconciliation call for an apology. People watching us need to understand that it is not just symbolic. This has a profound impact on those affected by this black mark on our collective history here in Canada.

The apology offered by former prime minister Harper here in the House of Commons was deeply meaningful. We understand the importance of bringing together members, the indigenous community, and the chiefs who were here on the floor of the House. I was not an MP at the time, but members can believe me when I say that I listened closely. I heard an MP from Saskatchewan, who was a journalist at the time, talk about the fact that all eyes were glued to the TV not because of the news, but because of the emotional experience that came with this extremely difficult gesture. That is what is important. Apologizing is difficult.

We have all had moments where we have had to apologize to our loved ones, in public or in private, whether it was in the House of Commons, at home, or at school. No matter where it was, we have all experienced this. It is difficult to apologize. We have to acknowledge our failings and swallow our pride. Without getting into a theological debate, we have to understand that this is the essence of the values expounded by religious institutions: recognizing one's failings and understanding the importance of forgiveness, accepting that we did something wrong and that we are seeking forgiveness. I realize that this is not easy and that is why it is important. When the Catholic Church apologizes—and I hope it does when it is asked to do so by this motion of the Parliament of Canada—the fact that it is so difficult and meaningful will be significant for the survivors of this terrible residential school system and for their descendants.

I will close by thanking all my colleagues, especially my colleague from Timmins—James Bay for moving this motion, along with everyone here. As I said at the beginning of my speech, the tone of today's debate, the shared tragedy, and our collective grief and sadness show why apologies are important. That is exactly what we have heard during this debate and what the Pope's apology would contribute. My whole speech has been about apologies, but I did not mention all the other elements that are crucial for reconciliation. I wanted to say this, because I understand that it is hard, but I am prepared to fulfill my role as a parliamentarian and make this official request, and I believe my colleagues are too. I think that today has been a perfect demonstration of why this is so important.

Business of Supply

• (1700)

[English]

Mr. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I find myself in a great deal of agreement with the member. I thank him for raising the issues of both the tragedy of residential schools and the healing journey that we as Canadians are on together.

The member raised the issue of theology. It has been raised a few times in this House that the United Church made an apology in 1986. However, I do not know whether the hon. member is aware that it took two years for indigenous people to actually accept that apology.

Apologies that are made cannot be taken lightly. It took two years for indigenous Canadians within our church to accept the apology. It was a hard process. The apology actually did not mean that there was reconciliation.

I wonder if the member understands or could add some insight into what happens when one demands an apology, if that apology can be effective, and if, indeed, he thinks it will be accepted.

[Translation]

Mr. Matthew Dubé: Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for my colleague's question, because it gives me a chance to clarify that reconciliation does not happen overnight. It is just one step among many on a path that is unfortunately very long.

As for the example he gave, the time that elapses between demanding an apology, receiving it, and accepting it is very important. The then prime minister apologized 10 years ago. Since then, a long road has been travelled by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. I have no illusions. I realize that the apology will not mark the end of the road, but the beginning.

I do not know how long it will take to achieve reconciliation after the apology is given, and it will certainly not be up to me to decide. I think my colleague would agree. Nevertheless, at least the gesture will have been made and the healing process can begin, as my colleague said. If we as parliamentarians can at least make this request, there will be one less item on the long list of things that need to be done to achieve reconciliation.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a lot of respect for my colleague.

In my region, the survivors of the sad, infamous St. Anne's residential school were shocked to learn that the Pope had refused to apologize. It is difficult to understand, since Pope Francis has a reputation for being a leader on reconciliation around the world. We were also very surprised to hear the Catholic bishops say that they were unable to speak on behalf of the Catholic Church on the need for a formal apology. Today, the Parliament of Canada is giving the Pope and the Catholic Church a chance to do the right thing.

Does my colleague think it is possible for the Pope to respond to this invitation to work with us towards reconciliation?

• (1705)

Mr. Matthew Dubé: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for all the work he has done on this file and for speaking up for those who experienced such horrible things.

It is possible, since this would not be the first time the Pope apologized for past wrongs. I understand that people are upset, because the road is very long. Although time is needed to heal, action is needed as well. I hope and I believe that this is what Parliament will do in supporting this motion.

[English]

Hon. Hunter Tootoo (Nunavut, Ind.): Mr. Speaker,

[member spoke in Inuktitut]

[English]

I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this motion on behalf of Nunavummiut and all survivors.

I would like to thank the member for Timmins—James Bay for bringing this motion to the House. I would also like to thank the New Democratic Party for sharing time with me and allowing me to have an opportunity to speak.

I can say, without a single shred of doubt, that a papal apology for the church's role in the implementation of, and its participation in, the Canadian residential school system is completely justified, and frankly, an apology is the very least the Pope could do for the indigenous people of this country.

As a result of residential schools, a generation of indigenous children were robbed of their childhood, raised not by their parents in loving homes but instead raised in a culture of violence, a culture of psychological and sexual abuse. It was this foreign and twisted culture that has since spawned a legacy of mental illness, drug addiction, and suicide among indigenous people in communities all across Canada. I know this, because I attended a residential school. I know this, because I myself have been affected. I personally know people who have been affected, family and friends I have watched struggle with this past.

There is not one family in my riding that has not been affected in one way or another by this awful legacy. Sadly, the devastating effect of residential schools has reached beyond the generation that experienced these horrors and has impacted today's generation of young people.

The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops is attempting to explain its responsibility away with weak technical arguments. For example, it was suggested that many different dioceses of the church were responsible for the residential schools. Also stated was that a visit by the Pope to Canada to deliver an apology presents a potential financial burden for the church. Really. These arguments are appalling to me.

What is worse is that I read this morning that there is a hesitation to apologize because there are political factors at play that could affect the relationship between the government and the Church, factors such as the new federal summer jobs funding requirement and the Church's reluctance to respond to a direct request from the government.

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An archbishop was quoted as saying, “That puts the church in a challenging place.” I am sorry. In response to this quote, I would like to ask the Church to consider the challenging place indigenous people have been put in as a direct result of residential schools. I can assure the archbishop that whatever challenging place the Church may be put in, indigenous people have lived and experienced much worse as a result of residential schools.

The Pope, as the head of the Catholic Church, must take responsibility for its actions and the profound effect those actions have had on generations of indigenous people. He must apologize on behalf of his church and join in the spirit of reconciliation, as has been recommended by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. An apology is not only the right thing to do but is the Christian thing to do. Although an apology will not undo the horrors of the past, it will go a long way in helping survivors heal.

• (1710)

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for sharing those profound words in the House today. I want to speak to him from his deep experience of having lived this.

When we look at my region in northern Ontario, which has the highest suicide rates among children today, they are places the abusers went. Whether it was Ralph Rowe, from the Anglican Church in northwestern Ontario, or in the community I represent, where the damage was done by St. Anne's and Bishop Horden School, the effects can be seen to this day. Even though we have a young generation coming up that is strong and proud, whenever we see a suicide epidemic, the elders say to me that the direct road to the deaths of these children leads back to the residential schools. I have seen it as a fact. I say to my colleagues that they have to be on the ground to see how direct that road is.

I would like to ask my hon. colleague, from his experience about that direct road to the suffering and issues that we are still dealing with, why this apology and this recognition by one of the perpetrators of this abuse is so important at this time in our history.

Hon. Hunter Tootoo: Mr. Speaker, it is important in ways that will help people heal. As I said, it is not going to undo the horrors of the past, but acknowledging those horrors, taking responsibility, and apologizing for them will help people heal.

The member talked about suicide rates. In my riding of Nunavut, our suicide rates are 10 times the national average, yet we have not one facility in the north to help people deal with mental health and trauma-related issues. In most northern, isolated jurisdictions in Canada, those services are not adequately available, and that is where they are needed the most.

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Nunavut for his words today and for telling of his lived experiences and how it has affected him. I know it has affected so many people around him in his riding and in our country.

With respect to the journey of healing and reconciliation, especially for residential school survivors, what are some of the key pieces he feels we should be leading as Canadians to make that journey a bit easier and hopefully a whole lot more successful?

Hon. Hunter Tootoo: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Labrador for her advocacy on this issue. I have had many discussions with her on this.

We need to put our money where our mouth is. We need to provide the programs and services for mental health, addictions, and help people deal with trauma. If we cannot provide those services in the north and in the isolated jurisdictions of the country, which are available in the south, we will never be able to move forward and end the cycle. Efforts need to be made to ensure we are putting our money where our mouth is and we are investing in those programs and services in order to help people heal.

• (1715)

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I tried to speak to this important motion. As we have gone forward with it, we have heard some incredible testimony and speeches today. I want to thank my hon. colleague from Northwest Territories, my hon. colleague from Nunavut, and all my colleagues who have spoken to this topic.

It brings me back to an emergency debate we had probably two years ago on the Attawapiskat suicides that were taking place. Reconciliation almost seems like a buzzword today, and there is so much we can be doing. Actions speak louder than words.

In preparing for this, I spoke to a number of my friends, who are residential school survivors. I spoke to a chief in my riding, just prior this, and her comments to me were that they were just empty words. So much more can be done.

I know my hon. colleague has feelings about this. We grieve and we heal in so many different ways. I would like his thoughts on the comments of our chief who said that these were just empty words, that we needed to get on with healing and moving forward.

Hon. Hunter Tootoo: Mr. Speaker, the member put it very clearly how people heal differently. For some people, it may not be helpful; for some, it will. The spirit and the intent of just hearing those words from someone whose organization was responsible for so much damage over so many generations will help the healing process for a lot of those people, and that is important.

The Deputy Speaker: It being 5:15 p.m., pursuant to an order made earlier today, all questions necessary to dispose of the opposition motion are deemed put and a recorded division deemed requested and deferred until Tuesday, May 1, at the expiry of the time provided for oral questions.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I suspect that if you were to canvass the House, you would find unanimous consent to call it 5:30 p.m. at this point in time so we can begin private members' hour.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to see the clock at 5:30 p.m.?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: The House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's Order Paper.

*Private Members' Business***PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS***[English]***ABORIGINAL CULTURAL PROPERTY REPATRIATION ACT**

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.) moved that Bill C-391, an act respecting a national strategy for the repatriation of aboriginal cultural property, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to thank my seconder today, the hon. member for Edmonton Centre, and my assistant Joel Henderson, who worked so hard to develop and draft this bill, and to make so many contacts in Canada and around the world.

This is an act respecting a national strategy for the repatriation of aboriginal cultural property.

For me, the story started at the Millbrook First Nation near Truro, Nova Scotia. I was at the Millbrook Cultural and Heritage Centre, admiring a beautiful robe in a glass case. I was fascinated by the workmanship, the detail, and everything about the robe.

The curator of the facility, Heather Stevens, came over to me and said, "It is a beautiful robe, isn't it?" I said, "Yes, it is." She said, "It's too bad it is not the original one." I asked her what she meant. She said that the original one was in a museum in Melbourne, Australia. It was taken there in 1852 and it has resided in Australia for 166 years.

It means so much to the Millbrook First Nation to have this robe there, even if it is a copy. However, to have the original repatriated would mean so much to the youth in the community, because the youth want to know about their culture and their roots. They want to know where they came from. They want to know everything they can find out about their culture from hundreds of years ago. The best way to do that is to be able to see the workmanship, the details, and the artifacts that people produced in those times.

The purpose of this bill is just to ensure that a small indigenous community, a Métis, Inuit, or first nations community, has another voice with it when it seeks to repatriate an artifact that has become available. It is not about taking artifacts away from people, or out of museums that have collected them and that appreciate their collection.

When an artifact becomes available, there should be a process in place where a small community or an indigenous community can approach a government agency or a government body, sit around a table, and discuss the challenges of getting the artifact back. It might be transportation, restoration, the display process, money, or negotiations, but in many cases the indigenous communities need another voice, and that is what this is about. It is about adding another voice to the efforts to repatriate first nations, Inuit, and Métis artifacts.

We are asking the government to establish a process that people can go to, not only indigenous people, but people who have artifacts. It is amazing that since we first tabled this bill, Bill C-391, we have had two organizations come to our office to tell us that they have indigenous artifacts that they would like to return to their proper

owners, but they do not know where to return them. Such a facility and such a process would have in place the ability to receive information about artifacts that are available, ensure that they go to the right place, and provide the proper transportation, protection, restoration, and so on.

This is not about taking artifacts out of other places against people's will or preference. This is about taking advantage of an opportunity when it arises.

The robe I am talking about is fascinating. It is in Melbourne, Australia. It was purchased in 1843 by a gentleman from Prince Edward Island. I do not think he was from Malpeque, but he was from Prince Edward Island. He moved to Australia in 1852. When he passed away, he bequeathed the robe to the museum, which has taken really good care of it ever since. It is not on display, but the museum curators in Melbourne are taking good care of it. We have had communications back and forth about the robe, and we appreciate the care they have taken of it. Maybe some day the robe could come back to the indigenous community where it was made, to be part of the culture and part of the spirit of the community.

Originally, my goal was really quite simple: to make sure that there was a process to bring back artifacts. However, it has taken on a whole new direction for me. It has been much more meaningful, with much more depth to it.

I went to an indigenous tourism meeting the other night. It had nothing to do with this, but the president and CEO of the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada talked about the repatriation of artifacts as part of their culture and their ability to increase tourism and economic development.

● (1720)

He said that it was too bad there is not legislation. Well, this is the legislation Keith Henry was talking about and it will serve the purpose that he was talking about, so there is an economic development element to it as well as a cultural element.

Yesterday I met with an indigenous senator, Mary Jane McCallum. It is interesting that we just talked about residential schools here, because she was in a residential school from the age of five until she was a teenager. Then she sought a career in dentistry, of all things.

It was an amazing discussion that I had with Senator Mary Jane McCallum. She talked about the residential schools, but she tried to give me a hint of what artifacts mean to aboriginal and indigenous peoples, more than I could have thought. She talked about the spirit involved with every artifact and told me about how that robe that is down in Australia carries with it the spirit of all the people who had anything to do with it. She talked about the people who made the robe, looked after it, and cared for it, and that their spirit is with that robe in Australia. I kind of got the impression that she thought those spirits wanted to come home, and I agree with her.

Then, amazingly enough, we had a chance to talk to the secretary-general of the Commonwealth Association of Museums, Catherine Cole. She deals with 53 countries that have museums. She told us about how repatriation of aboriginal artifacts is very important to them. It is one of their main goals. Some countries even have virtual museums; when they cannot bring the artifacts back, they take pictures of them, record them, and have them in a virtual museum with the hope that someday they will be repatriated.

I had a visit this week from the High Commissioner of Australia, Her Excellency Natasha Smith. She came to talk about the museum in Melbourne, but she also came to tell us that repatriation of indigenous artifacts is very important to Australia. They have a major focus on repatriation of remains and artifacts of their indigenous peoples. It is very important. She went on to tell me that they feel it is a responsibility under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and that under that declaration, we have an obligation to make sure indigenous peoples have access to their artifacts, history, and culture for education and ceremonies. They feel it is very much a part of that, and they support that view of the declaration, as does Canada.

Then today I had a visit from a young Inuit man. He was so excited about this legislation that it inspired me. He grew up in a northern Labrador community, and his words were that “repatriation is the root of reconciliation”. He said it several times. I was most impressed. He told me that in one of the communities in the north, they have actually created an award for organizations that have repatriated artifacts from cultural finds. One of the first to get the award was the University of Chicago, which worked with the community to repatriate 22 remains that had been taken from a graveyard in the north, I think around 1911 or 1912. They were returned, and the community awarded the University of Chicago this award for cultural repatriation.

I have heard so many voices about this issue. What started out to be a small exercise with a good purpose has turned out to be not only cultural but economic, and it is not only economic but spiritual. It is not only spiritual but very meaningful to all of these communities. I am so pleased that we have been able to do this.

We have contacted a wide range of people in indigenous communities all over Canada and the U.S. We have compared legislation. This proposed legislation is not as strong as some legislation, but it is stronger than others. The U.S. has legislation that requires facilities to turn over artifacts to indigenous peoples, and if they receive any money from the federal government at all, they are required to turn it over. Our legislation would not require that. It puts in place a process that aboriginal and indigenous communities can use if they identify an artifact that becomes available. We tried to come up with a middle road on this legislation. We have done a lot of work on it to try to make sure that it would suit everybody but at the same time not offend anybody.

● (1725)

The whole journey has been amazing, just to see how it has blossomed into other things, other than just a simple return of artifacts. It has impressed on me, and moved me, how meaningful it is to the indigenous people to have this in place. Already, even though we have only had first reading, and now the first hour of

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second reading, two organizations have called my office to say they have indigenous artifacts and are not sure what to do with them. They want to make sure they get into the right hands.

We are going to reach out to these organizations and make sure those artifacts get to the right people, to the right organizations, in the right communities. If this bill is successful, then it will include a process where people with indigenous artifacts can come in and say, “I have these artifacts. I want to make sure they get into the hands of the proper people. I understand how important they are. I understand that they part of the spirit of the community.”

We hope that this will be a receptacle for indigenous artifacts, as well as a way to handle them when they do arrive or are made available. I hope that receptacle will be part of that bill.

In the meantime, as an indigenous person suggested to me yesterday, I should say that if anyone has artifacts that are at risk of being discarded or finding their way to an inappropriate place, I urge them to call my office in Amherst or Truro, Nova Scotia, or Ottawa, or go to my website at <http://bcasey.liberal.ca/>. We will make sure that they are connected with the right people, and these artifacts will be protected and saved.

That winds up my remarks, but I do want to refer to the United Nations declaration which states:

Indigenous peoples have the right to practise and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs.

We agree with this. I agree with it. It continues:

This includes the right to maintain, protect and develop the past, present and future manifestations of their cultures, such as archaeological and historical sites, artefacts, designs, ceremonies, technologies and visual and performing arts and literature.

That is artifacts like the robe I am talking about. It goes on to say:

...cultural sites; the right to the use and control of their ceremonial objects; and the right to the repatriation of their human remains.

States shall seek to enable the access and/or repatriation of ceremonial objects...

That is exactly what this bill calls for. It calls to establish a process to make sure we do not let any aboriginal, indigenous, Métis, first nations artifact slip through our fingers. We want to make sure they get back to the proper communities, so they can appreciate them and understand their incredible cultures, and also share them with non-indigenous peoples.

● (1730)

Hon. Peter Van Loan (York—Simcoe, CPC): Madam Speaker, the hon. member indicated the legislation is only intended to apply if artifacts are available, if their owners no longer wish to have those artifacts, not to facilitate the removal of artifacts from people who have them. However, that is not reflected in the actual drafting of the bill which speaks to “a comprehensive national strategy to promote and support the return of Aboriginal cultural property, wherever situated.” It also speaks to “a mechanism by which any First Nation...may acquire or reacquire Aboriginal cultural property to which it has a strong attachment.”

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Since there is no reference at all in the bill to the notion of it only applying to property that an individual does not want or a museum is willing to deacquisition or deaccession, is he prepared to entertain an amendment that would clarify that it only applies to such artifacts as he described in his speech, only those that people are not interested in maintaining or that museums are willing to surrender?

Mr. Bill Casey: Madam Speaker, the intent of the bill is absolutely not to force anybody to give up their artifacts, but it does call for the development of “a comprehensive national strategy to promote and support the return of Aboriginal cultural property”.

The intent is not to force anyone to give up any artifacts. It also opens the door, if there are artifacts in storage or not on display, to encourage the owners to have them on display, either at their facility or lend them to some other facility. That would be part of the process.

There are thousands and thousands of aboriginal, indigenous artifacts not on display now, which serves no purpose for the cultural composure of our country.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to follow on the comments of my colleague. The experience in Alberta has been that many indigenous people are trying to repatriate items that were taken from them. Certainly in the period of colonialism, many artifacts were stolen. We just have to go to the Museum of Anthropology at the university in Vancouver to see all those artifacts that are stored away. Is the member not willing to include in his bill that surely the most important thing is to have measures to assist indigenous peoples of Canada who wish to repatriate artifacts that were taken from them, as opposed to people who have them trying to find a way to give them up? Does the member's bill deal with that? Is he willing to have measures such as that? Has he spoken with indigenous Canadians on how that might be incorporated into his bill?

• (1735)

Mr. Bill Casey: Madam Speaker, we have done wide-ranging consultations. Our focus is on having a system that can help a small community like Millbrook First Nation in my riding deal with the issues of transportation, restoration, storage, display, and so on. Right now there is no process. Communities are on their own if they identify an artifact. They have done that but they have no help and there is no place to turn to.

Certainly, I am open to anything that will make the bill better, to deal with these issues that we have both brought up, but the intent is not to force anybody to give up legally acquired artifacts.

Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette (Winnipeg Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I was wondering if we could just quickly comment on the idea that in fact the Millbrook First Nation collection was saved by a gentleman back in the 1850s. I believe his name was Samuel Huyghue. He bought a lot of the collection and brought it around the world. Museums are actually an important source for saving many of these collections and many museums are spending a lot of time trying to share this resource back with many first nations as well.

Mr. Bill Casey: Madam Speaker, I am glad the member brought that up. That gentleman, who was from Prince Edward Island originally, took the artifacts and took great care of them. He was extremely interested in indigenous history. He loved these artifacts

and took very good care of them. When he passed away, he bequeathed them to a museum, which has also taken very good care of them. We have had some discussions and we are discussing possibilities.

Hon. Peter Van Loan (York—Simcoe, CPC): Madam Speaker, the bill before us, proposing a national strategy for the repatriation of aboriginal cultural property, is a well-intentioned but flawed piece of legislation. The Conservative Party will support it at second reading, but we will be seeking amendments to correct some of its flaws, which we have already seen highlighted through the questions and the speeches so far.

The aboriginal communities of Canada are truly our first peoples. As such, aboriginal culture is important to all Canadians for its role in informing us who we are, what our roots are, and how that has contributed to making Canada the extraordinary country we are today. Naturally, the culture, artifacts, and art that bear witness to its past have an especially powerful meaning for aboriginal people. An ideal outcome will be one that not just balances competing interests in the property of cultural artifacts, but rather one that builds on common interests to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes. While some may see gain in stoking grievances and differences of interest, the sensible Canadian way is that which looks to build on mutual interests.

The question of how museums should deal with aboriginal cultural property is not new. In fact, well before any politician sought to make this an issue, the Canadian Museums Association and the Assembly of First Nations established a joint task force, which conducted consultations for a year. They arrived at sensible and practical conclusions on how museums should work in collaboration with first nations. They jointly recommended a process based on moral and ethical grounds for the use and presentation of cultural objects, and for resolving disputes. Museums across Canada have developed and implemented policies based on this joint Assembly of First Nations and Canadian Museums Association report, and all of it happened without Parliament imposing legislation. The parties involved are to be commended and recognized for their efforts in working together. It is in that context that we must view this bill.

“Aboriginal cultural property” is defined in this bill as “objects of historical, social, ceremonial or cultural importance to the Aboriginal peoples of Canada”. This could include thousands of everyday artifacts, ceremonial and sacred objects, ancestral skeletal remains and funerary objects, as well as artwork, sculptures, jewellery, or literature produced by Canada's aboriginal peoples.

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, many of these aboriginal cultural artifacts were gathered, purchased, and occasionally appropriated, by missionaries, government agents, anthropologists, and amateur and professional collectors. This occurred in a period when aboriginal culture was believed to be dying out, and the acquisition, preservation, and display of these artifacts was seen as a means to enable future generations of anthropologists and students to study traditional aboriginal cultures. Of course, aboriginal culture did not die out and instead now forms an important part of Canada's cultural landscape, while Canada's aboriginal people continue to make strong and significant contributions to our country.

The Conservative Party will be proposing three amendments, perhaps four, I might now suggest, constituting additional criteria for evaluating the measures to be included in a national strategy for the repatriation of aboriginal cultural property.

The display and interpretation of aboriginal cultural artifacts is broadly in the public interest. Current and subsequent generations of Canadians benefit from developing an appreciation and understanding of aboriginal history and culture, something that is a direct result of seeing and learning about aboriginal culture, often through artifacts and their interpretation in museums. It is not a coincidence that the appreciation of aboriginal culture, and public support to correct historical wrongs, have risen in parallel. This bill does not reflect that reality. For that reason, our first amendment will propose that measures “ensure that consideration be given to the public interest in artifacts being available to Canadians in a way that enhances knowledge and appreciation of Aboriginal culture”. The continued public display of aboriginal cultural artifacts will play an important part in helping future generations learn about and appreciate our first nations' traditions. This is a desirable outcome for all.

Another concern is that artifacts are often fragile and require special care. It will be a loss to all Canadians, including aboriginal communities, if artifacts are ultimately lost or degraded due to a lack of appropriate curatorial care. For that reason, we propose a second amendment. Any repatriation strategy should include measures that ensure that consideration is given to how best to adequately preserve and protect the quality and integrity of aboriginal cultural property. The current bill lacks this important consideration.

• (1740)

Finally, because of the sweeping definition of aboriginal cultural property in the bill as “objects of historical, social, ceremonial, or cultural importance to the aboriginal peoples of Canada”, the bill runs the risk of putting in jeopardy Canada's vibrant aboriginal art sector. This sector is a significant element to the economy of many remote aboriginal communities, and the revenues generated by the works produced support aboriginal families across Canada.

In any well-intentioned policy proposal, the greatest danger lies in unintended consequences. One need only look at the generally benevolent motivation behind the establishment of residential schools for aboriginal children and the subsequent suffering and hardship that often took place in those institutions to know the importance of looking beyond lofty ambitions to ensure that our actions actually make a positive difference.

In the case of the bill, there is a risk of placing a cloud over the entire aboriginal art and design community. If prospective purchasers, be they museums, galleries, or private collectors, fear that the repatriation of their newly acquired property is a future possibility, they will think twice about making such acquisitions or price in a discount for that risk.

Such an effort will harm aboriginal creators, communities, and economies. For that reason, we will be proposing an amendment to ensure that such a strategy does not have the effect of harming or discouraging the important commercial trade by aboriginal artists in the creation and sale of art, design, and fashion.

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Of course, a fourth amendment reflecting what we heard the hon. member for Cumberland—Colchester express in his speech—that this repatriation policy should only apply to artifacts that individuals are no longer interested in possessing or that museums are going to deaccession—would be a further constructive amendment to help ensure a positive, constructive path forward on a repatriation strategy.

With these four amendments we would be proposing, an aboriginal cultural property repatriation strategy will have the potential to focus on the mutual benefits and opportunities that grow the place for aboriginal culture in the Canadian identity for the benefit of generations to come.

I believe there is a deep well of good faith and existing collaboration between Canadian museums and our first nation communities. All across Canada, aboriginal communities have been engaged and made positive contributions as museums have stepped up their game in enhancing their presentation and interpretation of our aboriginal culture, art, and history. Let us work to ensure that this positive environment continues to grow, something that will benefit all Canadians in the future.

• (1745)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Romeo Saganash (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am honoured to have the opportunity to rise on such an important issue for indigenous people, that of cultural property.

First, I would like to remind members that this government already committed to implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

One would therefore expect that all legislation introduced by the government would be in keeping with the declaration, particularly when it comes to indigenous rights or issues. Sadly, that does not seem to be the case with the bill we have before us today.

I think it is important to point out that we will support this bill at second reading so that we can work with members to improve some of its aspects.

[*English*]

The cultural items that are currently held in museum archives, universities, and private homes were handmade from teachings and techniques passed down for generations among indigenous peoples. They are a necessary part of our self-identity, guaranteed by our inherent treaty rights, constitutional rights, and international human rights.

These are not artifacts belonging to some culture in pre-history. These bones are our ancestors, genetically proven. The clothing was worn by our cousins, the masks were carved by our uncles, the hunting tools were made with our fathers. The *makasinan* were sewn and beaded by our mothers.

Private Members' Business

I usually wear a sample, handmade pair of *makasinan*. The shoes are handcrafted of thick, brain-tanned moose hide, still smelling of the smoke that guarantees the leather stays soft, the same technique that has been used for thousands of years.

The financial considerations of indigenous communities regarding repatriation are not explicitly resolved in Bill C-391. I would like to know from the member what the bill proposes to do. For example, I know recently that in British Columbia, the government has allocated \$2 million to help with repatriation efforts for indigenous peoples.

Imagine walking through a museum and coming across a bag made with one's mother, which was taken away at residential school and is now under glass. This has happened to indigenous peoples again and again. Imagine the loss when one cannot even keep a bag after having learned to bead as a small child.

There are cultural teachings about beadwork: leave a bead in the wrong place to reflect life's imperfections and keep us humble, a crucial value for many indigenous peoples around the world.

The *makasinan* are well-known, well worn, and have been to ceremonies, hunting camps, and visiting communities in many territories. The security guards, cafeteria staff, visitors, and my colleagues ask me why I wear slippers to work. These *makasinan* have meaning to me in a way slippers bought at a store will never have. They connect me to a time and a place, and remind me of what I have been taught to hold true.

• (1750)

I invite all members to come to my riding this summer. In my riding there is the Cree cultural centre called Aanischaaukamikw. For many years Cree elders have spoken of the need for a central place for the protection of our ways. They remind us that Cree culture must be captured, maintained, shared, celebrated, and practised. Aanischaaukamikw is the realization of that very vision.

The museum allows us to preserve and share the stories, legends, music, pictures, and physical objects that show the youth the Cree people's reverence for the land we have walked on for thousands of years.

This museum is an example of what is possible when we have our personal belongings returned to us and when we have the resources to properly restore and protect our heritage, share it with our children, and share it with others.

However, not all communities have the capacity right now to store or care for their objects. Some have developed arrangements to leave precious objects in museums for proper storage and care. Others have chosen a shared arrangement that allows objects to rotate between the community and the museum, which takes them back to conservation.

The current requirement on indigenous peoples to prove ownership and connection is onerous. Research costs, often paid by loans, can prevent communities from achieving successful repatriation claims. Indigenous peoples should not be blocked by financial constraints. That is contrary to the inherent rights to cultural identity and cultural connection.

The heart of the matter when we are talking about the importance of repatriation of cultural heritage is self-determination. In fact, cultural heritage is considered so important to national identity, self-determination, and international cultural diversity that many states—Pakistan, India, the U.S., and Bolivia, for example—have MOUs and agreements that regulate the exportation of cultural objects.

It is also part of the agenda of the Summit of the Americas, where governments in the western hemisphere pledged to enhance appreciation of indigenous cultures and cultural artifacts through various collaborative means.

The language in Bill C-391 is weak and leaves many of the bill's provisions unenforceable. "To promote and support the return", for instance, "encourage owners", and other similarly drafted wording leaves most of the bill as optional.

Since the protection of cultural property touches on so many different areas, responsibility for various aspects of policy development and enforcement involves multiple ministries and government agencies, raising the risk of inconsistent and even contradictory actions being taken if a coordinated mechanism is not in place.

I would like to see a strong mechanism contained within Bill C-391 for Canadian-nation-to-indigenous-nation agreements.

The language used in this bill must also reflect already accepted national and international definitions of cultural property. I am not currently satisfied that it does. Definitions can be found in the Quebec cultural property act, the Canadian cultural property export control list, UNESCO conventions, and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. I refer members to article 31, for instance, under the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and to article 12, paragraph 2, of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

• (1755)

There is a lot of potential for the bill to provide closure to many people around the world and in this country in particular. Ancestors can be reburied with respect. Stolen items can be returned to their owners. Cultural teachings and practices can be revived. I look forward to working with the member on the bill.

Mr. Randy Boissonnault (Edmonton Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-391, which deals with the repatriation of indigenous cultural property. I want to begin by thanking the hon. member for Cumberland—Colchester for bringing this very important issue before Parliament. As a non-status adopted Cree and as a member of the indigenous caucus on the government side, it is my honour to second this private member's bill.

I am inspired and moved by the passion and commitment of the hon. member for Cumberland—Colchester. The tabling of Bill C-391 allows us to reflect a very important aspect of reconciliation with indigenous communities in Canada.

Private Members' Business

[Translation]

The government is firmly committed to reconciliation. In its Speech from the Throne opening the 2015 parliamentary session, the government committed to establishing a renewed nation-to-nation relationship between Canada and indigenous people, a relationship based on recognition of rights, respect, co-operation, and partnership.

[English]

This commitment was reinforced in budget 2018 through a broad series of investments, including \$23.9 million over five years, starting in 2018-19, to the Parks Canada Agency. This investment will allow the agency to integrate indigenous views, history, and heritage into Canada's national parks, marine conservation areas, and historic sites managed by the agency.

The decision to provide those funds responds to call to action 79 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. It calls for historical commemoration activities, and for recognition and acknowledgement of the contributions that indigenous peoples have made to Canada's history.

[Translation]

That raises an important question. Where should we turn for guidance on the approach Bill C-391 should take and on how the bill will address repatriation as part of reconciliation?

I think there are two very important documents that we should refer to in order to inform our decisions on repatriation and this bill. They are the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The government committed to implementing each of the commission's 94 calls to action. With the introduction of Bill C-391, I was curious about exactly what those calls to action said about the repatriation of aboriginal cultural property, so I took a look and did not see it mentioned anywhere. However, two major calls to action are directly related to it.

For one, call to action 67 calls on the federal government to provide funding to the Canadian Museums Association to undertake, in collaboration with aboriginal peoples, a national review of museum policies and best practices to determine the extent to which those policies and practices comply with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The review will lead to recommendations, probably for various stakeholders, which could include museums, indigenous communities, and governments.

The first thing that struck me about the review is its perspective on how Canadian museums carry out their work in accordance with policies and best practices. Looking at this issue from an indigenous perspective, it seems clear to me that the call to action is about policies and practices relating to the repatriation of cultural property and human remains. We know that Canada's museum community has been involved in this type of activity for quite some time.

[English]

The fact that this call to action requires the review be undertaken in collaboration with indigenous peoples is a very important

principle. I note that the same principle is reflected in Bill C-391. It says that development of a national strategy on repatriation would have to be done in co-operation with representatives of first nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples of Canada.

The final aspect of call to action 67 that caught my attention is that the review of museum policies and best practices is to determine how consistent those policies and practices are with the UN declaration. I will speak more about that declaration shortly. However, before I do, I would like to note that the government, through the Department of Canadian Heritage, is already working closely with the Canadian Museums Association on bringing forward the national review. A first meeting of an advisory committee that includes representatives from museums and indigenous communities recently took place at the association's annual conference in Vancouver.

● (1800)

I am sure that as this project proceeds, it will have some very important things to say about the repatriation of indigenous cultural property.

This brings me to the other call to action that is relevant for our consideration of Bill C-391 and repatriation. I am referring to call to action 43, which calls upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to fully adopt and implement the United Nations declaration as a framework for reconciliation. As hon. members will recall, the government has already endorsed the UN declaration without qualification and is committed to its full implementation.

I will turn to what the UN declaration can tell us about repatriation to provide us with context for our consideration of Bill C-391. There are two articles in the declaration that will be useful in guiding our reflection on the bill, and they are articles 11 and 12.

I will begin with article 11, which says:

Indigenous peoples have the right to practise and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs. This includes the right to maintain, protect and develop the past, present and future manifestations of their cultures.

It goes on to say that states should provide redress through effective mechanisms, which may include restitution of, among other things, cultural property taken without the consent of indigenous peoples or in violation of their laws, traditions, and customs. It says that those mechanisms are to be developed in conjunction with indigenous peoples.

We have heard on both sides of the aisle this evening about the effect this has on indigenous peoples, and has had in the past when their cultural property was forcibly taken from them. I see parallels between this and Bill C-391.

Private Members' Business

Moving on to article 12, among the rights discussed is the right of indigenous peoples to use and control their ceremonial objects and the right to the repatriation of human remains. It goes on to say, “States shall seek to enable the access and/or repatriation of ceremonial objects and human remains in their possession”, and ends by stating that this should be through “fair, transparent and effective mechanisms developed in conjunction with indigenous peoples”. Not surprisingly, the development of plans and actions in collaboration with indigenous communities seems to be a common thread.

When we look at article 12, there are obvious parallels with Bill C-391, but its scope is more limited to certain kinds of indigenous cultural objects, and only those that are in the state's possession. It also, unlike Bill C-391, makes explicit reference to human remains. We know that can be of significant concern for indigenous communities when it comes to repatriation.

With respect to objects and human remains in the state's possession, I would like to draw the attention of hon. members to the existing policies and practices of the two main federal repositories for this type of material. I am referring specifically to the Canadian Museum of History and Parks Canada Agency. Both already undertake repatriation with indigenous communities within and outside the treaty process and have done so for many years.

In summary, we know that repatriation is a significant aspect of reconciliation, and we know that our government is committed to reconciliation. The calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples both give us some useful points to consider to support Bill C-391.

I would like to thank my hon. colleague for his leadership and care in consulting with the government indigenous caucus, and more broadly with caucus members on the government side and members in this House, and for his commitment in helping indigenous artifacts and all of their related spirits to come back home.

I look forward to hearing the views of other hon. members on this bill.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am rising today to speak in support of Bill C-391. I will also offer my congratulations to my colleague, the member for Cumberland—Colchester, for bringing this important bill forward.

It is not often in the House that we have a chance to bring a private member's bill forward. It is a wonderful opportunity to make a difference in the lives of Canadians and where we are going as a country.

If passed, the bill would call for the Minister of Canadian Heritage to co-operate with the first nations, Inuit, and Métis people of Canada to develop and evaluate a national strategy on aboriginal cultural property repatriation. As my colleague stated earlier, the intent of the bill is very important, but I think it deserves a few amendments, which I will speak to in a little while.

During the late 1800s and early 1900s, indigenous cultural property was gathered, purchased, or confiscated by missionaries, government officials, collectors, and anthropologists. This was often

done without the direct involvement or consent of the indigenous peoples.

I come from British Columbia, and we often hear about the potlatch, which was an elaborate ceremonial feast held by first nations up and down the Pacific coast of British Columbia. When the Canadian government banned the potlatch ceremony in 1885, it arrested those who defied the ban. The potlatch artifacts were seized and many found their way around the country and overseas and into museums.

In 1978, the Canadian Museum of Civilization returned confiscated potlatch items to the Kwakwaka'wakw communities of Alert Bay and Cape Mudge. The federal government financed the construction of two new museums to house that.

We have heard over the last number of years that there is a strong desire of indigenous people in Canada to have those culturally sensitive artifacts returned to the communities where they originated. They certainly are artifacts that have a lot of meaning for indigenous peoples.

Repatriation of cultural property is a positive opportunity to connect indigenous communities with meaningful artifacts within their original context. We also heard how this is consistent with some of the articles in the UN declaration and in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action.

Again, I do agree with the principle of the bill, but I will also agree with the member for York—Simcoe who identified some areas that he thought could be improved upon. I also understand from the speech by the originator of the bill that he sounded more than willing to listen to some of the ways in which the bill could be improved.

The Canadian Museums Association represents over 2,000 institutions and museums. It has stated that we have a moral imperative to amicably pursue the repatriation of cultural property with aboriginal communities regardless of any legal imperative, and it will continue to encourage this practice with its members. It has also expressed concern with the vague language in the bill which could be interpreted in terms of how it will actually impact the museums and the burden that it might create. Certainly that is an important voice to listen to.

While the bill suggests that museums and similar organizations will be encouraged and supported in the repatriation process, it does not specify the degree to which museums would be obligated to participate or how these organizations would be consulted or involved in the development of the national strategy or the execution on the bill's passage.

It is necessary to have that conversation up front with museums and involve them in the strategy because their expertise is absolutely phenomenal. I have witnessed how well they do.

• (1805)

We will be proposing three amendments, and possibly a fourth, constituting additional criteria for evaluating the measures to be included in a national strategy for the repatriation of aboriginal cultural property.

Adjournment Proceedings

The first proposed amendment is to ensure that consideration be given to the public interest in artifacts being available to Canadians in a way that enhances knowledge and appreciation of aboriginal culture. We only have to go over to the Canadian Museum of History to look at the phenomenal opportunity that not only Canadians from across the country but people from across the world get to enjoy the rich heritage.

The second proposed amendment is to ensure that consideration is given to how best to adequately preserve and protect the quality and integrity of aboriginal cultural property.

The third proposed amendment is to ensure that such a strategy does not have the effect of harming or discouraging the important commercial trade by aboriginal artists in the creation and sale of art, design, and fashion.

Repatriation of cultural property is very important, and it is a significant step toward reconciliation. We should remember the roles that museums and cultural institutions play in our society by fostering education and appreciation of aboriginal culture and history through the exhibition of artifacts.

If this bill goes to committee and has some amendments, ultimately, it will be very important for the minister to work in consultation with all the stakeholders to ensure that the value of repatriation and the value of teaching our society about the indigenous cultures and the past are upheld.

I want to give an example of a very meaningful story, reported in a 2006 CBC article. It reads:

Many cultural artifacts have also wound up outside Canada, as Canadian aboriginal artifacts are highly prized by foreign collectors. The Cultural Property Export and Import Act has been of some help in repatriating a few of these artifacts.

In the summer of 2006, a 135-year-old Haisla totem pole will finally return home to a community 600 kilometres northwest of Vancouver. The pole has been in a Swedish museum since 1929. Out of gratitude for Sweden's decision to voluntarily send it back, the Haisla sent four carvers to Sweden in 2005 to carve a replica they would leave behind.

What are hearing about the good will to repatriate the artifacts and to move forward in what is perhaps a win-win for everyone.

This is just one of several examples of successful repatriation of cultural property. It is possible and it is significant.

Last summer I had the opportunity to go to the Secwepemc Museum. I witnessed an excellent local example of how it had taken its artifacts and had presented their history. It is a tourist attraction. Again, it is the small town Tk'emlups that sits right beside the city of Kamloops. They work in partnership with local museums. We have a Kamloops Museum and we have the Secwepemc Museum. The partnership they have with respect to celebrating both local indigenous culture and local history of the Kamloops area has been very significant. Both organizations recognize the challenges of the work that has to be done in protecting these very important artifacts for the future.

This private member's bill presents a great opportunity. We look forward to seeing it in committee and having some thoughtful conversations around how we can suggest amendments to make it a little stronger and a little more positive.

● (1810)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise and support my colleague's initiative and commend him on the outstanding work that he has done with respect to raising the profile of the importance of artifacts and the important role of museums, no matter where they may be in the world, in recognizing where those artifacts belong and attempting to work toward repatriation.

In listening to the debate, I heard colleagues across the way asking "what about this?" or "what about that?" That is the nice thing about the standing committee process, as I suspect my friend and colleague will get the support necessary to be able to see this private member's bill passed, just based on the comments I have heard here this afternoon. Therefore, I congratulate the member and those individuals involved in assisting and motivating him to bring forward the legislation that we have before us.

I come from Winnipeg, where we have a natural tourist spot today. Hundreds if not thousands of years ago, it was a major attraction for settlers and for indigenous people, The Forks in Winnipeg where the Red River meets the Assiniboine River. It is the heart of Winnipeg, and there is great interest in the development of that area, where we continue to look at ways in which we can enhance tourism.

Often we underestimate the value of our heritage, in particular indigenous heritage, by not demonstrating appreciation and putting it out and displaying it, but we also underestimate the potential interest both from an educational point of view and from a tourism point of view. More and more, those complement each other. That is what I would like to see in terms of direction. We could identify many of these artifacts and bring them to a place where there is a greater educational component. I do not think that we appreciate the heritage that we have to date, and the first nations are the founders of where we are today. They have enriched who we are and have given us our identity.

● (1815)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member will have seven minutes the next time this matter is before the House.

The time provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired, and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

Adjournment Proceedings

[English]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP): Madam Speaker, last December I rose in this House to ask the government to take immediate action to reject any proposal from the Calgary Olympic bid committee to host ski events at Lake Louise in Banff National Park during the 2026 Olympic Games. As recently as last week, a retired Banff park warden who lives in my riding asked me to do all I can to stop this bad idea from happening.

Last December, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change said that the government had not received a formal proposal and that no decisions had been made, but now we know that a proposal has been made. In March, the Minister of Sport announced that the federal government will provide financial support for an Olympic bid corporation. Earlier this month, the International Olympic Committee confirmed that Calgary is one of seven cities still pursuing a bid for the 2026 Winter Games. Just last week, Calgary City Council voted to keep the Olympic bid process alive. Therefore, it is confirmed. A bid for Calgary to host the 2026 Olympic Games is happening. Now the question remains as to whether the government will firmly reject any proposal to host Olympic events at Lake Louise before discussions go any further.

Banff National Park is Canada's oldest national park, and one of our most cherished places. However, according to Parks Canada's most recent state of the parks report, Banff's ecosystems are only in fair condition. The suggestion from the Olympic bid committee that events be held at Lake Louise drew swift criticism from environmentalists.

Harvey Locke, a well-known expert on national parks, wilderness and wildlife, called the Lake Louise proposal a "bad idea" and said, "The problem we have in Banff park is that we already have a park that's bursting at the seams. We need to be moving [in] the other direction, taking pressure off Banff park."

The Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society agrees. According to the southern Alberta chapter president Anne-Marie Syslak, "We need to be conscious of putting any more stress on that ecosystem.... We know it is an incredibly valuable and rich area for wildlife. We do not want to see massive infrastructure and commercial development in areas already maxed out...."

Allowing further development and the hosting of Olympic events at Lake Louise Ski Resort could result in irreparable long-term harm to Banff National Park.

It is also worth noting that there are other options to host the ski events. The Nakiska Ski Area in Kananaskis Country was the site of alpine events during the 1988 Calgary Winter Games. It has already been slated to host six Olympic events should Calgary host those games in 2026. The head of the Calgary Olympic bid committee, Kyle Ripley, told reporters back in January, "If we determine that it is not [appropriate to host events at Lake Louise], we have an alternate opportunity to host these same events at Nakiska."

Whistler, B.C., the site of ski events during the Vancouver 2010 Olympics, has also been suggested as an alternative. Mr. Ripley also said that we need to engage in a "philosophical conversation" about whether Olympic events should be allowed in one of our national

parks. The answer to that is quite easy. The Minister of Environment needs to follow the law. The Canada National Parks Act states, "Maintenance or restoration of ecological integrity...shall be the first priority of the Minister when considering all aspects of the management of parks."

Furthermore, the minister's mandate letter from the Prime Minister was clear on this issue. It stated that the minister should "Protect our National Parks by limiting development within them...."

Putting together an Olympic bid is a massive undertaking, and it is unfair to the bid committee to waste its time and resources going down a road that is actually not open. The law is clear on this matter. The minister's mandate letter is clear. Therefore, I will ask again: Will the minister reject outright any proposal to host Olympic events in Banff National Park?

● (1820)

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, first and foremost, Parks Canada places belong to all Canadians. The government is committed to expanding the system of protected areas, preserving our national parks, and contributing to the recovery of species at risk.

At the same time, we must continue to develop new and innovative programs and services to enable more Canadians, including youth and newcomers, to experience the outdoors and learn about our environment. By building connections to these places, we can foster the stewards of tomorrow, people who know and care about these irreplaceable treasures.

In managing national parks, Parks Canada is mandated to maintain or restore ecological integrity, and provides Canadians with opportunities to discover and enjoy them. Parks Canada is a recognized world leader in conservation and has been successfully balancing this integrated mandate.

The government recently announced support for the establishment of a bid corporation for the Calgary 2026 Winter Olympic and Paralympic games. Important next steps include further developing hosting plans and budgets, which will inform government decisions on hosting.

Parks Canada has not received a formal proposal or request detailing any possible use of Lake Louise or any other venues within our national parks for the 2026 Winter Games. As a result, the government is not in a position to make any judgements regarding the use of Parks Canada places or facilities as part of any future 2026 Winter Games bid.

Adjournment Proceedings

If we do receive a formal query or proposal, we will consider it based on a thorough review in the context of policy and legislation. Strict development limits are in place and planning is informed by science. Parks Canada has a rigorous development review and environmental assessment process that ensures all development proposals comply with the limits and that the park's ecological integrity is maintained. In addition, any development in national parks is managed through consultation with the public, indigenous groups, and stakeholders.

Parks Canada takes its mandate to maintain ecological integrity very seriously. Canada's national parks integrate environmental protection with visitor experiences. The agency has been successfully managing this balance and will continue to do so.

• (1825)

Mr. Wayne Stetski: Madam Speaker, I was the manager of provincial parks for southeastern British Columbia for many years, so I have a lot of respect for the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and her parliamentary secretary. They deal with a lot of very difficult issues, and those are growing in their complexity going forward.

However, this one is really quite easy. We have a bid committee looking at its options potentially. Putting together a bid is a very complex matter. It is expensive and time consuming. Parks Canada would be doing not only itself and the people who care about national parks a favour, but also the Olympic bid committee, by making it very clear that the law is clear on this matter, that ecological integrity must come first. The minister's mandate letter is very clear on this matter.

It is so simple to make the decision right now, upfront and say no to development in Lake Louise and Banff National Park. Let the committee know and let it get on with its work without considering Lake Louise.

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon: Madam Speaker, through its broad network of national parks, marine conservation areas, and national historic sites, Parks Canada connects Canadians with their heritage. In managing national parks, Parks Canada maintains and restores ecological integrity and provides Canadians with opportunities to discover and enjoy them. Parks Canada is a recognized world leader in conservation and has been successfully balancing this integrated mandate.

Canada's national parks are gateways to nature, adventure, and discovery. They represent the very best of what Canada has to offer and tell stories of who we are, including the history, cultures, and contribution of indigenous peoples.

Parks Canada takes its mandate to maintain ecological integrity very seriously. Canada's national parks integrate environmental protection with visitor experiences. The agency has successfully been managing this balance and will continue to do so.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, on December 6, 2017, I rose in the House during question period to ask the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans about the Liberals' promise to protect communities from climate change with investments in green infrastructure. I specifically

alluded to the state of the Cowichan River in my riding of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford. I wanted the minister to specifically commit to making sure that federal funds were there to raise a critical piece of infrastructure, the Cowichan weir.

I want to back up a bit and explain what is going on. Every summer, around the end of August and into September, the Cowichan River gets down to critically low flow rates because of the effects of climate change. We are not having the lake retain as much water. The snow pack is lowering, and as a result, we are dealing with flow rates that can sometimes go as low as four cubic metres per second.

This is an iconic river. It is a heritage river, and when that river is flowing at only four cubic metres per second, we can barely see the water move. It looks like a still and placid lake. What that does is that the temperature starts rising. We start losing access to tributaries, and it poses a very real threat to fish and fish habitat.

I also want to acknowledge the important work that is being done in the Cowichan Valley, both through Cowichan Tribes and the Cowichan Valley Regional District. They have come together to form the Cowichan Watershed Board. We also have a number of stakeholders that have come together to form the Cowichan Stewardship Roundtable, including Catalyst Paper, which owns the weir. All of these organizations have come together in a 100% consensus and have agreed that the solution to the long-term problem of the Cowichan River is to build a new weir so we can hold back more water in the lake. By holding back more lake supply water, we will be more successful at controlling the flow rate to make sure that an adequate flow of water is running down that river in the dry summer months so that fish and fish habitat can be saved.

During the minister's response to my question, he acknowledged that the government is proceeding with Bill C-68. We support that legislation, and we are glad to see that some of those changes from the 2012 amendments to the Fisheries Act are being repealed. However, one of the criticisms we had of Bill C-68 during second reading, before we sent it to committee for further study, was that in the definition of fish habitat, there was not any explicit legal protection for environmental flows, which really means the amount and type of water that is needed for fish and aquatic ecosystems to flourish. This is a big oversight, because by controlling flow rates and making sure they are adequate, they actually work.

I will give the example of the Jordan River, also in my riding of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford. The Jordan River has suffered from a copper mine and from B.C. Hydro dams. It has had a lot of work done to it over the years. They found recently, in 2008, when they increased the flow rates in the Jordan River, that, surprise, fish and fish habitat started returning and becoming a lot more healthy.

I want to specifically ask the parliamentary secretary if he will honour the Liberal promise to build this green infrastructure. Will he commit the necessary federal funds to ensure that the Lake Cowichan weir can be raised?

Adjournment Proceedings

• (1830)

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for the question in relation to the Cowichan Lake weir. I would also like to state that in addition to asking this question of the minister, the member has brought up this issue with me as well.

The Cowichan River is a British Columbia heritage river with significant cultural and historical importance, and it supports significant populations of salmon, as was mentioned by the member opposite. As an islander, I spent significant time during my childhood camping and exploring areas around Cowichan Lake and Cowichan River.

Healthy fish and fish habitat play a critical role in the Canadian economy and are a strong measure of our environmental health. That is why it is so important that we safeguard the health of our fish as well as the habitat in which they live, feed, reproduce, and migrate.

The continued well-being of Pacific salmon and their habitats is a high priority for the residents of Cowichan Valley Regional District, the Cowichan Tribes, the Lake Cowichan First Nation, and, frankly, all British Columbians and all Canadians. Our government is deeply committed to ensuring that these iconic species are protected for future generations.

As a result of climate change and other factors, we know that inflows from Cowichan Lake have been reduced. We also understand that the weir constructed in 1957 at the outflow of the lake is no longer adequate to ensure sufficient storage in drought conditions, which have been occurring more frequently in the past 20 years.

However, the problem at the Cowichan Lake weir is complex, and a long-term solution needs appropriate planning and consultation. It will require the involvement of a number of partners and significant funding to be implemented. That is why Fisheries and Oceans Canada has been working with the Cowichan Valley Regional District, the Cowichan Tribes, the Lake Cowichan First Nation, other federal departments, the Province of British Columbia, and industry to discuss a proposal to increase the height to the weir and to examine potential funding mechanisms. We are committed to this ongoing dialogue and to finding a long-term solution to resolve the issues of the Cowichan watershed.

Departmental officials are engaged in the Cowichan water use planning process, which works with all local stakeholders to address long-term water needs for fish and local residents. However, while the work to consider the Cowichan Lake weir proposal is under way, this government is also taking action and is concurrently making investments in habitat restoration and salmon stock assessment projects on the Cowichan River.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada currently has two active projects on the Cowichan system that will deliver mainstem riparian rehabilitation projects on the lower Cowichan River over a three-year period and is working with resource professionals, youth, volunteers, private landowners, and the community at large to restore lake and river shoreline properties.

The oceans protection plan is a historic \$1.5 billion investment that will make our oceans safer, healthier, and cleaner for generations

to come, and it includes support for the restoration of the Pacific salmon habitat. As salmon are a migratory species, the benefits from our government's investments in coastal restoration projects will therefore extend beyond the boundaries of the river system itself into the Georgia Strait ecosystem and also benefit species such as the endangered southern resident killer whales, which rely on salmon as their primary food source.

In addition, amendments to the Fisheries Act that we have introduced in Bill C-68 are intended to incorporate modern safeguards and restore protections lost as a result of changes that were made to the act by the previous government. These amendments were mentioned by the member opposite, who is also supportive. These changes will provide additional protections to fish and fish habitat across Canada, including habitat in the very important Cowichan River.

I can assure the member that Fisheries and Oceans Canada is committed to the ongoing conservation and protection of Cowichan River salmon and their habitat. We continue to invest in restoration projects that will benefit chinook salmon within the system, and we will continue to work with our partners to evaluate potential solutions and funding options for work at the Cowichan Lake weir.

• (1835)

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Madam Speaker, I thank the parliamentary secretary for his comments. I am encouraged, and I do know that officials from DFO have been working closely with a lot of local stakeholders.

It is indeed true that there are a lot of moving parts to this project, but I want to have the assurance that when the Cowichan Tribes, the CVRD, and Catalyst are putting all of this effort to come together with a comprehensive scientific study and eventually come up with a number describing the rate at which the Cowichan River has to flow in order to maintain a healthy fish population, when all of that local work has been done, the federal government will be there to play its part and live up to its statutory duty to protect fish and fish habitat in the Cowichan River.

Mr. Terry Beech: Madam Speaker, the minister recognizes the significance of the Cowichan River in supporting important populations of Pacific salmon. DFO is aware of the changes in flow that have occurred within the system and that the weir at the outflow of the lake is no longer adequate to ensure sufficient storage in drought conditions. That is why DFO officials have been working with our partners to find a long-term solution to this issue and find potential funding sources to implement it. Concurrently, our government is also taking action on Pacific salmon through the coastal restoration fund, meeting the Cohen conditions, and implementing the wild salmon policy.

I can assure the member that we understand the significance of the Cowichan River salmon and that we are committed to ongoing dialogue with our partners to find a long-term solution to the issues identified by the member opposite at the Cowichan Lake weir.

Adjournment Proceedings

CANADA REVENUE AGENCY

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, on December 6, I asked the Minister of National Revenue a question regarding the disability tax credit and the infamous memo of May 2. That was the memo that triggered the change to the application process for the disability tax credit.

I asked the minister a simple question, whether she approved the memo that went out in her name and that changed the process for applications for the disability tax credit. Her answer was, "Mr. Speaker, as I just mentioned, I want to reassure all Canadians who receive the disability tax credit that the eligibility criteria have not changed."

Two days later, on December 8, after she had just given that smug answer to a question that affected the lives of thousands of vulnerable Canadians, she put out a press release saying that "the CRA will return to using the pre-May 2017 clarification letter for Disability Tax Credit (DTC) applications related to Life-Sustaining Therapy."

In that release, the minister obviously acknowledged what everybody had already known for months, that the May 2 memo and the change to the process resulted in thousands of denials of the disability tax credit, including to diabetics who had received the tax credit for years and relied on the continuation of that credit to hold on to their disability tax savings accounts.

Since then, the CRA has spent about four and a half months going back and reviewing the thousands of rejected applications. At their most recent appearance at the finance committee, officials were not yet able to confirm that all of those reviews had even taken place.

Last night, the NDP critic for national revenue, the member for Sherbrooke, raised the issue. He correctly described the DTC debacle, and the minister's parliamentary secretary tried to blame the previous government for the minister's May 2 decision.

Let us consider this. For the entire tenure of the previous government, DTC applications were routinely approved 80% of the time for type 1 diabetics. For the first year and a half of the current government, DTC applications were routinely approved 80% of the time for type 1 diabetics. Then the minister sent out a memo resulting in a change of process that led to an 80% rejection rate, and somehow that is the previous government's fault. The minister is blaming the previous government for a change that she made on May 2.

Here we are now, four and a half months later. There are only two things that Canadians want from the government out of this whole sorry episode. They would like assurance that the government will stop trying to deal with its out-of-control deficit by going after and targeting vulnerable Canadians to raise additional revenue, and they want just a simple acknowledgement that the government screwed up last year and that it is sorry. The parliamentary secretary, who will be responding tonight, will have an opportunity to do just that, just give an apology so we can move on.

• (1840)

[Translation]

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Parliamentary Secretary for Sport and Persons with Disabilities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to

rise this evening to answer my colleague's question. I will repeat what he and many of his colleagues have already been told.

Our government has always had the same goal, namely, that all Canadians receive the benefits and tax credits to which they are entitled. I want to be perfectly clear. The eligibility criteria for the disability tax credit, or DTC for short, are defined by the act and have not changed. They did not change yesterday and they will not change this evening either. The criteria have always been the same.

Unlike the Harper government, our government is committed to ensuring that Canadians with disabilities not only have access to the tax credits they are entitled to, but also that they can engage with the CRA regarding how it can best serve them. That is why we have restored the positions that the Conservatives did away with in 2006. Everyone knows that the former Harper government only served the wealthiest Canadians, but eliminating the disability advisory committee was a completely ridiculous decision.

We are doing things differently. Last fall, the minister announced that we are reinstating that committee, which we believe to be crucial. After 10 years without a voice, stakeholders and experts are once again able to make recommendations to the CRA on how to improve the DTC and other measures that affect Canadians with disabilities. Our government has also taken concrete action to make it easier for Canadians to apply for the DTC. I know this from personal experience, since my daughter has type 1 diabetes and benefits directly from that tax credit. As of a year ago, nurse practitioners are now allowed to certify the medical information and the effects of the impairment on the credit application form, which makes the process much more accessible.

Let us be clear, the CRA approves the vast majority of DTC claims it receives. I do not know where my colleague opposite is getting his figures when he says that 80% of claims are rejected, but I know that 700,000 Canadians claim the DTC on their tax return every year. If my colleague does not believe me, he can refer to the CRA website. Everything is on the site. The data is public. The CRA is striving to be more transparent. That is why the DTC data, including the number of people who claim the tax credit, the amount claimed, and the number of claims approved or rejected are now posted on the CRA website. The numbers are easy to verify. Just go to the website and check.

[English]

Mr. Pat Kelly: Madam Speaker, if the member would like to know where the number came from, I invite him to review the testimony that was delivered at the finance committee. Diabetes Canada informed the committee that immediately following the May 2 change to the letter regarding the disability tax credit application for type 1 diabetics, they went from an 80% approval rate to an 80% denial rate.

Adjournment Proceedings

We have asked repeatedly for officials at the CRA to give us the information about approval rates and they have repeatedly told us they do not track information by type of application for the disability tax credit. They have repeatedly told us they will not and do not keep track of that type of information.

I invite him to check the record of that committee. If he wonders where the information came from, it is right there in the public record.

Once again, we have no apology.

• (1845)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon: Madam Speaker, my colleague opposite also forgot to mention that these were Facebook polls. That was also stated in committee. The CRA's authority and performance are being called into question. My colleague opposite has a habit of using politics of fear and saying our public services are inefficient.

[*English*]

Perhaps my Conservative colleague will understand it better in English. Let me be clear: our government is committed to ensuring that Canadians with disabilities receive the credits and benefits that they are entitled to.

[*Translation*]

Canada is at its best and society benefits from that. I am proud of a government that enforces the rules and the laws, and that provides the necessary personnel to meet the needs of diabetics and persons with disabilities.

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:46 p.m.)

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