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Friday, May 10, 2019

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

CONTENTS

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

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, May 10, 2019

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1005)
[English]

OCEANS ACT

Hon. Joyce Murray (for the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard) moved:

That a message be sent to the Senate to acquaint Their Honours that, in relation to Bill C-55, An Act to amend the Oceans Act and the Canada Petroleum Resources Act, the House proposes that amendment 1 be amended by replacing the text of the amendment with the following text:

(4) If an order is made under subsection (2), the Minister shall publish, in any manner that the Minister considers appropriate, a report

- (a) indicating the area of the sea designated in the order;
- (b) summarizing the consultations undertaken prior to making the order; and
- (c) summarizing the information that the Minister considered when making the order, which may include environmental, social, cultural or economic information.

Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure today to speak to Bill C-55, an act to amend the Oceans Act and the Canada Petroleum Resources Act. The bill would help protect our marine and coastal areas, and it would bring us closer to our 10% marine conservation target by the end of 2020.

Before I get into the substance of the amendment and the bill, I would like to thank the sponsor of the bill in the other place. I know that it is because of her passion for protecting our marine and coastal areas that we are here today debating the bill before we can see it pass and in action providing interim protection for our oceans.

While we commend the work of members of the other place and the important discussions that took place when the bill was under consideration in the other chamber, we are unable to support the amendments that were made at committee and subsequently passed.

However, in debating the motion today, we are proposing an amendment that we believe would capture the intent of the amendment from the other place. The proposed amendment would, first, in line with the amendment on geographical location, require that the geographical location of a proposed area for interim

protection be published when an order was made, along with other information relevant and necessary to the order.

Second, as we have maintained, the amendment on consultations by the member of the other place representing Nunavut is indeed already covered by existing legislation and regulations. That is why our amendment proposes to require that consultations undertaken to establish the interim protection MPA be published upon an order being made. We have said repeatedly that consultations are required, so now the government would ensure that we showed that consultations had taken place for the interim protection MPA to be established in the first place.

[Translation]

Discussions in the other place looked at the importance of consultation and engagement, which will continue to be the foundation for establishing all marine protected areas, or MPAs, now and in the future.

Bill C-55 does not weaken our commitment to develop MPAs in collaboration with governments, partners, stakeholders and the public. This bill does not take shortcuts in establishing MPAs. It does not eliminate any steps. In fact, it provides new tools to make sure we are protecting more of our marine environment.

[English]

As members know, the purpose of the bill is to allow the optional use of a new mechanism to provide interim protection for an ecologically sensitive marine area and to freeze the footprint of activities in the area following initial science and consultations with our many partners and stakeholders. This freeze on ongoing activities would be in place for five years, during which additional science and consultations would continue as part of the process to establish a permanent marine protected area.

The proposed ability to provide interim protection is a common-sense approach that would respond to the reality that during the seven to 10 years it takes to establish an MPA, nothing is protected. With the new interim protection provision, some measure of protection would be provided, in the spirit of the precautionary approach.

The bill would also modernize enforcement powers, which would bring the act in line with other environmental legislation. These new powers would be important for ensuring the effectiveness of our 13 current marine protected areas and for meeting each of their conservation objectives.

Government Orders

The discussion in the other place on amendments focused predominantly on, one, ensuring that communities most affected were part of the consultation process, and two, fulfilling our duty to consult with indigenous peoples, as required under section 35 of the Constitution.

•(1010)

[*Translation*]

I would like to assure members of this chamber that our government takes both of these requirements very seriously. Engagement, consultations and consideration of socio-economic information and traditional knowledge are fundamental cornerstones to establishing marine protected areas and, indeed, for interim protection under this bill.

I commend the members of the other place for their commitment to these issues and for ensuring that their regions are well represented in the debate on Bill C-55.

[*English*]

We consult and collaborate with a wide range of governments and marine resource users as well as other stakeholders, experts and the public at various stages, including the following: at the outset, to select an area of interest; when gathering information needed about the ecological importance of a sensitive marine area, the socio-economic conditions related to the area and any current or planned activities that may be of concern; when identifying initial boundaries and conservation objectives for an area based on the best available science, including traditional and local knowledge and a risk analysis; and when developing a proposed regulatory approach and studying the benefits and costs of such an approach. There is also a 30-day public comment period when the regulations are pre-published in the Canada Gazette. We consult on an ongoing basis to provide input to the development of the management plan for an area, and of course, MPAs are collaboratively managed with local partners once designated. Furthermore, sections 29 to 33 of the current Oceans Act explicitly outline required consultations.

As pointed out by the sponsor of the bill in the other place, based on an analysis by Professor Nigel Bankes, from the University of Calgary, the change proposed by the member of the other place representing Nunavut is a piecemeal amendment that is counter to the spirit and intent of the proposed interim protection provision. It would only serve to slow down a process where the objective is to do quite the opposite, which is to provide early protection to areas on an interim basis and following the precautionary approach.

[*Translation*]

Senator Patterson's amendment and, indeed, his explanation are based on the need to ensure that consultations take place. As I previously stated, sections 29 to 33 in the Oceans Act already provide for this, and all legislation must respect section 35 of the Constitution.

[*English*]

Furthermore, an amendment put forth by the member for Nunavut, which is based on a request from Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. and supported by the Qikiqtani Inuit Association, was passed by the House committee and would ensure that all interim protection orders would be consistent with existing land claim agreements. Therefore,

I respectfully suggest that the amendment from the member of the other place is unnecessary. As Professor Bankes stated, it would add requirements to establishing interim protections that are greater than what is required when establishing a permanent MPA and would curtail the application of the precautionary approach.

Professor Bankes writes:

since the amendment is only proposed to apply to the creation of MPAs by ministerial order and not to the process of creating an MPA by Order in Council and regulation, it will arguably be more difficult to use the ministerial order process than the MPA by regulation process.

[*Translation*]

I hope members will agree that this is neither logical nor consistent with the purpose of the bill. As the parliamentary secretary on this file, it is my view that we cannot continue to allow areas of ecological significance to go unprotected. This bill helps to achieve that without shortchanging consultations with provinces and territories, indigenous peoples, coastal communities and stakeholders.

•(1015)

[*English*]

Many members will recall that in 2012, the commissioner of the environment and sustainable development commented on the slow pace of establishing marine protected areas in Canadian waters. The report stated:

During the 20 years since Canada ratified the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, 10 federal MPAs have been established by Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Parks Canada as part of their marine protected area programs. Federal, provincial and territorial governments and non-governmental organizations are collectively protecting about 1 percent of Canada's oceans and Great Lakes through MPAs. At the current rate of progress, it will take many decades for Canada to establish a fully functioning MPA network and achieve the target established in 2010 under the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity to conserve 10 percent of marine areas.

It is worth noting that we have come a long way over the past four years since our government took office in that we have increased our marine protected and coastal areas from less than 1% to over 8%.

[*Translation*]

However, the process continues to remain long and comprehensive. It still takes years to establish an MPA, but under Bill C-55, we have an opportunity to provide early protection for sensitive and ecologically significant areas that support the health of our oceans and the coastal communities that depend on them.

[*English*]

The report by the commissioner of the environment and sustainable development also identified the following factors that affected the rate of progress in creating MPAs: prolonged jurisdictional negotiations, including unresolved land claims; a poor understanding by Canadians of the environmental and socio-economic benefits of MPAs; delays in the approval process; lengthy legislative and regulatory processes; and the competing interests of stakeholders.

Government Orders

In terms of the latter point, I will refer to a letter submitted by the QIA, which represents over 15,000 Inuit, regarding the need to ensure that the interim designation process respects the rights of the Inuit. The letter expresses QIA's opposition to Senator Patterson's amendment.

President Akeagok writes:

The further proposed amendment under consideration...would require the Minister to hold an additional public comment and consultation period before issuing an interim MPA order. We are concerned that this proposed amendment risks undermining the actualization of Inuit rights by conflating the requirement to uphold the rights of Inuit with a broader engagement with the interests of stakeholders. The current version of Bill C-55, sets out the appropriate hierarchy.

West Coast Environmental Law also spoke out against the amendment in its letter dated March 20, 2019. It states:

The proposed amendment would require the Minister to hold a public comment and consultation period before issuing an interim MPA order. We are concerned that this proposed amendment is redundant and, at worst, risks defeating the purpose of the interim MPA order.

[Translation]

Their letter also emphasizes that aboriginal rights and indigenous interests are, indeed, protected by the government's constitutional obligations and the Oceans Act.

As mentioned earlier, I believe this amendment represents a piecemeal effort to improving consultations and, rather than adding value to the process, is redundant and only serves one single section of the bill.

[English]

As Professor Bankes put it:

The result of this amendment, if adopted, will be to create a stand-alone set of consultation provisions with respect to a single section and a single power within the statute. This is not a logical approach to address and improve the standard of consultation, nor an approach that will provide certainty with respect to consultation. It will simply beg more questions than it answers with respect to issues such as what the rules are (or should be) with respect to other powers within this same statute.

I would also like to speak to the redundancy of the amendment regarding the requirement to post the approximate geographical location of a proposed protected area on the DFO website and to make a preliminary assessment of any habitat or species in that area before making an order for interim protection. Let me explain some of the reasons this is redundant.

● (1020)

[Translation]

We already meet the requirement to clearly identify and provide public information on the proposed boundaries for an area to be protected as well as details on the area's important ecological features, such as its habitat and species.

Developing and making this information available to the public is already required under the federal regulatory process, as outlined in the Statutory Instruments Act and the cabinet directive on regulations.

[English]

Marine protected areas are a globally and scientifically proven way to protect marine biodiversity and preserve special marine features. They also help restore our natural capital for the benefit of

future generations, supporting the long-term sustainable use of our marine resources and the economic benefits this protection provides. This in turn has a direct and positive impact on coastal communities which rely on healthy oceans.

In short, marine conservation is an essential and integral part of long-term economic planning and helps us better prepare for the impacts of climate change. However, all of this is a moot point if we do not have the right mechanisms in place to establish marine protected areas in a more timely fashion both when and where it is needed. It is simply not acceptable to wait seven to 10 years to protect ecologically sensitive areas in our ocean.

Climate change, global warming and ocean acidification mean that time is no longer on our side, which is why our government has gone to great lengths and held extensive consultations to amend the Oceans Act. I submit that the two amendments put forward by the other place, while right in their intent, will actually hinder the work that needs to be done to protect our marine and coastal areas.

[Translation]

As such, we respectfully reject the amendment by the Senate and propose that an amendment that we believe fulfills the intent of the Senate amendment is accepted. This will help us protect our oceans in a more timely manner while we continue to consult with Canadians, apply the precautionary approach and make scientifically informed decisions.

[English]

I trust we can move forward with these important measures that are designed to protect our oceans and coasts for the benefit of all Canadians.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is no surprise to me that the Liberal government will not accept any of the amendments from the Senate, because this is how it always goes. I am not sure why we delay bills by a year, sending them over to the other place, when we always do to not accept its amendments. It seems like a waste of time.

I want to talk about the part of the legislation that would give the government powers to declare areas of interest. In Sarnia—Lambton, we have a number of areas of interest that we have made huge progress in cleaning up and blue flag status is back for the waters, etc. However, under the government, it has consolidated us with the Niagara region and cut the funding so we are basically stalled with respect to the progress.

Why does the member think the bill will be good when the government can, without any evidence whatsoever, create new areas of interest when it has not addressed the ones that exist already?

Mr. Sean Casey: Madam Speaker, there are a couple of parts to that question. First, the amendments that were brought forward by the Senate were clearly well-intentioned. The result of those amendments is that the government has proposed an amendment that is consistent with the spirit of the Senate. The slur against the Senate that it is constantly bypassed by the government is not a fair one.

Government Orders

With respect to the identification of areas of interest, these are the subject of a rigorous process, a science and evidence-based process. Once an area of interest is identified, there is extensive opportunity for consultation before any step is taken subsequent to that. The indication that this is somehow arbitrary and immediate is disingenuous.

• (1025)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I want to put on the record that I will vote for Bill C-55, the Oceans Act, as it comes back to this place.

This is probably my only opportunity to say something I have been wanting to say for a while, which is that we owe so much to the former minister of fisheries, the member of Parliament for Beauséjour. He worked hard to fix the Fisheries Act, Bill C-68, which I hope gets back to this place soon so we can pass it. I hope it passes in the Senate unamended.

We need Bill C-68 as quickly as possible. We need Bill C-55. Constituents have contacted me, asking me to vote for the Oceans Act, and I will.

However, I wanted to take a moment in the House to extend my best wishes and constant prayers for my friend, the member of Parliament for Beauséjour, the current Minister of Intergovernmental and Northern Affairs and Internal Trade. I thank him for his work. I also thank the current Minister of Fisheries. This is important legislation and I am really pleased to see it have full support of the government.

Mr. Sean Casey: Madam Speaker, we, too, are very grateful to have someone of the calibre of the member for Beauséjour in our caucus and are fully aware of the substantial contributions he made while serving as the minister of fisheries, oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard.

We share the anticipation of the hon. member with respect to the return of Bill C-68 to the House and the speedy passage of Bill C-55, and are grateful for her support in this regard.

Mr. Chris Bittle (St. Catharines, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. parliamentary secretary for showing how the government is working with the Senate to enact amendments that are within the spirit of that. However, could he expand on what his constituents are saying?

Being from Prince Edward Island, clearly his constituents have a great stake in the protection of our oceans. Could he talk about what he is hearing back home?

Mr. Sean Casey: Madam Speaker, Canadians in general, and Prince Edward Islanders in particular, care about the health of our oceans. They care about biodiversity. They care about conservation.

Any and all measures we take to be a responsible international partner with respect to marine protected areas and marine conservation targets are well received by a place like Prince Edward Island. Our very livelihood, our social fabric is inextricably intertwined with the health of our oceans. Therefore, this is important to Prince Edward Islanders, as it is to so many in coastal communities.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech.

I am not an expert in these matters, but, like everyone else, I am very worried about global warming.

How can we even think of allowing oil and gas exploration in marine protected areas?

We would never dream of putting an oil well or a tar sands development in a national park. There is even talk of asking Alberta to slow production or clean up the process so it pollutes less. I think the whole idea is preposterous.

Why are we still talking about this?

Mr. Sean Casey: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

As the hon. member knows, a group of experts made recommendations about rules governing marine protected areas. Those parts of marine protected areas already being used for exploration will not be counted toward the internationally recognized targets.

We are taking this seriously. It is very important to have a strong economy and a healthy environment. It is possible to strike a balance between the two, and that is very important to our government.

It is important to understand the rules governing marine protected areas.

• (1030)

[*English*]

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Madam Speaker, the parliamentary secretary stated that the bill did not take shortcuts. That is absolutely and categorically not true. I have sat in the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans since the beginning of this Parliament. In fact, before Bill C-55 was brought to the House, I put forward a motion in committee that we study the process of establishing MPAs in Canada to ensure the process was open, accountable and effective.

This bill would take some shortcuts. It would enable the minister, without consultation, to establish areas of interest, not marine protected areas but areas of interest, that would allow the minister to absolutely shut down these areas for any activity other than what may have been taking place in the last 12 months, without any consultation and without any accountability whatsoever.

I would like the parliamentary secretary to explain how that is not a shortcut.

Mr. Sean Casey: Madam Speaker, the act sets out, in significant detail, the consultations that are required at every step of the process. Under existing Oceans Act MPAs, there is no protection until there is full protection. The measures that are contained in the bill before the House, in the amendment before the House, set out the process for consultation to ensure there is interim protection during that five to seven years before a full MPA becomes established.

Government Orders

Therefore, this is not a shortcut; this is something that is done in the interests of conservation, in the interests of biodiversity and in full partnership with all stakeholders.

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to speak to these proposed amendments from the Senate and the government amendment to those amendments.

I believe all Canadians, myself included, want to see protection for the special areas and species we have in our marine systems, special features like sea mountains, hydrothermal vents, deep-sea gorges and the creatures and species that live in those places. They hold incredible examples of sea life, some of which I have seen as life-size replications at the Bedford Institute of Oceanography in Nova Scotia. Some of those species and replicas are so bizarre and unbelievable looking. They look like they are creatures out of a horror movie, but they live in some of the deep-sea gorges off our maritime coasts.

Those are certainly aspects that we need to consider protecting, but there are other aspects of the bill that have been equally or more concerning, and that is our coastal communities. Our country has been built on our fisheries. The cod fisheries off Newfoundland certainly helped establish that great area of the country and then it became a part of this greater country in 1949. Fisheries on our west coast helped build the province of British Columbia into the strong province it is today. The fisheries continue to be a strong part of the economies there.

Over the past number of months, since the current government came into power, we continually have heard concerns from local communities, not just the fishermen in those communities but the businesses, the people, the schools and the churches, which all rely on the livelihoods of the people who make their living off the sea. We have seen protests in front of the minister's constituency office in the past week by people who are concerned about fisheries closures on the west coast. We saw protests on the east coast when the minister visited there. Lobster fishermen are concerned they will be shut out of areas due to marine protection. We have heard concerns from coast to coast to coast.

However, we did not see that kind of protest and concern in the north, and there was a reason for that. The marine protected areas there were proposed by the local communities, the local indigenous peoples and the local Inuit. They recognized the special features of the areas and the special cultural activities that took place in those areas.

We had an incredible opportunity as members of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans to do a study on the implementation process for marine protected areas in Canada. I put forward a motion in 2016 that the committee study the process to ensure it was efficient and equitable and that it considered all the processes in place, and possibly being put in place, to establish marine protected areas. I put forward that motion long before the government introduced Bill C-55. That particular study had to be set aside while we did the committee work on the study of Bill C-55. We integrated a lot of the testimony we heard both on the study put forward at committee and the committee study of Bill C-55.

In those processes, we saw the absolute importance of consultation in the process. That is the main thrust of the amendments put forward by the Senate, which are being watered down by the government amendment. The Senate looked at the bill and said there needed to be accountability, openness and transparency, which the government seems to lack. It has a record over the past three and a half years of a lack of accountability and transparency, which is very evident and clear to the Canadian public.

● (1035)

Bill C-55 was put forward with great intentions. It was meant to help the government achieve targets, targets that were set by the previous Conservative government, to achieve a 10% protection of our marine protected areas by 2020. We are getting very close to that, but it is because of the great work and the unequivocal consultation process that have taken place. Yes, sometimes it took five to seven years, or maybe 10 years, to establish a marine protected area, but the ones that have been put in place have been accepted by the local communities for reasons that they saw were important.

In fact, with the ones I talked about in the north, what the local communities up there saw as most important was to try to keep the outside world out of their cultural practices, the way they need to harvest beluga whales to maintain their way of life. It was interesting talking to one of the chiefs up there. He does some travel to represent his community, and he is an incredibly amazing fellow. He talked about how, when he comes to the southern parts of Canada for consultation meetings or meetings with the government, he has to move away from his traditional diet of muktuk, whale, and seal. He said that he could eat three hamburgers for dinner and still feel hungry, and it is not until he gets back home and has a feed of muktuk that he actually feels full and satisfied again. That part of life is so important up there.

That is why the creation of MPAs was put forward in the Tuktoyaktuk and Paulatuk areas of the Arctic coast. The communities saw the values, and the government agreed with those values. The government went through a strong consultation process of including those communities in deciding what the criteria should be, what areas should be protected and what the results for the local community would be as far as activities are concerned, such as what harvest would be allowed in those areas. Those are examples of what was taking place under the previous rules and the previous government: strong consultation, strong input and strong collaboration with the local communities.

I want to go back to the mention of the protests we have heard about. As the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, we travelled to all coasts of this great country. We started on the east coast, in the Maritimes, and travelled to Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. We talked to the people on the ground. They were all concerned for their communities, not because of closures but because of how the closures might be done. They wanted input. They know the local features and the local values of what is important.

Government Orders

After we finished touring the Maritimes, we toured the west coast and the north. We talked to fishermen on the west coast, and again, they wanted input. There was talk of closures of areas off the Pacific coast. There was one area that was referred to locally as “the kitchen”, because that was where the local fishermen went to catch the greatest portion of their total allowable catch for halibut. The halibut were there in such high numbers that the fishermen could go out safely in good weather, catch their quotas and come back. That area has been fished continuously for decades. It is highly productive and highly sustainable, and yet they feared it was being considered as a marine protected area. This would have meant that, rather than going out for just a short time in a highly productive area, they would have had to travel further distances to unknown territories, where the catch was uncertain, and possibly spend more days out there through more inclement weather, putting their crews, boats, livelihoods and lives at risk, all because they had not been consulted.

• (1040)

That is the continuous testimony that we heard, time and time again, both in the study that I put forward at the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, and in the committee's study on Bill C-55.

Again, all Canadians want to see the special areas protected, but they want to have some input on what those special areas are and how they are protected. They also want to know what is being protected. That was part of what was in the Senate amendment, that the areas and the habitat and species that were in those proposed areas be identified before the closures are put in place.

Going back to the way Bill C-55 is worded with regard to areas of interest, certainly the parliamentary secretary talked about MPAs, which would still have the full consultation process in place, but areas of interest would not. The full consultation process happens only after those areas of interest are established.

Areas of interest also include closures and restrictions, whether it is shipping restrictions, fishing restrictions, boating restrictions, bottom use, and oil and gas exploration and development. All of those restrictions can be in place almost instantly with an area of interest designation.

For the parliamentary secretary to say that there are no shortcuts being taken with Bill C-55 is absolutely preposterous.

The weeks, months and sometimes years required to make sure that the multiple, complex and intricately connected pieces of MPA puzzles are put together properly are so important. It is not something that can be rushed, just so we can meet an international goal, to be in the spotlight on the international stage. Canada has led the way in this in many ways. As I have said, we have almost reached the 10% target. We reached the 5% by 2017 quite comfortably by identifying other protective measures that come into place that actually protect the features of an area.

Rockfish closures off the coast of B.C. were put in place long ago, because those areas were recognized as special spawning and rearing habitat for the core values of those populations. By allowing those rockfish closure areas to be established and reducing the amount of harvest in those key productive areas, the spill-off from those areas goes into many other areas of the ocean around the area,

allowing other fisheries to continue outside of those local areas. Those are the types of things that really work.

What we have seen from the government is empty consultation, time and time again. Last year, we saw examples of how it had consulted for weeks and months, I believe, on the snow crab closures off the Atlantic coast. It established a process working with the crab fishermen to determine when the openings would take place, all in the aspect of protecting the right whale from the entanglements that were taking place. Nobody wants to see any of those deaths occurring from fishing ropes or from equipment that is in the water. Those measures were strongly valued and respected, because consultation took place.

At the same time, lobster fishermen had not been consulted. They had closures slapped on them with no notice. Basically, they were ready to go out on the water and set their traps, and they were told no, there are closures. They were frustrated by the lack of consultation by the government, by the fisheries minister and by his staff.

As recently as last year, we saw fisheries closures on the west coast to protect the southern resident killer whales. That is something we all value. We see the world value in protecting that population of southern resident killer whales.

• (1045)

There was strong consultation supposedly taking place with the fishing communities on the south coast of B.C., on Vancouver Island, and input supposedly being received by the department staff on where the proposed closures should be, on what time frame those closures should be and on the type of gear restrictions. All of that process seemed to be working, but then, when the fishing season was upon us, lo and behold, the fisheries minister announced totally different closures, totally different boundaries, focusing fishing pressure in a small area. Rather than spreading out the fishermen and their access over a slightly larger area, which had been proposed by the fishermen, all of a sudden everyone was constrained in a very tight area, and all the fish were coming past that very tight area.

In fact, I had the opportunity to be out there and experience this. The person I went out with said that we were lucky to be there after a long weekend. When we were there, there were about 25 or 30 boats all hemmed up against an invisible line in the ocean, drawn by the fisheries minister to protect the area north of it. There were the boats, side by side, all crammed into one small area, rather than being dispersed throughout a much broader area. However, on that day, there were only 25 to 30 boats. Apparently, on the long weekend prior to that, there were 200 boats in that same area. I cannot imagine the impact that this type of concentrated pressure would have. I have seen this in my work with fish and wildlife management. I have seen fishing and hunting pressure, shortened seasons, condensed pressure into shorter and shorter time periods. Instead of dispersing it over wider areas, it has been concentrated into a very short time frame, making the harvest that much higher. The concentration in that short period of time is so intense that it is just not workable.

Government Orders

We do not want to see that with marine protected areas, just to meet a target number for areas that need to be covered to meet international and not necessarily Canadian standards. Again, as I mentioned, the government seems to be in a big rush to get the spotlight on the world stage by meeting these targets by a set deadline, rather than doing it through a consultative and considered way with local communities that have a desire to meet those standards. The cases of conservation that I have talked about, the compression of seasons and the compression of areas, the intense pressure, are simply not good for fisheries or wildlife management or for the protection of our areas.

I want to get back to why the Senate brought this amendment back to the House. I credit the Senate for taking the time to study this, to see the potential risks that were there and to actually try to hold the government to accountability standards, which the parliamentary secretary seems to claim is redundant. Well, redundancy is not necessarily a bad thing. Redundancy can actually be a good thing. We see it in safety mechanisms all over the world. Redundancy means accountability and safety: safety for our communities that rely on our fisheries and access to the oceans, safety for shipping lanes that may need to go through or near an area, safety for the future economy of the country.

● (1050)

I cannot let the government go sliding through with this amendment it wants to put forward and really water down the Senate amendment.

There were a series of recommendations out of the parliamentary study that I put forward at the fisheries committee.

Recommendation 1 states:

That, when identifying new areas of interest for marine protected areas, the Government of Canada evaluate net economic and social values and responsibilities, including cost of patrol and enforcement in Canada, particularly for remote marine areas.

While some of this is in the bill, very much of it is left to regulations that will come out of the bill. We had big concerns with how some of these marine protected areas are going to be patrolled. That was another part of the consultation process we heard in the communities. The communities felt that often the fishermen or local guardians might be best suited to do the patrols and enforcement of those areas. Local lobster and crab fishermen might be best able to identify that a boat does not belong out there and question why it is there. They could be the reporting mechanism for that and could move it forward to the proper authorities for investigation and possibly enforcement.

Recommendation 2 of the report states:

That areas of interest and marine protected areas not be considered in isolation from sustainable fishery management practices.

That really gets back to the rockfish closure areas that I was referring to on the west coast. Those rockfish closures are considered a protective measure to increase the actual square kilometres of areas that are considered protected under the targets of 5% and 10%.

Recommendation 3 states:

That the Government of Canada acknowledge any negative impacts on people who directly depend on the resources of a marine protected area and the Minister use

his or her discretionary powers to consider providing offsetting measures in consultation with the fishing industry where loss or harm is proven.

Again, the strong consultation piece is what is measured here. The consultation piece is what is missing in Bill C-55 and what the Senate is trying to put back in through its Senate amendment. Because of that, I am going to be suggesting that we oppose the government's amendment and approve the Senate amendment, because the Senate amendment will place much more accountability on the government.

Recommendation 4 from the standing committee's report states that the minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard should table an annual report to Parliament that includes a list of Oceans Act marine protected areas designated during that year and information on whether or not each established marine protected area is meeting its conservation objectives.

That has been one area where we have consistently seen the minister's department fail time and time again. The commissioner of the environment and sustainable development has issued a couple of reports over the past year and a half, very damning reports, against the fisheries minister's department. One came out last fall, I believe it was, showing there is a very low level of accountability within the department.

In fact, one of the things in a previous report from the commissioner, dating back over a year ago, was that when the department was audited on whether it had established integrated fisheries management plans for 155 major fish stocks in Canada, which it had committed to do in 1995, it was found that in 2005, 10 years later, the department had only recommitted to developing those integrated fisheries management plans.

● (1055)

The report that came out in, I believe, 2016, which was 10 years after the second commitment and 20 years after the first commitment, identified that the department had still not updated a large number of the integrated fisheries management plans. This was simply to develop integrated fisheries management plans for 155 fish stocks in Canada.

The department's response to the audit showing that it had failed time and time again was to develop a plan to develop those plans. It is absolutely unbelievable. The department failed to develop a plan after committing twice to do so, but it has committed to developing a plan to develop those plans. That is the type of unbelievable accountability that has happened under this fisheries minister and under this government time and time again.

Madam Speaker, I see we are getting close to question period. Do I have a couple of minutes left?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member will have time after question period to continue.

*Statements by Members***STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

[Translation]

FLOODING IN THE OUTAOUAIS

Mr. William Amos (Pontiac, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the flood crisis is far from over in the Outaouais. Water levels are rising once again in Mansfield, Fort-Coulonge, Waltham, Campbell's Bay, L'Isle-aux-Allumettes, Pontiac and the list goes on. The situation is critical in some areas, where water levels are expected to rise 10 inches higher than last week. In preparation for the second deluge, Canadian Armed Forces personnel are being redirected to western Pontiac. We appreciate this support from our troops.

● (1100)

[English]

Our thoughts go to all of those people who are affected by this disaster who must once again leave their homes, rebuild their sandbag walls and prepare for the worst.

While the crisis is not over, the issue of compensation is on everyone's mind. Our government has been proactive on this issue by granting \$2.5 million to the Red Cross to help disaster victims and by announcing yesterday that the government will provide early financial assistance via an advance payment to the provinces. As well, our government is committed to contributing financially to the cleaning up of affected areas.

* * *

BOBCAYGEON AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Bobcaygeon and Area Chamber of Commerce recently held its Starlight Celebration gala, where awards of excellence were presented. The chamber, which has proudly been serving Bobcaygeon, my hometown, and the surrounding area since 1977, understands that small business is the heartbeat of the community.

I would like to congratulate all 36 award nominees and recipients, including Maureen Lytle of Kawartha Settlers' Village for the employee achievement award, Debra-Claire Kemp of Kawartha Mediums/Zen Den for new business achievements, the Bobcaygeon Curling Club for the not-for-profit award, Kawartha Settlers' Village for the tourism achievement award, Douglas and Son for the business achievement award, Shawna Love Leigh of Studio 358 for the creative arts achievement award and Shaukat Mohamed for the citizen of the year award.

Finally, I send a special thanks to all the sponsors, staff and board of directors, as well as the president, Donna Wood, and office manager Christine Whelan for organizing such a memorable evening.

* * *

[Translation]

MATHIEU FROMENT-SAVOIE

Mr. Greg Fergus (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Madam Speaker, on April 3, 1991, a resident of my riding passed away. His name was Mathieu Froment-Savoie, and he was the son of Ghislain and

Pierrette. He was extremely talented, but above all tenacious and courageous. Mathieu had terminal cancer.

Life is not always easy. We must persevere, as Mathieu did and as his parents did following his death. Founded in 1999 and now celebrating its 20th anniversary, Maison Mathieu Froment Savoie provides high-quality palliative care services to people at the end of their lives. The centre really focuses on the well-being of the patients and their loved ones, easing their suffering with respect, dignity and compassion as they go through this important stage of life.

Mathieu, we will never forget you. To Ghislain and Pierrette, who are here with us today, thank you.

* * *

[English]

SENIORS' CONCERNS

Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP): Madam Speaker, in April I visited seniors residences in my riding, and I want to thank the folks at Riversdale House, St. George's, Kiwanis Manor, King Edward Place, Harry Landa Court, Shepherd Apartments, McNaughton Place and the McAskill Manor for their warm hospitality and great conversations. I learned a lot.

Unfortunately, the most common theme was that the benefits received when people turn 65 do not cover their basic needs. Every day these folks are making tough decisions between enough food—never mind healthy food—and life-saving medications.

For seniors living in affordable housing, any increase in their pension, like the cost of living increase in their guaranteed income supplement or OAS, means their rent goes up.

The Liberal government needs to better understand that its policies heralded as help for seniors living on low incomes are not really helping make life more affordable. Seniors in my riding were very clear on what would make life affordable when living on a pension: universal, free prescription drug coverage. Pharmacare is the help they need and want now.

* * *

FLOODING IN OTTAWA WEST—NEPEAN

Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the last few weeks have been emotional and difficult for communities along the Ottawa River. Two record-breaking floods have occurred now in three years in my riding of Ottawa West—Nepean. The communities of Britannia, Belltown, Crystal Bay, Rocky Point, Lakeview and many others have been battling historic rising water levels that are threatening our homes.

In trying times like these, I was proud to witness the strength and power of people coming together to support our community, the thousands of volunteers who worked tirelessly filling 1.5 million sandbags across the Ottawa-Gatineau region.

To the community volunteers; to the NGOs, such as the Ottawa Volunteer Search and Rescue, the Salvation Army and the Red Cross; to the first responders; to local businesses; to Canadian Army personnel in Operation Lentus, especially 2 Combat Engineer Regiment—on behalf of all of us in this chamber, we give thanks for their hard work and dedication to our community.

* * *

•(1105)

NATIONAL NURSING WEEK

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, as the shadow minister of health, I am pleased to celebrate National Nursing Week. The theme for 2019 is “Nurses: A Voice to Lead – Health for All”. This is appropriate, given the leadership of over 421,000 nurses on the front lines of our health care system across Canada. Each and every day, they deliver compassionate, professional care to their patients.

I know this very well because my daughter is a nurse who has worked in intensive care, home care, palliative care, cardiac care and the emergency department. She and the many nurses like her across our nation endure difficult working conditions, violence from patients and they still deliver excellent care.

With our aging population, we will need many more nurses to join the profession and bring their innovations.

On behalf of Her Majesty's opposition, we commend all nurses for their contribution to our nation. I thank them for their service.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Wayne Long (Saint John—Rothesay, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as residents of a coastal community, we live on the front lines of the battle against climate change in Saint John—Rothesay.

I would like the incredible young leaders from Saint John High School, St. Malachy's Memorial High School, Harbour View High School, Simonds High School and Rothesay High School, who demonstrated last week to call upon their elected representatives to take concrete action to tackle climate change, to know this. I rise today on this “Fridays for Future” to stand in solidarity with them by standing in support of our federal government's plan to tackle climate change.

Our government's plan is the most ambitious federal government climate change plan in Canadian history. The incredible young leaders in Saint John—Rothesay, who took to the streets to demand climate action, deserve a member of Parliament who will stand up for them in this place by standing up for such ambitious climate action.

* * *

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Madam Speaker, yesterday, in his hometown of Georgetown, P.E.I., Dennis King was sworn in as the 33rd premier of P.E.I., along with his cabinet.

I rise to offer my congratulations to Premier King and his government. He has vowed to take a collaborative approach in his

Statements by Members

dealings with other parties and levels of government, and I stand ready to work with him to advance the interests of islanders.

I also ask the House to join me in thanking Wade Maclauchlan for his service to our province. He has balanced the books and achieved remarkable success in employment, economic and population growth.

After a distinguished career in academia, he took on what he referred to as his “retirement project”; the premiership of the province he loved. His incredible intellect, photographic memory and a killer work ethic have served islanders well. He left the place better than he found it. He poured his heart and soul into public service, and for that I offer gratitude and respect.

* * *

GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Mr. Scot Davidson (York—Simcoe, CPC): Madam Speaker, the residents of York-Simcoe went to the polls just three months ago to elect me as their member of Parliament. However, most cannot wait for the opportunity to vote again this fall, and I do not blame them. The people of York—Simcoe are tired of the Liberal government's record of broken promises, ethical scandals, economic failures and foreign policy blunders.

The Prime Minister promised sunny ways in 2015 with a new approach of honesty and responsibility. However, the reality now faced by ordinary Canadians is high taxes, out-of-control spending and a government out of touch with the struggles of everyday families, seniors and students. This is especially apparent to the residents of York—Simcoe and other communities in rural Canada, who find themselves on the outside looking in, as the Prime Minister attacks them and their way of life.

Canadians across the country will have an opportunity to change all of that in the upcoming election. Until then, it is clear that the Prime Minister is not as advertised.

* * *

[Translation]

VAUDREUIL—SOULANGES

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, Lib.): Madam Speaker, volunteers are the backbone of our communities. These ordinary women and men do extraordinary things. Not only are these people helping their fellow Canadians, but they are also building better communities for everyone.

*Statements by Members**[English]*

Today, I want to take a moment to recognize members of my community who improve the lives of others, one selfless act at a time. These are local heroes, such as the hundreds of volunteers giving their time at the Hudson palliative care centre or the ones helping out community members in need through organizations like the scouts, the guides, the cadets, Nova Hudson, L'Actuel, Moisson Sud-Ouest, les maisons des jeunes and Le Pont Bridging. It is also our farmers, business owners and neighbours, young and old, who more recently helped prepare meals and filled up sandbags for neighbours whose lives had been touched and impacted by this year's historic floods.

● (1110)

[Translation]

On behalf of the House, I thank all volunteers whose service and generosity make our communities and our country better.

* * *

*[English]***FIRST RESPONDERS**

Mr. Darrell Samson (Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to recognize the vital work that first responders do to protect and serve our communities. Each day, they bravely put their lives on the line to ensure we can live with peace of mind.

This weekend in my riding there are two great events.

The first event is a carwash at the Gordon R. Snow Community Centre, hosted by volunteer firefighters from stations in Fall River, Wellington and Waverley. All proceeds of the carwash will go toward Camp Courage. This camp introduces young women to the demands of being a first responder and encourages them to pursue a career as first responders.

The second event is an emergency preparedness jamboree in Porters Lake. The annual jamboree is a community awareness project that can help prepare residents and their families for any type of emergency.

I would personally like to thank all first responders for their tireless work for our communities.

* * *

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Liberals' anti-energy policies and legislation have destroyed Canada and Alberta's reputation as a stable, fair, predictable destination for energy investment.

The Prime Minister has failed to take substantial action or exert federal jurisdiction to ensure TMX could be built by the private sector. He cancelled the northern gateway pipeline and he killed the energy east pipeline with red tape and regulations. He implemented a carbon tax, which does nothing but make life more difficult for Canadian families and small businesses.

Canadians cannot afford to continue paying for the Liberal government's failings. More than 100,000 people in the energy sector have already lost their jobs. However, hope is on the horizon with a newly elected United Conservative Party in Alberta. An increasing number of provinces, representing 59% of Canadians, oppose the Prime Minister's carbon tax.

Canadians are not stupid. They know this tax is just another money grab for the Liberal government. It is clear that the Prime Minister is not as advertised.

* * *

WILLIAMS SYNDROME AWARENESS MONTH

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): Madam Speaker, May is Williams Syndrome Awareness Month. Williams syndrome is a genetic condition that remains virtually unknown. Medical, developmental and learning challenges typically occur alongside unique abilities, such as advanced verbal and communication skills, highly social personalities and a passion for music.

Those abilities describe my friend, Karina Scali. Karina lives with Williams syndrome and has been selected again this year to participate in the Lifting Lives Music Camp in Nashville, designed for young people with Williams syndrome. The Academy of Country Music was so impressed by the song her group wrote a few years ago that it invited the group to perform at the Grand Ole Opry.

Karina received the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for her work in our community.

I ask members to join me in raising awareness of Williams syndrome so all individuals with Williams syndrome will have the support they need to live healthy, self-directed, productive and fulfilling lives like Karina does.

* * *

*[Translation]***QUEBEC DIABETES ASSOCIATION**

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have the privilege this year of serving as honorary chair of the 19th annual golf tournament organized by Diabète Estrie, a non-profit organization in my region made up of people with diabetes, their loved ones, and health care professionals who are trying to make things easier for people with this disease and improve their quality of life.

With the money raised, Diabète Estrie will be able to send kids aged eight to 15 with type 1 diabetes to specialized camps. The money also helps the organization pursue its mission to inform, promote awareness, provide training, support research, ensure service provision and defend the rights of diabetics to help them live with this disease in their day-to-day lives.

I encourage everyone to come out to this event on June 7, as part of Quebec's diabetes prevention week.

*Oral Questions***ORAL QUESTIONS**

In closing, I want to thank all the members of the organizing committee as well as the many volunteers who dedicate themselves to this cause every year.

* * *

*[English]***GOVERNMENT POLICIES**

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, in 2015, the Prime Minister promised small annual deficits, with a self-balancing budget by 2019. Instead, we got the biggest peacetime debt accumulation outside of a recession.

He promised openness and transparency and we got cash for access fundraising and illegal vacations. He promised to help small-business owners, then called them tax cheaters and threatened their savings. He said, “Canada is back” and then humiliated himself in India. He promised better relations with the public service and then launched Phoenix. He promised better relations with veterans and then said they were asking too much. He promised a service-focused CRA and then picked on single parents and the disabled, while giving tax breaks to wealthy people with offshore accounts. He promised no more omnibus bills and then snuck deferred prosecutions into a 500-page budget bill and fired his attorney general for refusing to play ball and get SNC-Lavalin off the hook.

The Prime Minister is definitely not as advertised.

* * *

• (1115)

SPEECH AND HEARING MONTH

Mr. Marc Serré (Nickel Belt, Lib.): Madam Speaker, May is Speech and Hearing Month. It is important to recognize Canada's outstanding speech-language pathologists, audiologists and communication health assistants, who I was honoured to work with as regional director of the Canadian Hearing Society.

Speech-Language & Audiology Canada will be highlighting the importance of early detection and intervention of speech, language, swallowing, hearing and balance disorders. This builds on the early hearing detection report card released last month, which noted that Canada's overall grade still remained “insufficient”.

[Translation]

The ability to speak, to listen and to be heard is vital. Children's access to hearing care should not be determined by their personal circumstances. Professionals seek to ensure optimal communication health whether they are working with a hard-of-hearing child or adult or a family dealing with dementia.

I ask my colleagues to join me in observing Speech and Hearing Month in Canada.

*[English]***JUSTICE**

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Madam Speaker, Scott Brison wanted to stop the \$700-million Davie shipbuilding contract. Scott Brison, Judy Foote and the MP for Beauséjour were lobbied by corporate friends to kill the deal. The only reason they did not was the fact that their actions at cabinet leaked out.

Vice-Admiral Mark Norman was not the source of the cabinet leak, but his was the only name put forward to blame. Why?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we have full confidence in our government institutions, and they all functioned very well in this case. The RCMP investigated and laid charges. The investigation, the decision to lay charges and the prosecution were handled by the Public Prosecution Service of Canada, as was the decision to stay charges.

All those decisions were made independently of the Department of Justice, of my office and of the Government of Canada. Our institutions are functioning well, and the rule of law is alive and well in Canada.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Madam Speaker, we are confident that the director of public prosecutions did her job and made the right call to admit that there was no case against Mark Norman, but Mark Norman's name was first given to the RCMP by the Prime Minister. Mark Norman was not at the cabinet meeting. Mark Norman was not the source of the cabinet leak. In fact, he was just one of 73 names of people who knew about Scott Brison's attempt to kill the Davie deal.

Why did the Prime Minister single out Vice-Admiral Mark Norman to blame for the leak from his cabinet meeting?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as the hon. member well knows, investigations are the realm of the RCMP in Canada, and it did that.

As the hon. member well knows, the decision to lay charges, to evaluate that evidence and lay charges, rests with the Public Prosecution Service of Canada, and that was done here, as was the decision to stay charges.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister gave Mark Norman's name to the RCMP. The Prime Minister's Office resisted giving documents to Mark Norman's lawyers. The Prime Minister's team counselled witnesses. The Prime Minister's lawyers asked the prosecutors if they could engineer issues at trial. The Prime Minister's Office even used code words to avoid revealing Mark Norman's name in documents.

Direction, deception and delay: that is the Prime Minister's record of political interference in the Vice-Admiral Norman affair. When will he apologize to Mark Norman?

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, on the basis of this week's decision, the charge against Vice-Admiral Norman has been stayed.

As confirmed by the Public Prosecution Service of Canada this week, every decision was made completely independently. No other factors were considered in this decision, nor was there any contact or influence from outside the PPSC, including political influence in either the initial decision to prosecute Mr. Norman or in the decision to stay the charge.

Any accusation to the contrary is absurd.

• (1120)

Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is simple. As soon as the Liberals took office they did everything in their power to prevent the Davie shipyard from getting the *Asterix* contract, a vital contract for the Royal Canadian Navy.

What did they do when they got caught red-handed? Instead of launching an investigation to shed light on this scheme, the Prime Minister attacked the person who blew the whistle on their scheme, Vice-Admiral Norman.

When will the Prime Minister apologize and give Vice-Admiral Norman a promotion instead of demotion?

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, no other factors were considered in this decision, nor was there any contact or influence from outside the PPSC, including political influence, on the initial decision to prosecute Mr. Norman.

Based on this week's decision, the charges against Vice-Admiral Norman have been stayed. Every decision was made completely independently.

Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): That is ludicrous, Madam Speaker. The Liberal closet is full of skeletons—those of ministers, advisors, assistants, and even the clerk.

The Liberals should tell the truth and stop going after a man who told the truth and stood up for the Royal Canadian Navy and for Quebec.

What are Quebec MPs doing for jobs in Quebec?

The shipyard workers want work. They want the contract for the *Obelix*.

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, no other factors were considered in this decision. Based on this week's decision, the deputy minister has reviewed the policy in place regarding the request to have his legal fees paid as they relate to this case.

We agreed with their advice.

[English]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Madam Speaker, let us look at Liberal government rhetoric versus Liberal government action on climate change. The Liberals said they put a price on carbon, but it will not apply to 80% of major emissions. They said they were going to force corporate Canada to take the climate crisis seriously, but here is \$12 million for fridges, Loblaws. They said they would help phase out oil and gas, but today we hear that they are paying \$54 billion in new subsidies to the billionaire fossil fuel industry.

Instead of hooking up their billionaire pals, when will the government take climate change seriously and bring in a green new deal?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am always happy to talk about our climate change plan. Yes, it includes a price on pollution. Polluters need to pay, but we are giving the money back. That means that a family of four in Ontario will get \$307. We are phasing out coal. We are making historic investments in renewables, but we are also ensuring a just transition for workers, because we need to make sure that workers and communities can thrive as we move to a cleaner future. We are focused on making historic investments in public transportation, which is something the NDP would not have done, because it planned to balance the budget and not make those historic investments. We are also making historic investments in clean solutions and energy efficiency. We have a climate plan—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Churchill—Keewatinook Aski.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Madam Speaker, people living in Hollow Water First Nation and in Seymourville are worried about a proposed frac sand mine in their territory. They are very concerned that this project could expose them to dangerous levels of carcinogens. It is clear that the provincial government is pushing for the project to go forward without good faith and honest discussion. The environmental assessment has been bungled, leaving residents worried about their health and the land.

People on the ground are calling on the federal government to step in. Will the government step up to protect people and the land?

Oral Questions

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we believe in the importance of proper environmental assessments. That is why we are rebuilding trust in environmental assessments through Bill C-69, which, unfortunately, is opposed by the Conservative Party. It will ensure that we do environmental assessments in consultation with indigenous peoples at the start. It means that we will be listening to the public and that we will be making decisions based on science and evidence, and we will ensure that good projects go ahead in a timely fashion.

* * *

[Translation]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, you will never guess what the member for Compton—Stanstead and Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food is trying to get her constituents to believe.

In her last mailer to all the residents of her riding, the minister claimed that spending \$4.5 billion on a pipeline was an inevitable step in the energy transition. What a mind-boggling statement. That is like saying that taking the chain off a bike would make it go faster. The minister must not rate her constituents' intelligence very highly.

Could the minister rise today to explain her reasoning and tell us why spending \$4.5 billion on a pipeline for an energy transition was inevitable?

• (1125)

Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, with TMX, we are following the course of action recommended by the Federal Court of Appeal. At the same time, we are holding constructive, meaningful consultations with indigenous communities along the pipeline route. Our teams are working on the ground. Justice Iacobucci organized round tables on possible formats for the consultations, and the Minister of Natural Resources continues to meet with communities living along the route.

The Conservative members voted to slash funding for the TMX consultations. We are working hard every day to move forward in the right way.

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, people wishing to show leadership on the environmental front do not buy oil pipelines.

As if that were not bad enough, a recent IMF analysis pegged our fossil fuel subsidies at \$54 billion. That is 2.4% of Canada's GDP. The government calls itself a climate change leader, but honestly, that makes no sense at all.

Will the government undertake a transition toward renewable energy once and for all and turn its back on its friends in the dirty energy industry?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, let me be clear. We have already eliminated eight of the nine financial subsidies for fossil fuels.

We are phasing out coal, but we are ensuring a just transition. We are working on this issue not only in Canada but around the world. We are leading the Powering Past Coal Alliance because we need to power past coal. We are making historic investments in renewable energy, in public transit, in clean energy and in energy efficiency because we want to save people money and because it is no longer free to pollute in Canada.

* * *

[English]

JUSTICE

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Niagara Falls, CPC): Madam Speaker, everyone who knows Vice-Admiral Norman knows him to be a respected, dependable and distinguished member of the Royal Canadian Navy. Why is it that the Liberals could not have given him the benefit of the doubt by keeping his job open for him? Why did they not pay his legal fees until three days ago, when they were shamed into doing it?

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, based on this week's decision, the deputy minister has received the policy in place regarding Vice-Admiral Norman's request to have his legal fees paid as they relate to this case. We agreed with that advice.

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is increasingly clear that the Prime Minister and his government politically interfered in Mark Norman's case, just as it did in SNC-Lavalin's.

The government withheld documents and blackened pages totally out. It used code names to hide its actions. It coached witnesses. Mr. Norman's lawyer was clear that the documents should have been handed over to the RCMP and to the prosecution.

Why would the Liberals not release the documents to Mr. Norman's defence team, and unredacted? What is the Prime Minister trying to hide here?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to remind the House that the Department of Justice co-operated with the court for the production of documents. We are talking about over 8,000 documents from seven different government agencies. The decision to redact is made independently of political bodies.

As counsel for Vice-Admiral Norman said, our justice system is "truly unassailable". It has proven itself, our institutions have proven themselves and there was no interference from the government in this case.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Madam Speaker, for months the government made every attempt to withhold all documents necessary to Vice-Admiral Norman's defence. In fact, the government still has these documents, which led to the stay of proceedings. Vice-Admiral Norman was not even allowed access to his own emails.

What is the government trying to hide?

Oral Questions

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as I just said, we are talking about over 8,000 documents from seven different government agencies. We co-operated with the court. We produced the documents in question. The decision to redact is made independently of political bodies.

In short, we co-operated, the system worked and we are proud of Canada's judicial system.

• (1130)

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Madam Speaker, the government politicized military procurement by putting its partisan interests first. The *Asterix* was a resounding success in the world of military procurement. It was delivered by Davie on time and on budget. It is a success that all Canadians and Vice-Admiral Norman can be proud of.

When will the Prime Minister apologize to Vice-Admiral Norman?

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, on the basis of this week's decision, the charge against Vice-Admiral Norman has been stayed. As confirmed by the Public Prosecution Service of Canada this week, every decision was made completely independently. No other factors were considered in this decision, nor was there any contact or influence from outside the PPSC, including political influence in either the initial decision to prosecute Mr. Norman or in the decision to stay the charge. Any accusation to the contrary is absurd.

[English]

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, first the Prime Minister said Vice-Admiral Norman would be charged before the investigation was even complete. Then the Prime Minister's Office did not provide the requested documents for two years, nearly bankrupting Mark Norman and putting his family through hell. Then, just as the Liberal MP for Orléans was going to testify against the government, suddenly the charges were dropped. Clearly this was another attack by the Prime Minister on someone who was standing up for what was right.

Will the Prime Minister apologize to Vice-Admiral Mark Norman and reinstate him as vice-chief of the defence staff?

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am really glad that the Conservative Party is now seized with the idea of having independent civil service provide advice to government. It is important. I am also glad that it is talking about people's jobs because that is important too. We received some other independent advice today from Stats Canada, an organization whose independence the previous government had a lot of trouble dealing with, and that is that 106,000 jobs were created in the last month in this country.

Let me put that into context the Conservatives might understand. In Stephen Harper's last year, they celebrated 72,000 jobs in one year; 106,000 jobs in one month is independent advice they should listen to and take note of.

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is evident that the jobs the Liberals are talking about had nothing to do with Vice-Admiral Norman because they cared nothing about his job. There appears to be overwhelming evidence that the Prime Minister and his Liberal government went to incredible lengths to try to keep truth hidden, deliberately suppressing information that would eventually exonerate Vice-Admiral Norman. This political interference is a damning indictment of the current government and Canadians deserve answers.

Will the Prime Minister apologize to Vice-Admiral Norman and reinstate him as vice-chief of staff?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the premise of that question is entirely false. As the director of public prosecutions has said on at least two occasions, as the prosecutor in question has said, there was no political interference in this case; there was no political interference in the decision to lay charges; there was no political interference in the decision to stay charges; and there was no political interference over the course of the trial.

This government produced documents as it was supposed to in accordance with the court orders. We did so in good faith. There are systems of governance in Canada; our judicial systems function well.

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SENIORS

Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP): Madam Speaker, this week the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance was bragging about all the support for seniors coming from the government, but here is a reality check. Seniors living on fixed income and in affordable housing in Saskatchewan do not see this help. When their GIS or OAS increases, their rent goes up. If their CPP increases with inflation, their GIS goes down.

Will the government pass my bill, Bill C-353, and end these clawbacks to ensure that when seniors on low income see their pension payments increase, so does their quality of life?

• (1135)

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member opposite for raising an important issue. Yes, we do have challenges when provincial governments claw back the benefits that we deliver to seniors, especially when it comes to circumstances involving housing. We also understand that there is much to do for seniors. That is why our government has invested so heavily in reducing poverty, because when we reduce poverty, we do not create low-income seniors; we create seniors who have a chance to succeed.

Oral Questions

Our investments, including the GIS improvements, including CPP reform, including investments in affordable housing, are all aimed at making sure seniors get the quality of life they deserve as they move into retirement. We will not stop working hard to make sure that all seniors in this country are given the services they need.

* * *

[Translation]

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Madam Speaker, the Quebec City tramway would reduce greenhouse gas emissions and provide a quality service to residents.

A recent survey showed that most residents of Quebec City hope the tramway will be added to their public transit offering. Obviously, in public, the Liberal government says that it hopes the project will begin this summer. However, it is not answering the Quebec government's call for help to make up the \$800-million shortfall for the tramway. This is not the first time infrastructure funding has been slow to make its way down the pipe.

Speaking of pipes, rather than buying an old pipeline, why does the government not switch to solution mode and fund the tramway that Quebec City residents want?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to remind my colleague that the \$1.2 billion that the federal government set aside in 2018 for the Quebec City tramway project is still there and always will be. If the CAQ does not want to make the Quebec City tramway a priority, than it will have to deal with me. This is an important project for Quebec City.

If I may, I would like to remind my colleague of one little thing, which is that, since 2015, we have approved 673 infrastructure projects in Quebec. Since the CAQ took office, we have only managed to get six approved. It is time to get things moving. The government is there for the people of Quebec.

* * *

[English]

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Madam Speaker, we told the Liberals time and time again that they were irresponsibly rushing through changes to Canada's election laws. Now major social media platforms, such as Google, confirm that they were not consulted on significant changes to legislation. Although the Prime Minister claims to believe in consulting with stakeholders, clearly he only wants to hear from those who agree with the way he wants things done. Why did the Prime Minister force through changes to our electoral system instead of taking the time to get it right?

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in all fairness, we will take no lessons from the other side about making changes to the electoral system. The legacy of the unfair elections act has been long, and we heard about it extensively in 2015. We acted promptly to deal with it.

With respect to the social media platforms and the position they are taking today, we find that disappointing. We know these social media platforms have the resources and the ability to take action, and to take action now. We know that Bill C-76 was given first reading well over a year ago and its long endurance within this Parliament is largely due to the blockage of that legislation by the Conservative Party at PROC.

Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Madam Speaker, in its efforts to rush its flawed elections bill through the House, the government failed to consult with those to whom the law would apply. Yesterday, at committee, Google and YouTube confirmed that they cannot implement the changes in time for the election. They were not consulted on the changes, and the changes themselves were unclear. How can Canadians have any faith in the Liberals when even Google is saying that their changes are unclear? What are the Liberals trying to do?

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we categorically reject the premise of that entire question.

First, Bill C-76 was fundamental to ensuring the stability of the democracy in this country in response to the unfair elections act.

Second, when we are talking about elections and electoral fairness, we need to talk about online platforms, including social media companies.

Third, regarding notice to those companies, they have had adequate and ample notice.

Fourth, the resources of those companies are larger than those of most nations on this planet, for goodness' sake. To purport that they have not had the ability to address these issues is absolutely and categorically false.

* * *

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Madam Speaker, this year Canada commemorates 74 years of victory in Europe, a day to remember the defeat of the Nazi empire. This is a day to honour those who gave their lives.

However, after carelessness on the minister's part, Canadians were shocked to see German soldiers on ads to celebrate our Canadian warriors. How many levels of vetting did these ads go through? How could the minister and his office allow these careless and offensive ads to go forward?

● (1140)

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, this was a completely unacceptable mistake and the video was removed immediately. I can assure members that I and the people involved are very concerned, and we are taking steps to make sure this does not happen again.

Oral Questions

What we want to do is make sure it does not detract from the message that 74 years ago this week our soldiers liberated Europe. That is the important message.

We will make sure that what happened with this ad never happens again.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Madam Speaker, Wednesday was the 74th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day. This is a day when we mark the sacrifice that allied nations made to win the Second World War, especially the tens of thousands of Canadians who gave their lives.

The Liberals marked VE Day by thanking Nazis for their sacrifice, complete with an online video featuring German troops and a voice-over by the veterans minister.

Our veterans, their families and all Canadians deserve better. Saying that it will not happen again is one thing. Will the minister stand and apologize to veterans?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, of course I would do anything I could for our veterans, including apologizing for the likes of what happened. It is totally unacceptable. As I said, we will make sure that this does not happen again. I have instructed my deputy minister to find out what took place and what was missed.

As I indicated previously, it is very important that we do not miss the true meaning of what happened 74 years ago this week and what our troops did to provide life for the European people. To liberate Europe was so important. That is what the message is all about.

* * *

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): Madam Speaker, this week I asked the government if it would adopt a national auto strategy before more people lose their livelihoods. This issue hits close to home in Windsor—Tecumseh. First it was Chrysler; now it is the Ford Essex Engine plant that is eliminating shifts.

The government scrambles to react, but there needs to be a master plan. The NDP and experts have been calling for a national auto strategy for years, and the government has a plan waiting on the shelf.

Will the Liberals stop ignoring Windsor, and southwestern Ontario for that matter, and commit to a national auto strategy?

[Translation]

Mr. Rémi Massé (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we do have a plan, and it is working very well. Canada's auto sector remains strong and is well positioned to design and build the cars of today and tomorrow.

In total, we have invested more than \$6 billion in the auto sector, creating and safeguarding tens of thousands of jobs since we took office.

Since 2015, 11,500 new jobs have been created. Our investments included \$110 million in Toyota facilities in Cambridge, \$89 million in Linamar facilities in Guelph, \$41.8 million in Honda facilities in Alliston, and the list goes on.

Our government is firmly committed to supporting Canada's auto industry.

[English]

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, the Liberals' strategy is working so well that their incentive program actually excluded the only Canadian-built electric vehicle in Canada. We had to force the government to reverse that.

The government talks about investing \$6 billion over its tenure. Let us take a look at Detroit, one city alone. General Motors is investing \$8 billion in Detroit; Ford, \$1.5 billion; Fiat Chrysler, \$4.5 billion. The age of innovation in auto is here. The government is nowhere in the game.

Why is the Prime Minister so defeatist when it comes to manufacturing? When is he bringing his vision to fruition? We need a national auto strategy now.

[Translation]

Mr. Rémi Massé (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague does not appear to have heard my answer. The strategic plan we have put in place for Canada's auto sector, and for all its workers, is working.

I repeat, we have invested \$6 billion since 2015 in the auto industry and in Canada's auto workers.

Our plan is working, and I want to repeat this, because it is important. These investments include \$110 million in Toyota facilities in Cambridge, \$49 million in Linamar facilities in Guelph, which has helped create over 1,500 jobs, \$41.8 million in Honda facilities, and the list goes on.

Our government is committed to supporting the industry—

• (1145)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Nepean.

* * *

[English]

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the jobs report released today shows the biggest one-month gain since 1976.

Canadians created over 106,000 jobs, mostly full-time jobs. Wage growth has also gone up. More businesses are investing. More employers are hiring. More Canadians have good-paying jobs.

Oral Questions

Can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment tell us what we are doing to continue the success?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. When I recognize you, then you can speak. Otherwise, I would ask members to either listen or wait for their turn.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Madam Speaker, that is great advice.

I want to thank my colleague from Nepean for asking that question, because we know that this question would never come from the Conservatives. They are embarrassed to see the success of the government, with almost twice as many jobs created by the government than by the Harper Conservatives, with a million jobs since coming to power and 106,000 in the last month alone.

We said we were going to invest in innovation, in people and in job creation. We promised that; we delivered it, as advertised.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. I am just going to remind members once again that when somebody has the floor, we need to listen even if we do not like the answer.

The hon. member for Calgary Signal Hill.

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NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Ron Liepert (Calgary Signal Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, these Liberals love to throw numbers around, so why do I not help them out a bit?

We have heard, time and again, “347 days”. Well, let me ask the government about that right now. It has been 347 days since the government spent four and a half billion taxpayer dollars on a pipeline. At the time, the finance minister said that construction of the new pipeline would start immediately, but 347 days later, we have not had one shovel of dirt turned, so I would like to ask the finance minister this question: When is construction of this pipeline going to start?

Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we will take no advice from the Conservative Party on how to move forward in the right way.

We followed the court's direction. We know that meaningful dialogue with indigenous peoples is a fundamental obligation on our part and not a suggestion. We believe in protecting our environment, and at the same time we are moving forward in the right way.

We are following the path forward. Canadians expect us to get it right, and that is what we are focused on.

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Madam Speaker, it has been years since the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion was approved, yet the government continues to delay. As billions of dollars of investment flee the country, Canadians are choosing provincial governments that represent

economic prosperity and responsible resource development over Liberal rhetoric.

When will the Prime Minister finally get shovels in the ground and get the TMX built?

Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member very well knows that we approved Line 3 and we also supported Keystone XL. On TMX, we are moving forward in the right way.

The Conservatives do not want to listen to the courts. They do not want to have meaningful dialogue with indigenous people.

In order to do this right, we need to do the hard work, which is what we are doing. We have eight teams on the ground right now. We are doing our phase III consultation. We are basically looking forward to June 18 to make a final decision on how to move forward in the right way.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Madam Speaker, when asked about his plan for Trans Mountain, the Prime Minister said “We are going to get that pipeline built”. Well, that was a year ago.

The PBO reported that any construction delays cost taxpayers \$700 million a year, and if the pipeline is not completed by 2023, it is no longer economically viable. Any delays past June cost taxpayers even more and put the entire project at risk.

Will the Prime Minister be honest with Canadians? When will the Trans Mountain expansion be built?

● (1150)

Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, after 10 years of inaction under Stephen Harper, 99% of our oil exports were still being sent to the United States. The Conservatives had 10 years to expand global markets, and they failed.

The Conservatives continue to put politics over the process. We remain committed to the right process, and that is what we are focused on.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Madam Speaker, four pipelines were approved and constructed under Conservatives, but not a single inch of new pipeline is in service under these Liberals.

More than 12,000 Canadians signed Angela Cook's petition this week, calling on the Liberals to approve the Trans Mountain expansion on June 18. The independent, science-based, expert regulator said twice that it should be built. At least 43 indigenous communities and the majority of Canadians want construction to start.

It has been over 11 months since the Liberals spent 4.5 billion tax dollars and said that the expansion would be built immediately. Will it be approved for this year's summer construction season?

Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as I said, we are focused on getting this process done in the right way, certainly ignoring any advice from the Conservatives, because we know they failed for 10 years to get any new pipelines built to new markets.

Oral Questions

Canadians need to be reassured that this process is being followed in the right way. We have teams on the ground, we are doing meaningful consultations, and we have basically ensured that on the environmental side we have conditions and recommendations that we are following. That is what Canadians have confidence in. That is what we are focused on.

* * *

[Translation]

RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Madam Speaker, high-speed Internet has become essential for SMEs, producers and families in all regions like Berthier—Maskinongé. Nevertheless, people from Lavaltrie all the way to Saint-Mathieu-Du-Parc do not have affordable, reliable Internet access, which is completely unacceptable in 2019.

This is an urgent issue, and the Liberals have absolutely no plan to overcome this digital divide. A New Democrat government will do everything it can to fix this problem and stand up for people in the regions.

My question is very simple. When can we expect a digital strategy to connect Quebeckers and Canadians?

[English]

Mr. Marc Serré (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Rural Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, broadband is important for the prosperity of our country. We are focusing on making sure that we connect all Canadians. We have approved 180 projects in 900 communities, plus 190 indigenous communities. By 2021, our investments will connect 90% of Canadian households with high-speed Internet. Budget 2019 will even go further, with \$1.7 billion of investment to connect 95% of Canadians by 2026.

Where one lives in Canada should not limit one's ability to participate in the digital economy. Our government is taking real action. We have a plan and we are going to make it happen.

* * *

[Translation]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Madam Speaker, women are in prison in Saudi Arabia simply for having peacefully defended their rights. They have been subjected to sexual abuse and torture. Those responsible must be sanctioned.

[English]

Will the government issue individual sanctions against those who are responsible for the torture of Loujain al-Hathloul and the other women detainees, or will it continue to do business as usual with Saudi Arabia, putting profits ahead of human rights?

Ms. Pamela Goldsmith-Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs), Lib.): Madam Speaker, we are very concerned by the detention of women's rights activists in Saudi Arabia, including Loujain al-Hathloul. Canada remains committed to advocating for detained activists in their struggle for gender equality and human rights. We have raised this situation with Saudi officials and will continue to do so, alongside

our international partners. Canada will never hesitate to defend human rights.

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Madam Speaker, concerns are being raised about proposed changes to Hong Kong's extradition law. These changes would allow the extradition of anyone in Hong Kong, including 300,000 Canadians living there, to mainland China. We have an extradition treaty with Hong Kong. In mainland China, two Canadians are in jail and another two are on death row.

Democracies around the world are under threat. It is even more important at this time that Canada stand for democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

Will a minister from the government make a clear, unambiguous statement about these proposed changes to Hong Kong's extradition law?

Ms. Pamela Goldsmith-Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs), Lib.): Madam Speaker, we have raised serious questions with the Government of Hong Kong regarding the proposed amendments to their extradition laws. Ensuring the safety and security of Canadians at home and abroad is a top priority for the Prime Minister, for the Minister of Foreign Affairs, for our entire government and, I am certain, for the members opposite.

We will continue to closely monitor any developments surrounding possible changes to Hong Kong's extradition laws.

* * *

● (1155)

[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Madam Speaker, the United States took this Liberal government to the cleaners during free trade negotiations. One third of Canadian exporters are already affected by American steel tariffs. Garant, a big, wonderful company in my riding, has been doubly affected since May 1 because of Canada's 25% tariff on raw material, which is jeopardizing its competitiveness and jobs.

Instead of settling for a new tax, why has the Prime Minister not taken action to settle this dispute and get these tariffs dropped on both sides of the border?

[English]

Ms. Pamela Goldsmith-Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs), Lib.): Madam Speaker, in response to these illegal U.S. tariffs on steel and aluminum, we undertook Canada's strongest trade action since World War II by imposing \$16.6 billion in countermeasures on U.S. exports to Canada. We are also constantly examining our tariff list to ensure that it has the greatest impact possible. We are also providing \$2 billion in support for Canadian manufacturers.

Oral Questions

This week the minister spoke to Secretary Mike Pompeo about the importance of removing the unjustified and illegal U.S. tariffs, once again exercising strong leadership for Canada.

* * *

JUSTICE

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, our former Conservative government made the decision to retrofit a ship in order to get much-needed equipment to our navy. Then leaked documents show that the Liberals tried to stop this after a company that is friendly to the party was cheesed off that they did not get the contract.

After this leak prevented the Liberals from taking this unwise course of action, they attempted to destroy the career of one of Canada's most senior military officers, whose only crime was wanting to get a ship for our navy.

Why?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as I have said a number of times in this House and outside this House, it is the RCMP that investigates in such matters. The RCMP investigated and turned evidence over to the prosecution service. It is the prosecution service of Canada, which operates independently of government, that evaluated the evidence and decided to lay charges, proceeded with the trial and ultimately decided to stay charges.

All of this was undertaken independently of the government. There was no political interference, as the member herself said.

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SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Madam Speaker, this week the Leader of the Opposition miraculously claimed that he now supports our Canada child benefit. However, actions speak louder than words. The Conservative Party has voted against the Canada child benefit at every opportunity.

The Conservatives put out a tax guide that did not acknowledge the existence of the Canada child benefit but included their proposed tax credits for millionaires. Conservative MPs have called the Canada child benefit communistic and have said that CCB investments would be better spent on something else.

Could the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development please remind this House and please remind Conservative MPs just how much the Canada child benefit—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development.

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.): Madam Speaker, parents and children in Canada have a very simple message for the Conservatives: Keep your hands off the Canada child benefit.

The Conservative leader has voted against doubling it. The Conservative leader voted against indexing it. The Conservative leader voted against making it tax free.

If people want to know what the Conservatives' plan for children is, let them look at Doug Ford's war on children in Ontario. It is what happens when a Conservative government tries to campaign without a platform.

The Ontario Conservatives have cut teachers for kids. They have cut libraries for kids. They have cut school lunch programs for kids. They have cut the child advocate. They have even cut giving out vaccines for kids.

When it comes to the Conservatives, Ford's cuts hurt kids, and they are sheer stupidity.

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NATURAL RESOURCES

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Madam Speaker, residents in B.C. continue to flock across the border to fill their tanks with gasoline. They are saving \$25 per tank, and that matters. It matters to Canadian families, it matters to small business, it matters to tourism operators and it matters to so many more.

This minister does not seem to understand what a difference that makes in people's lives. Increasing the carbon tax without a deadline on getting Trans Mountain started is a problem.

When will they get the pipeline built, and when will they get rid of this carbon tax that is hurting so many?

Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there are a few things in that question. As I said before, we are focused on getting the TMX pipeline project done in the right way, something that the Conservatives completely ignored. For 10 years, they got no pipelines built.

We want to make sure people have confidence in the process. The process we are going to follow is having full consultations and at the same time respecting our environmental obligations. That is what we are focused on. That is what Canadians have to have respect for and have to have confidence in for us to get it done in the right way.

* * *

● (1200)

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Ms. Jean Yip (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Madam Speaker, removing barriers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, STEM, is fundamental to ensuring equity for researchers across our country. Our government recognizes that we must always strive to tear down these barriers and ensure under-represented groups can succeed and thrive in the STEM fields.

Can the Minister of Science and Sport please tell this House how our government's made-in-Canada Athena SWAN program will help us achieve this?

Oral Questions

Hon. Kirsty Duncan (Minister of Science and Sport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, that is an excellent question. While the Harper Conservatives ignored diversity in research, we understand that we cannot afford to leave any talent on the sidelines.

Yesterday I announced new grants and launched Dimensions, a made-in-Canada version of the internationally renowned Athena SWAN program. This will create more opportunities for women and other under-represented groups and institutions across Canada.

This has been a long-standing problem. The Harper Conservatives did nothing to improve diversity. We are taking action.

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FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Madam Speaker, Liberal fisheries ministers continue to fail Pacific salmon and the Canadians who rely on them. Evidence of this failure is another layer of fishing restrictions that will put hundreds of British Columbians out of work. Instead of working against fishermen and coastal communities, the government should work with them to restore Pacific salmon stocks.

B.C. fishers and conservationists know how to put more salmon back in our streams and oceans, so when will the fisheries minister start working with the fishermen instead of just shutting them out of their fisheries?

Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in actual fact this minister and this government have never stopped working with fishers and have never stopped working with conservationists.

The B.C. salmon conservation and innovation fund is a prime example. There have been over 100 million federal dollars coupled with provincial dollars to address the challenges facing B.C. salmon. That work will continue. The consultation will continue. We are very committed to the restoration of Pacific salmon.

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[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Madam Speaker, not a single penny in compensation will be going to supply-managed producers before the election. The Parliamentary Budget Officer confirmed it.

Farmers are already suffering the consequences of being sacrificed in the free trade agreements. To them, compensation is not an election issue, but an urgent need. The farmers say they want to see concrete action before the election, and that would include a cheque.

When will they get their cheque?

Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Madam Speaker, our government has always been very clear. We are the party that brought in supply management and we will protect and promote it.

We committed to supporting our supply-managed producers fully and fairly by giving them \$3.9 billion in compensation for the

repercussions of CETA and CPTPP. The working groups continue to discuss the best way to distribute the money, and the minister hopes to finalize everything by the end of June.

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Madam Speaker, a cheque is exactly what people want. They have had it up to here with reassuring words. The Parliamentary Budget Officer says that if he were a farmer, he would be worried. There are only so many ways to reassure people.

Rather than tell supply-managed farmers to vote Liberal if they want their cheque, will the government get those cheques in the mail before the end of the session?

Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Madam Speaker, let me repeat that we are committed to fully and fairly supporting supply-managed farmers by giving them \$3.9 billion in compensation for any negative repercussions of CETA and the CPTPP. We are also looking at the impact on processors and the potential impact of CUSMA. Working groups continue to discuss the best way to distribute the money.

I would also like to remind the House that all opposition members voted against the budget, which includes compensation for farmers.

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● (1205)

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Madam Speaker, the Conservatives' \$100-billion naval strategy sought to ensure the survival of two of Canada's shipyards, even if it meant destroying Davie and all of its suppliers, mostly in Saguenay. When the Liberals took office, they wanted to finish the job the Conservatives started, finish off Davie and deprive it of contracts. That is what we learned from the Vice-Admiral Norman case.

Now that the government has stayed proceedings against the vice-admiral, does it also intend to abandon the Conservatives' naval strategy and finally treat Davie fairly?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Public Services and Procurement and Accessibility, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we are very pleased with the Davie workers' productivity and the excellent work they did on the *Asterix*. We are working closely with all Quebec businesses. We awarded \$1.6 billion in contracts to Quebec companies. We gave Davie a contract that was part of a \$7-billion investment. We gave Davie \$700 million for icebreakers. We certainly do recognize the work and professionalism of the Davie shipyard and its workers.

*Routine Proceedings**[English]***INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS**

Hon. Hunter Tootoo (Nunavut, Ind.): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Indigenous Services.

When it comes to health care, Nunavummiut do not get the same level of support from the federal government as other Canadians. The national average for federal support is 20%. Nunavut receives less than 10%. As a consequence, the Government of Nunavut is forced to pick up the tab for programs for which the federal government is responsible. The GN spends in excess of \$50 million a year above what it is funded to administer the non-insured health benefits program.

Does the Minister of Indigenous Services think this fair and will he work with the Government of Nunavut to fully fund the administration of this program?

Mr. Marc Miller (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Madam Speaker, our government is working in support of the Government of Nunavut in the provision of health services to its residents.

Last week, the Minister of Indigenous Services met with the minister of health and finance for the Government of Nunavut to discuss health care and a number of other shared priorities. We continue to stay in close communication to ensure that Nunavummiut have access to the quality health services they need.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Madam Speaker, with permission of the House, I would like to table the recent Parliamentary Budget Officer's economic and fiscal update. We heard the parliamentary secretary from Global Affairs say that the \$2 billion from steel and aluminum tariffs were being used to help out companies in Canada. This report shows that the huge majority of this money has disappeared into government coffers and has not extended to our industries.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to table the document?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS*[English]***INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS**

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1) I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, three reports of the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group.

The first report concerns the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region's, PNWER, 28th annual summit, held in Spokane, Washington, United States of America, from July 23 to July 26, 2018.

The second report concerns the 58th annual meeting and regional policy forum of the Council of State Governments Eastern Regional Conference, held in Rye Brook, New York, U.S.A., from August 5 to August 8, 2018.

The third report concerns the annual National Conference of the Council of State Governments, held in Covington, Kentucky, U.S.A., from December 6 to December 8, 2018.

* * *

● (1210)

PETITIONS

EQUALIZATION

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition from many people across the country who call on the government to immediately cancel Bill C-69 and launch a study into the economic impact of equalization, including an examination of the formula.

The petitioners are really tired of the government telling them that they cannot work and that their jobs are dirty. They feel that the context for equalization has changed, after the Prime Minister has gone after jobs in the energy sector with great vigour.

ANIMAL WELFARE

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise today to table a petition submitted by constituents in my riding of Calgary Midnapore.

The petitioners clearly care deeply about the welfare of animals. They ask that the sale and/or manufacturing of animal-tested cosmetics and their ingredients be banned in Canada moving forward.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Madam Speaker, equality means that all people are treated fairly, without discrimination.

The petitioners call upon the House of Commons to permit Christians to robustly exercise their religious beliefs and conscience rights, both in their private and public acts, without coercion, constraint or discrimination.

PRIVACY AND DATA PROTECTION

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to table five petitions today.

The first petition was started at a time when Statistics Canada was reported to be collecting personal and banking information belonging to Canadians without their knowledge and consent.

The petitioners call upon the government to ensure this does not happen. They raise concerns about the need to set standards to prevent this sort of thing from ever occurring in the future.

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the second petition deals with the carbon tax.

Government Orders

The petitioners note that a carbon tax will not in fact help the environment, especially compared with more effective measures, such as exporting Canadian technology to jurisdictions that are less environmentally responsible as well as not sending more jobs to other jurisdictions.

The petitioners call upon the government to reverse its efforts to impose a carbon tax on all of its provinces against their will.

CANADA SUMMER JOBS INITIATIVE

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the third petition deals with the Canada summer jobs program. It came in the context of the attestation requirement that was not only removed this year, but that groups were being denied equal access to the Canada summer jobs program based on their beliefs instead of their actions. This continues to be a concern to these petitioners and other Canadians.

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the fourth petition is in support of Bill S-240, which is currently back before the Senate and seeks to address the scourge of forced organ harvesting.

The petitioners are hopeful that the Senate will move this forward as quickly as possible so it passes before the election.

FALUN GONG

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the fifth and final petition raises the plight of persecuted Falun Gong practitioners in China.

The petitioners call on Chinese officials to immediately end the persecution of Falun Gong and release all prisoners of conscience, including Canadian citizens and their family members, and to take every opportunity to establish measures to investigate the Chinese regime's organ harvesting, the taking of organs from innocent people. Again that is a reference to Bill S-240.

[*Translation*]

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, today, I am tabling a petition in support of Bill S-240, which would combat the scourge of forced organ harvesting. This bill is currently before the Senate. I hope it will be passed quickly.

Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would also like to table a petition signed by Canadians who are calling on parliamentarians to support two legislative initiatives to prevent the trafficking of human organs removed without consent or as a result of a financial transaction.

[*English*]

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Madam Speaker, I as well have a petition today from residents across Canada who call on the Parliament of Canada and the government to move quickly on the proposed legislation to ban trafficking of human organs around the world. The act would prohibit Canadians from travelling abroad to acquire human organs removed without consent or as a result of financial transaction and to render inadmissible to Canada any and all permanent residents or foreign nationals who have participated in this abhorrent trade in human organs.

•(1215)

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

OCEANS ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise again. It is always awkward when we have our speeches interrupted by question period, but it is an honour to continue with my debate on the Senate amendments to Bill C-55, an act to amend the Oceans Act and the Canada Petroleum Resources Act.

This bill went through the House. It went through the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, which I sit on, and was studied at great length. There were a number of amendments put forward on this bill when it came through the House and the standing committee. Unfortunately, the majority of the amendments that would have provided openness, transparency, accountability and some assurance for the local communities that could be affected were rejected.

That is why I believe it went to the Senate. They have taken a look at it and have seen that it needs to have an increased level of accountability. It is simply not there.

In our opinion, the bill was not correctly drafted. That is just a continuation of what we have seen in draft legislation from the government. It seems to happen again and again. We get a bill before the House, it makes it through first and second reading here and goes to committee, and then a flood of amendments comes in.

Just recently, I remember the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo speaking about some of the indigenous-related bills that have been before the House, drafted by a government that is high on virtue and low on substance. It actually table-dropped a dozen or more amendments on top of an already long list of amendments that were actually submitted late, after the deadline. It was amendment after amendment coming from the very government that actually drafted the legislation in the first place.

It seems to be a continuation of ineptness on the government's part in seeing what needs to be in place in a piece of legislation. We have seen that multiple times. I actually had the opportunity to sub in at the environment committee when it was studying Bill C-69. That bill was rushed through this House and rushed through the process. I could not believe the rushed process when the committee was studying that bill, especially at the clause-by-clause stage.

Government Orders

I actually happened to sub in the day the committee was doing the clause-by-clause study of that bill and considering all of the amendments that were put forward on that bill. I believe that over 600 draft amendments were proposed. What is even more unbelievable is that over 300 of them came from the government side. There were 300-plus amendments from a government that originally drafted the bill. To me, that is unconscionable. How can it possibly be?

It is an example of how the government was very inept in getting any legislation moving in the early stages of its tenure, and now it is pushing and pushing to move things through at a faster pace as it comes closer to the end of its tenure. I certainly hope the end of that tenure happens in October. We are certainly working hard to restore the trust and faith that people in Canada and people around the world have in Canada. It was lost by the current government.

The government is simply trying to rush legislation through, but it is trying to do this through a lack of accountability, a lack of transparency and absolute power that is being bestowed on the ministers or the councils that operate under their purview. We see that in this bill.

The government does not want to be held accountable for the reasons that it may have within its secret place for establishing areas of interest or marine protected areas. It does not want to be held accountable for any part. It feels that it knows best.

• (1220)

It seems to be the drive of the current government to have the government manage everything. Pay it the taxes, and it will manage everything better. We know that it is not the right way to go. We know that the people on the ground, the people in the communities, know how to manage our fish and wildlife species, resources and access to those resources far better than a government centred here in Ottawa does.

The consultation process is a huge part of what is missing in Bill C-55. I will go back to my experience travelling across this great country, from the east Atlantic coast to our west Pacific coast to our North Atlantic coast, with the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans.

We met with fishermen, with communities and with business owners in those communities. They wanted to provide input on where a marine protected area, MPA, may be instituted, how it may be instituted and what type of restrictions may be in place. Fishermen brought us maps with the proposed protected areas sketched out. They showed us areas where they would fish and set out their trap lines, fishing lines and long lines in a certain pattern so that they had room to work together as they fished and would not cross over each other's lines or get entanglements. They could fish in a progressive and orderly manner. However, what was happening with some of the proposed marine protected areas was that they had not been consulted on the no-take zones within those areas. They were being squeezed tighter and tighter. They were anticipating conflict on the seas, which is certainly not what we want to see, nor do we want to see people put at risk because they have to travel further or spend more time on the water to catch their harvest. However, it is that consultation that is missing in the bill, which is what the Senate was trying to put in there.

I will talk a little about my understanding of conservation versus preservation and conservatism versus socialism, which really came to light for me after I came to the House and participated in a number of debates here.

I come from a conservation background, where we use natural resources in a sustainable way. We take something out of those resources that gives value so that we have something tangible to put back in. Sometimes that can be as simple as a volunteer angler or hunter willing to put his hours back into habitat restoration, whether that be stream restoration for trout, salmon and species that might spawn in those streams or forest restoration for elk and deer. That is how they put something back, and they feel the need to put something back, because they have taken something from it. To me, that is true conservation, and I put that up against the preservation side any day.

The preservation side wants to lock everything up. There is no take. There is no consumption. There is no value received by anyone from locking it up. There may be some views or a little travel through that area, but basically, it is no touch and no take. Nothing is taken from it. What do we have to do to maintain that? We have to take from somewhere else. We need revenue to patrol, enforce and manage the piece that is preserved. To me, when we have to take from somewhere over here to support something over there, it is too much toward socialism, and I certainly hope we are not going to have to go that way.

• (1225)

There are other pieces in the bill that are really troubling. I want to quote from part of it:

The Governor in Council and the Minister shall not use lack of scientific certainty regarding the risks posed by any activity that may be carried out in certain areas of the sea as a reason to postpone or refrain from exercising their powers or performing their duties and functions under subsection 35(3) or 35.1(2).

For a government that claims to be investing billions in science, this paragraph jumped out at me when I first reviewed Bill C-55. That the Governor in Council and the minister shall not use the lack of scientific certainty in doing anything presents to me that they can use any reason they see fit, whether science supports it or not, to make a decision, which is simply unconscionable. I cannot support that type of power and authority being given to ministers of the Crown or their councils. The greatest part of that concern comes from foreign influence in those decisions. We see this continuously.

Government Orders

I mentioned earlier in my speech the consultations that took place on the closure of chinook fishing off the west coast of Vancouver Island. At the time, fishing organizations and local conservationists felt that they were having a reasonably good consultation process with the department about what closures there should be. They were working co-operatively. They were working with the department and the government on what they saw as viable solutions. They put forward their proposals, which they felt would be accepted. What they found out afterward was that there was a strong backdoor lobbying effort by environmental NGOs that wanted to see all fishing completely shut down. That pressure was behind the scenes, behind closed doors. No one knows what it was, because it was all done through ministerial confidence.

Foreign influence could affect the decisions that could be made through that clause saying that the minister does not need scientific evidence. All he needs is pressure from a foreign NGO. That is where I see huge risks in this bill. We had hoped to see more accountability in the reasoning, location and jurisdictional decisions the minister makes on establishing these MPAs.

Earlier today we heard the parliamentary secretary basically denounce the proposed amendments from the Senate, saying that they were redundant and not necessary. I would like to come to that. If they are redundant, they would be easy to step over to go to the next phase. If they showed that one phase of the consultation or assessment process covered off the concerns, when they got to the next phase, which might bring up those concerns again, they could point out, in the individual instances and cases, how those concerns were addressed. I really have a hard time agreeing with the parliamentary secretary's statements about the redundancy and the lack of the need for accountability. Everyone needs accountability from their government. I think that is why people send us here to Ottawa, to this great place. We are held accountable by our constituents back home.

• (1230)

I want to get back to an early draft of the legislation. The process in Bill C-55 is an attempt to speed up the government's ability to reach targets that were set by our government as targets, not hard-set goals but targets. We were working toward achieving those targets through a process of consultation and input from the local communities.

I talked about the marine protected areas that had been established in the north. I will have to apologize to the Inuit people for not being able to speak their language the way they do. There is the Anguniaqvia niqiqyuam marine closed area in the Arctic Ocean. There is the Tarium Niryutait closure also in the Arctic. Those marine closed areas were put in place because the communities wanted them. They saw what was there. They saw the value. However, they only protect against certain things. They protect against cruise ships coming in. They still allow the local harvest to take place for salmon, beluga whales and whatever the local Inuit had traditionally harvested out of those areas. It was a very co-operative process.

We travelled there and met with the chiefs and the band members. They were very proud of what they had achieved, a total opposite to what we have seen take place over the last three and a half years

under the federal Liberal government. We saw a spirit of co-operation in the north, a recognition of those indigenous and Inuit values for the establishment of those MPAs. They were very specific about what they were protecting because they had consulted with the local people. The government understood what needed to be protected, what needed to be preserved, how big the area needed to be and what the risks were.

Another big part of what has taken place here is that for some of this, the moving forward with areas of interest and proposals for marine protected areas, there has not been a full identification of risks. There has not even been a basic identification of those risks. One of the things that came forward in the Senate amendments was that there would be an identification of the risks, the features and the species that might be involved in the marine protected areas.

Over the past couple of years, the fisheries minister has been questioned about MPAs, their enforcement, implementation and so on. One of the things that came out of the study we did, which was basically a unanimous report, was:

That, when identifying new areas of interest for marine protected areas, the Government of Canada evaluate net economic and social values and responsibilities, including cost of patrol and enforcement in Canada, particularly for remote marine areas.

The minister's response to this recommendation merely acknowledged that enforcement was an expense.

Last September, the minister's own national advisory panel, established to give advice on establishing marine protected areas, also recommended "That the government identify long-term, permanent, and stable funding for marine protected areas". The minister's response to the advisory panel failed to even mention funding or resources for marine protected areas. It is unbelievable. It was mentioned in the committee report and in his own advisory panel's report and the minister did not even acknowledge it in his response.

DFO's 2019-20 departmental plan states that the department will provide enforcement in MPAs through the National Fisheries Intelligence Service, NFIS. However, the purpose of the NFIS, according to DFO, is large-scale fisheries offences, not habitat protection for pollution offences. The minister, through his department, is handing off patrol and enforcement of MPAs to the National Fisheries Intelligence Service that has no mandate to protect habitat or pollution.

• (1235)

There was no mention of MPA enforcement activities in the federal budgets or supplementary estimates since the fisheries committee and the minister's advisory panel told the government that enforcement activities needed to be funded. The minister knew there needed to be funding around enforcement. He was told that by the committee and by his own appointed panel, yet we saw nothing in the budget for enforcement of MPAs.

Government Orders

In the discussion earlier, I mentioned that local communities felt, in many cases, that they might be the best to patrol and enforce because they were on the water. They are out there anyway, performing their activities, at no real additional cost to the government. Therefore, they could spot the bad guys, the infractions, point out who was doing what at no expense. However, we have seen no program platform put forward, no ideas on how to enforce and increase the patrol of these upcoming MPAs.

It is another area where the government is simply putting out ideas and has no plan on how to follow through and complete those ideas. Without a funding plan for enforcement, the creation of marine protected areas is little more than government announcements and lines on a map. Out on the ocean, on the high seas, it may mean very little.

What is the government's funding plan for enforcement activities in marine protected areas?

I believe there were 24 recommendations from the standing committee's study on marine protected areas. The majority of those were around the consultation process that was needed, the consultation process with fishermen, with indigenous people, the Inuit and with people right across the country, on how it would affect them. I also do not want to forget the consultation that needs to take place with the shipping industry. All of those pieces need to be put together into a very intricate puzzle.

Recommendation 15 states:

That the creation of a marine protected area be founded on clear objectives, the best available science or, in urgent situations, the application of the precautionary principle, all informed by traditional knowledge contributed by the local indigenous communities and fishers that have traditionally operated in the area.

All of these pieces need to be put together. It is simply again the consultation process that needs to take place through the best available science. The recommendation is very clear, except for an urgent situation, but still through the knowledge of the locals.

The bill has been through the House, the Senate, and amendments were proposed in the House and at committee. Unfortunately, a lot of those amendments were ignored by the government. We now have amendments from the Senate. Obviously, it saw problems with the bill. In that, we can see the bill is flawed. It needs to be improved. How the government intends to do it, I am not sure. The Liberals will probably try to push it through.

Rather than a page and a half of detailed points that the Senate made in its amendment that needed to be corrected, the government's response was to take a butcher's knife to it, send it back to the Senate, with three small bullet points saying that it needed to get this done so it could say that had achieved something, because the Liberals have achieved very little in their three and a half years.

● (1240)

I will conclude by thanking members for being here on a Friday to listen. It has been an important process. I want to thank the Senate for its study and its committee that put the work into the study.

As I mentioned, even before the government introduced Bill C-55, in fact, months before, I moved the motion that the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans take a look into how marine protected areas were established, the process and procedure for

establishing those to ensure the science and consultation was done. The committee did some great work on that. Unfortunately, I do not believe the government has actually followed through on the process.

Mr. William Amos (Pontiac, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I disagree with the member opposite on just about 100% of what he said. This should not be any surprise. Bill C-55 really goes to the core of the identity of our government, a government that is committed to conservation.

Our government is so committed to conservation that we took the bold measure of ensuring there would be no deepwater offshore drilling, for which there would be no response were there to be a blowout over the winter in the Beaufort Sea or in the Arctic, which we so zealously protect. We are there to protect our jewels and ensure they are conserved, whereas the member opposite and the party he represents would simply, in the case of the Arctic, for example, drill baby drill, go in there with no plan and we would end up paying for the consequences.

Therefore, what we really need to understand is that this is a question of identity. The identity of our government is one of conservation, protection and, yes, economic growth where it is responsible. Unfortunately, the member's comments indicate a completely opposite approach, which is most unfortunate.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the member's disagreement with what I am saying, but I certainly disagree with what the Liberals are trying to say. They have seemingly been taken over by organizations that want to shut down any development whatsoever.

As I have mentioned many times through my intervention, consultation is key on closures. However, we have heard comments from the premier of the Northwest Territories that the government, without consultation, shut down the entire northern shelf for any development, negatively impacting an entire territory and the economic benefit it could have had through that.

We have seen the benefit when oil and gas was found off the coast of Newfoundland and how it was developed safely. There has not been a blowout. Nor has there been a problem. The wealth that came into the province of Newfoundland over the past decades was mostly driven by the safe development of oil and gas off those coasts. However, the government is hell-bent on shutting down any type of resource development anywhere in the country.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

I have a very specific question for him. He has a lot of experience in this field. He is a member of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans.

I would like to know whether Bill C-55, as drafted, will enable Canada to meet its international obligations to protect 10% of marine areas by 2020, which is next year.

Government Orders

I would like to know whether the rules, as set out in the bill, will ensure that these areas are recognized by the international organizations, even though there are significant deficiencies in how these areas are protected. The international organizations set out in the convention may not even recognize these zones as protected within the meaning of the convention.

Does he have an opinion on this? Did he hear experts' opinions on whether the areas to be protected through this bill will actually qualify as part of the 10% that must be protected in accordance with an international agreement we signed?

• (1245)

[*English*]

Mr. Mel Arnold: Madam Speaker, I hope the member will accept that I will not be able to respond to him in his native language, French. I would hate to butcher it in an attempt, so I will respond in English.

The targets that were set are targets. They are not a hardline deadline that one has to meet or one would get a failing grade and get kicked out of class. That is certainly not the case. Those targets could have been met without a bill like Bill C-55. All Bill C-55 does is allow a lazy government to move forward without accountability and transparency to meet a foreign body's influence on what we should do as Canadians. To me, that is terribly wrong. We have the greatest country in the world. As Canadians, we know how to protect it, how to conserve it and how to preserve what needs to be preserved. We should not have to push through a bill that would take away the transparency and accountability of any body in order to meet international targets.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will speak for our side, as we are fortunate to have a member like my colleague, who gave an excellent summary of some of the deficiencies in the law. It has happened oftentimes, with Bill C-55 and others before it that the government has proposed, that there is a legitimate intent in the bill, but there are deficiencies in the way the government has gone about proposing different parts of it.

I want to ask the member a couple of more specific questions. He mentioned some of the amendments that were proposed on this bill, both by the Senate and at the House of Commons committee. Could he go, one more time, over how many amendments were proposed, what the substance of those amendments was with respect to improving Bill C-55 and what our concerns are on this side of the House?

Mr. Mel Arnold: Madam Speaker, there was a lengthy list of amendments. I do not have them all in front of me here, but I believe there were probably 25 or 30 amendments put forward at the standing committee during the study of the bill. There were 23 or 24 recommendations from the study motion that I put forward at committee, all geared toward consultation with the local communities, the local people and indigenous nations right across the country. That was the one message we heard time and time again, not to rush this. The process that was in place, where sometimes it would take five to seven years to establish an MPA, was supported by the communities out there. That is what the recommendations were about. The amendments that were not accepted would have helped to address some of that consultation process, but unfortunately the

government pushed it through without those amendments being accepted.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, the other question I want to ask the member is on the consultation piece. He talked a lot about the communities in the north that he met with, both during some of the consultations on Bill C-55 and the process at committee, and through his outreach efforts to learn more about the impacts the bill would have on various communities, not only in British Columbia, on the west coast, but also in our territories in the north.

I would like him to speak specifically to some of the impacts that the governments in the north would have to work through and the economic impacts the bill would have on those communities. It is often stated by the other side that the economy and the environment go hand in hand. It is such overused verbiage. Perhaps the Liberals should replace it with the good Yiddish proverb "Trying to outsmart everybody is the greatest folly", which is actually the substance of this bill. The government is refusing to take legitimate amendments from the Senate that would vastly improve the bill. If the member could speak to that, I would love to hear it.

• (1250)

Mr. Mel Arnold: Madam Speaker, as the member for Calgary Shepard probably knows, his province and his constituents probably have much greater interest in this bill than they would suspect. Parts of this bill would allow the minister to set up marine protected areas or areas of interest that could ban shipping over the entire area, the shipping of products from all over Canada, and in particular the product of the petroleum resource industry in Alberta, in Calgary.

Constituents right across the country benefit from the shipment of those resources. That is the crux of this bill. It is about the unbelievable power that is given to the minister to absolutely and arbitrarily draw a line on a map and say, "That is it, no ships going though there, anywhere." Those are the kinds of things that my colleague's constituents in Calgary Shepard and my constituents in North Okanagan—Shuswap are extremely concerned about, that the government is giving unfettered power to its ministers to shut down industry.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise and join my colleagues in the debate on Bill C-55, and more specifically the Senate amendments. Some of them were rejected by the government, which moved its own motion to somewhat amend the bill in response to the questions and criticisms from the Senate. That is the context in which I rise to express my opinion on this important bill.

I believe that protecting marine areas against the many potential threats concerns all Canadians. We must also protect the habitat of fish and marine mammals. I believe that Canadians are just as concerned about this issue as they are about protecting biodiversity and ecosystems on the ground.

Government Orders

All Canadians are proud of their national and provincial parks. They are places of national or local interest that deserve to be adequately protected to ensure their survival. That is the goal of protecting them. We will protect these places, which are beautiful and worth visiting, to preserve them for future generations and to conserve biodiversity. We also want to conserve the fauna and flora for future generations. I would also add that biodiversity must be protected not just in Canada, but around the world.

We also want to ensure that industrial development does not endanger certain plant or animal species. Scientists recently sounded the alarm over the protection of plant and animal species. Over a million species face extinction in the short term unless something is done to protect them. I believe that Canadians will agree that we need to conserve biodiversity and ecosystems around the world for future generations.

Canada needs to take action, but a global, concerted effort is also required. Although Canada is the second-largest country in the world by land area and has thousands of kilometres of coastline, we cannot singlehandedly do everything that needs to be done to protect global biodiversity. Global collaboration is needed for our actions to be effective.

A few years ago, we actually did enter into a collaboration with the international community. We set targets and made shared commitments to ensure the protection of biodiversity and sensitive areas. We pledged to protect 5% of our marine areas by 2017 and 10% by 2020. I do not need to remind anyone that 2020 is next year.

Right now, in 2019, only 1.5% of our marine areas are protected. That means we have missed our 2017 target of 5%, obviously, and we are on track to miss the 2020 target too unless the government wakes up and boosts protection to 10%. That would be surprising, but it would be woefully inadequate anyway, for several reasons that I will explain.

First of all, the protected areas, as defined by the government, will not be truly protected. That is the central problem with Bill C-55. It is a laudable commitment and a step in the right direction, since it would at least do something to protect certain areas, but the protection provided under the bill is grossly insufficient.

● (1255)

When it comes to terrestrial protected areas, such as national parks, these protections are very real and effective. Oil and gas exploration and activities such as hunting and fishing are not permitted in our national parks. The regulations governing these areas are clearly defined, and people know what can and cannot be done. These terrestrial areas are very well protected, and we should be proud of them. No one is allowed to do exploratory drilling for shale gas or oil in national parks, and everyone agrees on that.

The crux of the problem is that the government has decided not to extend those same protections to marine protected areas. On the one hand, we have the Conservatives who do not care one bit. They did not lift a finger to protect marine areas when they were in power. On the other hand, we have the Liberals, who only pretend to protect these areas. They are going to establish boundaries for protected areas in Canada, but if you really look at the details, it becomes clear that these areas will not be protected from oil and gas exploration.

We know how dangerous drilling and oil and gas exploration and development can be.

All Canadians will be happy to hear about the 2% increase in marine protected areas, including a large part of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, for example. However, they will be surprised to learn that this area will not be protected from oil and gas development.

Everyone knows that this is just window dressing by the Liberal government. It lets them say that they are protecting marine areas when really these are not protected areas since oil and gas exploration and commercial fishing, including with trawlers that drag nets along the bottom of the sea to catch fish, crustaceans and other species that we consume, are allowed. It is ridiculous that these activities are permitted in marine protected areas. In fact, industrial activities are not permitted in terrestrial protected areas.

Marine protected areas should enjoy the same protections as terrestrial ones, but the government refused to make that happen. The government always caves when it comes time to take important decisions. When it is not caving to insurance or pharmaceutical companies, then it is caving to oil and gas companies, which have quite a bit of clout. When it is not caving to banks, it is caving to companies like Loblaw's or huge multinationals like SNC-Lavalin, which have privileged access to the Prime Minister's Office. Again, the government was not firm on the issue of development.

The government did not want to protect 10% of Canada's marine areas from these industries. It wanted to take a half-measure and do a little better than the Conservatives. The Liberals would have people believe that they did something. They want to announce that they are protecting marine areas and that they have a better environmental plan to protect biodiversity and ecosystems. In reality, if we cut through all the rhetoric, we see that the government is not really taking any meaningful action, and that is unfortunate.

If memory serves, my colleague from Port Moody—Coquitlam tried to remedy that situation at the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans. He did extraordinary work to try increase protections. He did not want them to be protected only on paper. He did not want the government to simply chart out what areas should be protected and then for everything to stay the same as it was before.

The bill identifies the marine areas in need of protection on a map. However, if we were to go and check on what is happening in those areas after the bill is passed, we would see that the bill changes absolutely nothing and that it is business as usual. It is an opportunity for the government to claim to be doing something to protect the environment and to increase marine conservation targets by a few percentage points, when in reality it is doing nothing at all.

● (1300)

These protections are more urgent than ever, especially in light of the impact climate change is having on biodiversity and ecosystems. When all of this changes and when the ocean's climate changes, the ocean's currents and water temperatures change as well. This all has an effect on marine biodiversity, which must be protected more than ever.

Government Orders

Humankind long thought that the ocean was infinite. That is certainly how it appears when you stand on the edge of the ocean. The beauty of Canada's Atlantic and Pacific coasts are world renowned. Our beaches are as well, even though the water is quite cold in some places. Some beaches are still good for swimming in the summer. When you go to the coast you can really see the expanse of the ocean. It looks infinite; it looks as though the horizon has no end and the resource is infinite. However, we now know that it is indeed finite and that we must take care of it. This resource is far from being infinite. With today's technology, we understand the ocean's resources are limited and must therefore be protected. We must ensure that they can endure and that future generations will be able to enjoy them, as I was saying earlier.

The ocean's resources are a treat for the palate. People across Canada enjoy seafood every day, and in some areas they are eaten in large quantities. We must be responsible and ensure that the species that we enjoy so much will be available for future generations so they may enjoy them in a responsible manner. That is why we must ensure that the laws we pass are stringent, have teeth and provide the resources needed by those who will enforce these new protections. We must ensure that irresponsible fishing practices are not used and that no trawlers will scrape the ocean floor to harvest resources in these specific areas. We need the financial resources, but they have yet to be announced by the government. It still has not announced how it will protect these areas. Not only do we have false protections on paper, but we do not even have the resources needed to monitor them and ensure that these areas are well protected once designated. That is worrisome for many experts.

The experts are far from unanimous. They do not agree on this bill. Some of those experts are very well-known organizations, such as the World Wildlife Fund, the WWF, which stated that oil and gas exploitation will still be permitted and that harmful fishing practices will not be legally prohibited. The World Wildlife Fund works with other organizations to make regulations as tough as possible. Even if this bill is adopted, some endangered species will remain endangered.

Another organization, West Coast Environmental Law, is very critical of the government. One of the organization's directors, Ms. Nowlan, believes the proposed amendments make useful short-term improvements to the federal Oceans Act and related oil and gas legislation but could and should go much further. For enforcement to be truly effective, we need even stronger legal authority, such as minimum protection standards that make respect for ecological integrity the top priority.

She added that this is not nearly enough, unfortunately. It is certainly a shame that the government is giving people the impression that it is doing something.

Academics have said that this is not enough. One well-known organization, the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, or CPAWS, advocates for increased protection for parks and wilderness areas. The organization is concerned because the areas being protected do not meet the standard set out under the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity and therefore will not actually count toward the target.

●(1305)

That is what Ms. Jessen from CPAWS said. She raised the issue that I just asked my Conservative colleague about, though he did not seem to have an answer. She does not have a definitive answer either, but I think one will emerge over time. This expert says she is concerned that the protection standards that will be implemented under Bill C-55 may not meet the standard set out under the convention to which Canada is a party. Members may recall that the convention commits us to protecting 10% of our marine areas. Today, only 1.5% of our marine areas are protected, even though our target is to protect 10% by 2020.

It is also possible that the international organization will not even recognize the areas that we will be protecting under this bill. I asked my colleague if he had gotten any more information in committee, but apparently no one knows yet. Organizations and experts are still deeply concerned that even if this bill increases the percentage of protected areas from 1.5% to 8%, 9% or 10% over the coming years, the new protected areas may not even count under the convention. This bill is so toothless that even if the government designates new protected areas, the convention will not recognize them. That is a shame.

It would be a serious mistake for the government to adopt protections that do not meet the standards laid out in the convention. This would be a lost opportunity to catch up with many other countries in this regard. Not only are we not meeting our targets, we are actually falling considerably behind every year in relation to countries like the United States and Australia, which are leaders in this area. Even the United States, which is not necessarily regarded as a huge champion of the environment and biodiversity, has protected 33% of its marine areas against various threats. Australia has protected 30% of its marine areas. They are the leaders. Canada, meanwhile, still ranks near the bottom in that regard, because it refuses to stand up to the interests of big oil and gas and say "no" to exploration and development by oil and gas companies.

That being said, in some places, such as the Beaufort Sea, which my colleague talked about earlier, the government decided to ban these activities. That move was criticized for the lack of consultation, but I think that at some point, we have to stand firm and refuse to allow these activities in such sensitive areas that are so hard to access, especially in winter when it is difficult if not impossible to clean up the mess. In the Gulf of St. Lawrence, there are extremely sensitive areas where we would not begin to know how to clean up the mess or restore the area after a disaster. The government has to be firm.

Government Orders

We in the NDP have the courage of our convictions. We are not afraid to stand up to the oil and gas lobbies and their highly dangerous activities to truly protect these areas. We have to protect these areas for future generations, to protect our environment and fight climate change. Unfortunately, the Conservatives are doing nothing and do not want to do anything, and the Liberals are only pretending to do something. At least there is one party in the House willing to do something meaningful to truly protect biodiversity and our ecosystems.

• (1310)

[*English*]

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to be joining the debate on Bill C-55 to contribute a couple of thoughts.

My colleague from North Okanagan—Shuswap gave an excellent overview of the contents of the bill and the substance of the amendments being proposed by the Senate. It has proposed a couple of measures that would improve accountability.

There is a series of common-sense ideas. They are very technical in nature. When I went through them, they gave me pause. I thought about the implications for the minister of the requirement to consult and how to consult? I thought about how the government would deal with applying some of the other measures in the real world.

A lot of what we do in Ottawa is put theory into legal practice and provide the wording for what we want departmental officials to do on the ground. However, there is also an entire portion related to the application of the legislation and regulations. We want to know how it will work in the field. How will the ideas in this chamber, brought forward by the government through legislation and by government members and opposition members through amendments, actually work out in the real world?

It is not enough to have good intent. It is also what happens on the ground. The reality on the ground is extremely important in whether the legislation will achieve those goals. Intent is fine. I think intent is laudable. We talk a lot about that as politicians. However, it is the results on the ground that count the most. Did we achieve the goals we set out? Do we have a metric to measure how the legislation is working?

The member from North Okanagan—Shuswap gave an excellent overview of the work both parties on the opposition side have done in proposing amendments and improvements to the bill at various stages, going back to when the bill was before the House of Commons committee. Between 25 and 30 amendments were proposed at that time to try to improve the legislation.

I have been on different committees, and often I have seen government legislation that has technical flaws in it. Some of the flaws are inadvertent. They are simply copied and pasted from other pieces of legislation. Perhaps they had a good intent at one time, but when we sit down with officials and stakeholder groups, we quickly realize that they would have several unintended consequences. I will get to one of the unintended consequences of the MPA processes.

When sections of bills are being changed, or improved, as the government would say, I have seen members try to amend them at committee. I have done this myself. I have proposed amendments to

government legislation that I thought would improve a bill and fix it in a substantive way, perhaps by amending a definition, as I tried to do on the medical assistance in dying bill, to provide a more technical definition.

With respect to Bill C-55, we are talking about Senate amendments that, as I mentioned, would improve the accountability of the minister to both Parliament and Canadians. They are common-sense ideas. Whether the amendments and the ideas therein are properly executed deserves further investigation and deliberation.

Bill C-55 would maximize the minister's powers. I have mentioned several times in this chamber, on other pieces of legislation proposed by the government, how opposed I am to maximizing ministerial discretion, especially on things like MPAs, which have an immense economic impact on the livelihoods of people in smaller communities, people who depend on fisheries for their livelihood.

It is incumbent upon any government and any member of Parliament to ensure that ministers are reined in and do not have free rein to do as they wish. Too much of the legislation that has passed in the House leaves it up to cabinet, through orders in council, to decide what the details will be.

I will draw the attention of the House to the cannabis bill, which decriminalized or legalized the sale and distribution of cannabis in Canada, and to the impaired driving bill. These bills created a litany of regulations that were basically to be written by a minister and then approved by cabinet at some point.

• (1315)

Some of them were very basic concepts, like definitions that should simply be taken out of a dictionary. We have the same situation here, where the minister's discretion and ability to intervene and interfere in a local area's decision-making process is very broad.

That is a deficiency in any government legislation, because often when we then ask those ministers to return to committees and provide a summary, provide some type of semblance of what was done with the powers, in almost every situation that I have experienced so far, I have been disappointed when ministers returned to committee to explain how they used the powers. They either went way overboard in their application or fell far short and actually did not pass a regulation that met the requirements of Parliament, thus being unable to achieve the goals that the legislation set out.

Just yesterday, at the Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations, where eventually the regulations that Bill C-55 would enable will make their way for gazetting and review and approval, I saw another instance of a government regulation being used by two previous governments, both Liberal and Conservative, whereby the officials in the department had collected information they were not legally allowed to collect.

Government Orders

Then an amendment to a piece of legislation was passed in 2012, and at that point, that collection of information was legalized. The logical question that all parliamentarians asked, including members in the government caucus and members of the Conservative caucus and members of the NDP caucus, was that if this collection of information was legalized in 2012, was it illegal before that? That was what the legal counsel for the committee was telling members of Parliament was in fact the case—that the government officials had improperly collected a whole suite of very sensitive, proprietary, corporate economic information.

My worry with Bill C-55 is again the broad discretion being given to the minister during the consultation process and the set-up of the MPA.

I want to quote Jim McIsaac of the BC Commercial Fishing Caucus, who said:

Right now on the west coast we have 10 or 12 different MPA processes. It's impossible for the fishing industry to engage in all of these in a kind of comprehensive way. We need a place where we can sit down and set some of these overarching objectives. If we don't do that, it's just going to disintegrate into a mess. It won't be durable going on. We need a way to bring all available knowledge into these.

That speaks to some of that consultation overload. Consultation is a great thing. I participate in government consultations when they post them on the website. I will mention one right after this, on the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, just as an illustration of where I think the problem with this consultation on the MPAs exists.

Having 10 or 12 MPA consultation processes at the same time overwhelms one particular industry. It is too much in one area for one group, one sector, one group of workers in an economy to be able to answer to when we want in-depth, valuable information to be provided. We do not just want boxes checked.

The government has indicated that it does not agree with the Senate amendments and did not agree with many of the Conservative amendments at the House of Commons committee when the bill found itself there, and in this legislation what the government is trying to do is outsmart everybody. I think that is the greatest folly. It is a Yiddish proverb. It is one that has been used many times. We as parliamentarians should know, and the government should know, that it is impossible to know everything.

That is what consultation is supposed to be about. It is the process of discovering what we do not know; it is not supposed to be about affirming what we think we know. It is about discovering what we do not know.

In this case, my thought is that if we do 10 to 12 different consultations, again as with these MPA processes, it will overwhelm a particular industry. I am much more familiar with energy site consultations on indigenous communities at the Alberta provincial level. In a prior life, I worked for the Alberta finance minister at the time and the minister of sustainable resource development at the time. Our sustainable resources in Alberta do not happen to be fisheries. Unfortunately, fisheries are not a major sector in the Alberta economy, but they are a major sector in the British Columbia economy, and we should be worried by what we hear.

• (1320)

We should be worried when groups are telling us that the proposal in the legislation may overwhelm their ability to provide in-depth valuable information, whether it is traditional knowledge or qualitative or quantitative data that their industry collects just as part of doing business and part of proposing what they think. Again, the consultation angle here is that there could be an overwhelming number of them and that would make it very difficult for them to meet it.

I want to provide another quote for the chamber's consideration from Christina Burrige, the executive director of the BC Seafood Alliance. She states:

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

Again, that is valuable input from another organization that feels these proposed MPAs might have a fine purpose in mind, but the difference being the intent and impact on the ground, the reality of what will be done.

Several members have mentioned during debate on the legislation that they are concerned that the minister will have simply too broad a series of powers to do as he or she wants, such as to declare a certain area, cut out a certain border for the MPA first and then consult after the fact. However, the economic impact is immediate. People in the area who depend on this type of fishery or it is a significant part of what they do on a daily basis will not be able to continue to do so. They will have to consult with the minister as part of an organization or individually.

There is always the possibility that the government will of course listen to a particular stakeholder group and will defer. It will move boundaries. It will change them to meet the demands. However, the impact will have already happened. There will be already investors, perhaps or individuals who will have changed their behaviour, either their purchasing behaviour or the fishing practices they had. In the meantime, people still have to make an income at the end of the day. They still have to make ends meet. They still have to pay their one's taxes, because the government will never let up on that. They still has to attain some type of middle-class lifestyle. People cannot just lay down their tools and wait for the government to finish its consultation process. They cannot wait for the minister to be satisfied that they have met the requirements of the law.

Some of the defects and shortcomings in the bill could be addressed by some of the proposals in a Senate amendment. We can look back, as the member for North Okanagan—Shuswap mentioned, to some of the amendments proposed on the Conservative side at committee about improving the way the consultation would be done to protect the workers out there. Part of the amendments proposed here also touch upon some of the announcements made by the government.

The government made an announcement that it intended to spend about \$1.5 billion on ocean protection off the west coast. It was part of its goal to reach some of its international targets and it was part of the process toward attaining and ensuring the construction of the Trans Mountain expansion pipeline, so meeting some of the public concerns that individuals had. I have a couple of issues in how this legislation and those dollar announcements matter.

We heard from the previous auditor general, who passed away tragically from cancer. He filed a report late last year, saying that the government was more interested in big dollar announcements in its news releases. He went in-depth in attacking the government's means of testing how it was achieving its goals. He said that it rated its success according to how much money had been shovelled out the door, not the actual impacts on the ground. He had a more broader critique on how the government had managed its operations.

Bill C-55 operationalizes MPAs in a lot of ways. It is much meatier legislation than people might realize. Many people realize that the consultation processes and the conservation of these broad maritime ecosystems and the termination of economic activity in many of these areas for certain types of fisheries or the potential of certain types of fisheries is a big operational part of government.

• (1325)

Time and time again, in different parts of the government, we have seen their inability to meet their own department plans, which every minister tables in the House. There are many shortcomings on that side, such as loading up departments with more work while cutting back on the total FTE count of employees in the department.

The government seems to rate its success simply by how much money has gone out the door, or sometimes, if the money has not even moved, by the quality of the news release being put out and the dollar figure. If there is “billion” in the number, the government will say that it is a job well done, that the mission was successful and that it has achieved its goals.

I will go back to the TMX pipeline for a moment, because I am a member who represents a Calgary riding and I am an Albertan. The TMX pipeline is a perfect example. The government created an investment environment, or a public policy situation, where a company felt obliged to give public notice to its shareholders after a board meeting that it was thinking of backing out of the pipeline expansion. It was not going to meet its goals. The government had created that environment, and it felt obliged to expropriate the pipeline from Kinder Morgan and purchase it for \$4.5 billion.

Here comes the operationalizing component. My worry about Bill C-55 is whether the government will be able to operationalize all of this and whether it is overwhelming communities with too much consultation. The government has not been able to build a single inch of pipe to twin the TMX line to the west coast, despite the fact that it promised legislation, despite the fact that it promised, over 300 days ago, that it would get the pipeline built, and despite the fact that almost two construction seasons have been thrown away.

I hear a member on the government caucus side from Toronto heckling me. I remind him that the previous government approved four pipelines. I remind him that the previous government had a record of actually building pipelines. I also remind him that under his

Private Members' Business

government's watch, the government he defends, over 7,000 kilometres of pipe has been cancelled in this country.

The LNG Canada project on the west coast is a \$40-billion project that was approved by the regulator in 2012 and approved by the previous Stephen Harper government. They approved it. It took six years before the company felt that the business environment was good enough. For three years, from 2015 to 2018, the project was on the cusp of being cancelled. The only thing that saved the project was that the government exempted it from the carbon tax. That is the only reason the company went ahead with a \$40-billion project. As well, under the government's watch, 78 billion dollars' worth of LNG projects have been cancelled.

• (1330)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member will have two minutes remaining the next time this bill is before the House.

BILL C-55—NOTICE OF TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Orders 78(1) or 78(2) with respect to the consideration of the Senate amendments to Bill C-55, an act to amend the Oceans Act and the Canada Petroleum Resources Act.

Under the provisions of Standing Order 78(3), I give notice that a minister of the Crown will propose, at the next sitting, a motion to allot a specific number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of proceedings at the said stage.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 81(4), I would like to designate Wednesday, May 15, for consideration in committee of the whole of the main estimates for the Department of National Defence.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It being 1:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*Translation*]

ENDING THE CAPTIVITY OF WHALES AND DOLPHINS ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill S-203, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and other Acts (ending the captivity of whales and dolphins), as reported (without amendment) from the committee.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): There being no motions at report stage, the House will now proceed, without debate, to the putting of the question of the motion to concur in the bill at report stage.

Private Members' Business

[English]

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP), seconded by the member for Windsor—Tecumseh, moved that the bill be concurred in.

[Translation]

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

(Motion agreed to)

[English]

Ms. Elizabeth May, seconded by the member for Windsor—Tecumseh, moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

She said: Madam Speaker, I thank those members who are applauding this historic day. I speak for myself and for many Canadians from coast to coast to coast when I say we are very grateful for the assistance of the hon. Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, the assistance of the hon. Minister of Environment and Climate Change and the assistance of their parliamentary secretaries in assisting this bill to get through this place after its long, long, long gestation in the Senate. We are extremely grateful for that support to expedite the passage of this bill so that it can receive royal assent before this House adjourns for the summer and the election.

I am only going to canvass briefly the elements of the bill; I think we are all very familiar with it.

It was started in the Senate, where it was sponsored by an absolutely terrific Canadian who would make the case that we should change mandatory retirement at age 75 for members of the Senate.

Senator Wilfred Moore of Nova Scotia brought this bill forward in 2015. On his retirement, it was taken up by another magnificent and inspiring leader within this country, former jurist Senator Murray Sinclair. All of their work and all of the witnesses in the long hearings before the Senate made the same point over and over again: In the 21st century, we simply know better than to think cetaceans belong in captivity. We can no longer pretend that the entertainment value of these magnificent, sentient creatures in swimming pools anywhere in Canada is acceptable.

Parallel to our efforts on Bill S-203 is a very good bill, Bill C-68, from the former minister of fisheries, the hon. member for Beauséjour. It is currently before the Senate, and we certainly hope will pass soon. To him, I once again want to underline my deep thanks for all of his work as minister of fisheries.

Bill C-68, would make it illegal to take a cetacean into captivity in Canadian waters. Bill S-203, finishes that piece and makes it comprehensive by adding that we will not breed cetaceans in captivity, nor will we buy cetaceans from other countries and keep them in captivity.

We are listening to the science and taking the appropriate actions.

I want to thank other people who have played a significant role in seeing this largely non-partisan effort, supported by thousands and thousands of Canadians, come to this point.

I want to thank the hon. members for Courtenay—Alberni, New Westminster—Burnaby, Beaches—East York and Pontiac; the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard; the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard; the members for West Nova, Avalon, and Charlottetown, and the member for Repentigny from the Bloc Québécois. There was help from members on all sides of the House, including the party that did not support the bill; there are individual members of that party who were very helpful.

The NGO community has been very helpful in assisting the process by networking with good scientists and also making sure the community of Canadians concerned with cetaceans received assistance. That community includes Animal Justice and its spectacular lawyer, Camille Labchuk; the Humane Society of Canada; Humane Society International; Ontario Captive Animal Watch; Animal Alliance of Canada; World Animal Protection; and The Whale Sanctuary Project. Assistance also came from scientists Dr. Lori Marino; Dr. Ingrid Visser, who testified by video link all the way from New Zealand; Dr. Naomi Rose; Dr. Hal Whitehead, of Dalhousie University; and Phil Demers.

●(1335)

All of these scientists, NGOs, individual elected Canadians and those from the unelected other place worked diligently and did their homework with one aim only: to end a practice that we all know is wrong.

[Translation]

It is a great honour for me to have overseen this private members' bill. It is a great honour.

I am surprised by the tremendous support that this bill has received across Canada. At this time, I would like to say just one thing: thank you.

[English]

I thank everyone involved and am in their debt, as are our wonderful free whales. Although it was certainly an accident of fate and Parliament that the bill was brought forward by Senator Wilfred Moore, I will say once more “Free Willy”.

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the leader of the Green Party for her contribution to today's debate and for her contributions every day in the House. They are always welcome and always to the point.

Private Members' Business

I want to ask her about an important aspect she mentioned in her comments today on Bill S-203. It is the notion of the sentient nature of so many of the creatures that exist on our planet. For a long time, even when many of us were much younger, we learned about dolphins, but a bit less about whales, and that sentient nature. Perhaps the member could elaborate on how that science and evidence is developing and what the next frontier holds in further protections, beyond whales and dolphins, with respect to the animal kingdom and the species that exist on this planet.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, having had a chance to look at my list, I am mortified that I had not said the correct riding of someone who played a huge role, and that is the hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam. I want to ensure that is on the record.

The science increasingly tells us that it constitutes cruelty to animals to take these cetaceans and keep them in confined spaces. They communicate as families. They communicate as communities. They use language. The communication requires space and range. They are creatures that travel enormous distances. Part of the health of the animal requires being able to function in community.

We saw it in the wild this summer when one of the members of our southern resident killer whale population gave birth to a calf that died almost immediately. The mother of that whale pushed her calf through the water on her nose, keeping it above the water, although dead, for an astonishing 17-day period of mourning.

It is certainly not possible to imagine that these creatures could live in swimming pools. The science is clear.

• (1340)

Mr. Chris Bittle (St. Catharines, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. leader of the Green Party for her work on this file.

Being a member from Niagara, we have an unfortunate place, and I do not know how else to describe it, in the backyard of my riding, which is Marineland. It is quite troubling to see such incredible animals being confined to such horrible conditions in small tanks. I had the fortune to see these animals in the wild, travelling kilometres at a time.

Could the hon. member comment on that business model? Hopefully, this bill will push Marineland to develop a new business model where tourists and residents of Niagara can be proud of something in our background.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, it is a difficult thing. When this bill came forward, two facilities in Canada held cetaceans in captivity. Vancouver Aquarium quite rightly made a decision voluntarily, which was very controversial within decisions made by the Vancouver city council, that it would no longer hold cetaceans in captivity. However, Marineland has taken a different approach, which is to fight the bill tooth and nail.

I hope Marineland can adjust its business model. It is a fantastic tourist attraction. It is in a perfect location. I am not a marketer, but if I were, I would suggest it talk to the people at Cirque du Soleil. I would suggest it convert that swimming pool for whales, which is a cruel living condition, to brilliant acrobats dressed as mermaids, cavorting on trapezes up and down, and attracting crowds like they

have never seen before. Then we can all say with big smiles on our faces: "Everyone loves Marineland".

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Niagara Falls, CPC): Madam Speaker, this debate will continue, but I want to ask the hon. member if she has had an opportunity to compare what is in her bill to what is in the government's Bill C-68, which is now before the Senate. That bill covers a lot of ground, but a number of the issues are very similar, if not identical, to what is in her private member's bill. I will ask her to comment.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, to my dear friend from Niagara Falls, I would say that Bill C-68 is a terrific piece of legislation. It does ban the taking of whales from Canadian waters, but it does not speak to the pith, substance and core of this bill, which is that people cannot continue to hold them in captivity, cannot breed them for captivity and cannot keep whales in captivity.

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise today to join this important debate on Bill S-203, an act to amend the Criminal Code and other acts with regard to ending the captivity of whales and dolphins.

Both I and my constituents in Parkdale—High Park have anticipated this piece of legislation for some time since it moved from the Senate to this House. Now that it has returned from the fisheries and oceans committee without amendment, I am pleased to stand and speak in favour of this bill. It is important to highlight the important work that was done by a unanimous fisheries and oceans committee to get it back before this House expeditiously.

Before I speak to the substantive elements of the bill, I want to add my voice to the voice of the leader of the Green Party and thank the Senate sponsors for this bill, the now retired Senator Wilfred Moore and Senator Murray Sinclair, who carried the bill forward after Senator Moore's retirement. I want to thank as well the House of Commons sponsor, the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, who commenced this debate today. All of these individuals have been tireless advocates for this legislation, and their activism and advocacy has helped carry Bill S-203 to this point we are at this afternoon.

The bill itself seeks to prohibit the taking of a cetacean into captivity and will amend the Criminal Code to create offences respecting cetaceans in captivity. It will also amend other acts to require a permit for the import of a cetacean into Canada and the export of one from Canada.

I want to begin by tracking our government's progress on the commitment to promote animal welfare rights in Canada and abroad. This is an important issue to me and the constituents of my riding of Parkdale—High Park, as I frequently hear from them about the work we must all do collectively to ensure the welfare of animals. Since 2015, we have made progress on this commitment.

Private Members' Business

In my role as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, one of the pieces of legislation I have had the privilege of working on is Bill C-84, an act to amend the Criminal Code in relation to bestiality and animal fighting. That bill will make important amendments to our Criminal Code to change the definition of bestiality and expand the animal fighting provisions to capture more of this conduct and ensure offenders are brought to justice.

This week is indeed a momentous week in this chamber, because it was only this week that Bill C-84 received third reading and was then sent to the Senate. I, along with many others, look forward to its study and its eventual passage there. In the same week that we dealt with Bill C-84 in this chamber, we are dealing today with Bill S-203. It has been an important week for animal rights in this country.

With the help of stakeholders such as farmers, industry groups, provinces and territories, and veterinarians, our government has also been active on ensuring proper and humane animal transport. Federally, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, the CFIA, administers the enforcement of regulations related to animal transport, and plans are under way to modernize the regulations and humane transport provisions of the health of animals regulations. These have not been updated since the 1970s. The need to reduce animal suffering during transportation is clear.

In 2017, we also announced an investment of \$1.31 million to an entity known as the Canadian Animal Health Coalition, the CAHC, to help ensure the safe transportation of livestock, develop emergency management tools for the livestock industry and improve animal care assessments.

We have also been engaged with stakeholders on the topic of animal welfare during the slaughter process. The stakeholders in my riding of Parkdale—High Park have spoken to me repeatedly about the need to ensure that animals are handled humanely at all points of their lives and that the high standards we expect regarding animal treatment are upheld. I absolutely agree with their sentiment that this kind of protection must be a priority, which is why I currently serve as a member of the Liberal animal welfare caucus.

Let us get back to the bill before us, Bill S-203.

Scientists agree that whales, dolphins and other extraordinary marine mammals like them should not be kept in captivity or bred in captivity, and that doing so amounts to cruelty.

Additionally, it is well documented that the live capture of cetaceans and their transport to a foreign habitat harms the natural habitat where the cetaceans originate. At a time when oceans are under increased threat from a number sources, such as habitat destruction, coastal pollution, overfishing and global warming, which all harm these cetaceans, we can scarcely afford to be keeping them in captivity.

We must also think about the difficult living conditions for cetaceans that live in a confined space, such as an aquarium, without the social contact and normal activities most cetaceans in the wild would enjoy. Those that live in captivity suffer from a higher rate of physical health issues and a lower life expectancy.

● (1345)

As well, calves generally suffer from a much higher mortality rate and a lack of emotional connection to others of their species as a result of the limited space when they are in captivity.

Therefore, where we may have seen whales, dolphins and other cetaceans in an aquarium as a form of entertainment in bygone years, in many cases we now realize that it actually amounts to animal cruelty. Thus, our government firmly agrees that the capture of cetaceans for the sole purpose of being kept for public display should be ended.

Importantly, while the banning of whale captivity is not yet in law, the practice has been in place for some years now, which is a good sign. Bill C-68, which was mentioned earlier in today's debate in one of the questions by a member opposite, was introduced by our government. It is currently in the Senate and passed in the House in June of last year. It includes amendments to end the captivity of whales unless for rehabilitation. This legislation now before us is the next step, the next important step, in ensuring the safety and security of these intelligent and complex creatures.

Presently, as was mentioned by the Leader of the Green Party, there are two aquaria in Canada that are holding cetaceans: the Vancouver Aquarium, in British Columbia, and Marineland, in Ontario. The Vancouver Aquarium, which is a not-for-profit institution, currently has a Pacific white-sided dolphin, which was rescued from the wild and deemed not releasable, as well as five belugas on loan to aquaria in the United States. The Vancouver Park Board has not permitted the aquarium to hold cetaceans captured from the wild for display purposes since 1996, but it does work with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to respond to cetaceans in the wild requiring rescue and rehabilitation. Marineland holds the remaining balance of cetaceans, including one orca.

The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans retains the authority to issue a licence for the capture of live cetaceans. However, only one such licence has been issued over the past decade, and that was for the rescue and rehabilitation of a stranded *Pseudorca* calf. No licence has been issued for the purpose of displaying a cetacean publicly in over 20 years. As stated earlier, it has been the practice of successive Canadian governments that cetaceans not be captured or placed in captivity unless for rehabilitation.

It is also important to note the elements of Bill S-203 that relate to the protection of the rights of indigenous peoples, some of which feature whales and dolphins as a key component of their culture and traditions. These provisions were not initially part of the bill, but through the significant consultation process that took place while Bill S-203 was being studied in the Senate, the bill was sufficiently and appropriately altered.

Private Members' Business

It is essential to consider and address the needs of indigenous peoples. This is something I have heard frequently from the knowledgeable, engaged constituents of my riding of Parkdale—High Park and literally from people right around the country. They have always echoed to me that we in this place, as legislators, must apply an indigenous lens to all the legislation, government or otherwise, that comes before us. I am pleased to see that this is in fact exactly what was done in the Senate when it engaged in those consultations.

This legislation complements our government's work, which I have outlined. We are committed to the recovery and protection of marine mammals. This commitment is evident through another investment we have made, which is a \$1.5-billion investment in what is an historic oceans protection plan that would help restore our marine ecosystems, in partnership with our indigenous partners.

As well, there has been a five-year \$167-million investment in the whales initiative, which would take concrete steps to help endangered whales and reduce the impact of human-caused threats. Our latest announcement was \$61 million for measures in support of the southern resident killer whale population off the coast of British Columbia.

Bill S-203 is one aspect of the support our government is giving to marine animals and their habitat. Bill S-203 is also supported by some significant leaders in the field of marine science and animal welfare, including Humane Canada and Animal Justice. Even the former head trainer at Marineland, Mr. Philip Demers, has expressed support for the measures in this bill.

What I think we are seeing here with Bill S-203 is the proper and necessary evolution of rights protections for animals in this country. It is a bill whose time has come. It is a bill I am very proud to support on behalf of my constituents and as a member of the government. I urge all members to do the same.

• (1350)

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise to speak to Bill S-203, an act to amend the Criminal Code and other acts, ending the captivity of whales and dolphins.

The proposed bill amends the Criminal Code to create offences respecting cetaceans in captivity. It also amends the Fisheries Act to prohibit the taking of cetaceans into captivity and the Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Inter-provincial Trade Act to require a permit for the import of a cetacean into Canada and the export of a cetacean from Canada.

The bill seems to be falling under the same umbrella, the same mode of operation of the government. It is being rushed through the House.

I was not able to attend the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans the day the bill was debated clause by clause, where amendments might be considered and brought back to the House. It is my understanding that even the Liberal government drafted and put forward four amendments to the bill. The Liberals could see the bill was flawed. They drafted corrections to a bill that had been out there for a lengthy period of time. However, when it came time to debate those amendments, the Liberals drew them back. It was

speculated that they did that because of pressure from outside groups behind closed doors, under cabinet confidence, something the public cannot have access to, to withdraw those amendments.

That is a concerning factor for me. As the deputy shadow minister for Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard and a member of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, we seem to see a trend recurring over and over again. The government promises consultation and claims to consult with locals and the people who are affected by changes to laws or regulations, the businesses, the aquariums, the fishermen. After the Liberals have done all that supposed consultation, they go behind closed doors where they appear to be lobbied by foreign interest groups, special interest groups. That lobbying seems to have more effect than the open and transparent consultation process that should take place with an open and transparent government, which, unfortunately, seems to be lacking right now.

Bill S-203 has been rushed through the House of Commons, without study. In the short time members of Parliament have had the bill, many issues have been flagged. These issues range from constitutional concerns to practical considerations that have been simply overlooked. This happens when legislation is rushed through and not carefully considered. Had the members been given more time to review and study the bill, many of these problems could have been solved with simple amendments. These amendments would benefit cetaceans, Canadians and stakeholders alike.

Another major issue was flagged recently in Bill S-203, which could impact hundreds of thousands of Canadians and their vacation plans over time. As it currently reads, Bill S-203 could negatively impact Canadian travel and tourist industry. More specifically, Bill S-203 could negatively impact travel agencies and Canadian vacationers who travel abroad and visit captive cetaceans in other countries. It has been argued that this is not the case, but the legal advice cannot irrefutably dissolve this. They cannot say for certain that this is not the case. It will take a court decision to say whether it is the case.

I have a letter from Marineland that raises the concerns in great detail and I will quote from that letter:

• (1355)

There was considerable discussion at the House of Commons Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans with respect to the prohibition on using cetaceans in performances for entertainment purposes and the broadness of the legislation. The section reads:

“(4) Every one commits an offence who promotes, arranges, conducts, assists in, receives money for or takes part in any meeting, competition, exhibition, pastime, practice, display or event at or in the course of which captive cetaceans are used for performance for entertainment purposes unless such performance is authorized pursuant to a licence issued by the Lieutenant Governor in Council of a province or by such other person or authority in the province as may be specified by the Lieutenant Governor in Council.”

A plain reading of the legislation offers no ambiguity. 'Every one' means every human being in Canada commits an offence when they do any of the following "promotes, arranges, conducts, assists in, receives money for or takes part in."

Travel agents in Canada promote and receive money for selling such excursions to constituents of yours who then 'take part in' and many end up 'promoting' the experience on their own social media in Canada.

Private Members' Business

The exemption that is proposed in the section will not apply to the shows that today travel agents in your communities are actively promoting and receiving money from, nor will it apply to your constituents who take part in these shows and may promote it by encouraging others on social media to participate in similar shows in the future.

Department of Justice lawyers were not able to refute Marineland of Canada's contention that travel agents who 'promote' and 'receive money from' selling tickets to such shows occurring outside of Canada will not be criminally charged for doing so.

While Marineland of Canada is not concerned about this clause of the legislation impacting our facility, as we simply will not offer such a show for entertainment purposes, we believe this clause highlights the perils of using Private Members' legislation originating in the Senate to amend the Criminal Code of Canada.

We've reviewed travel agency offerings throughout Canada and have found that there are travel agents in every single Canadian province that promote and sell tickets to, and therefore receive money from, captive swim with the dolphin experiences and captive cetacean shows that will be covered by S-203.

The Department of Justice lawyer suggesting it is unlikely these people, or Canadians who urge their friends on Facebook to swim with the dolphins on their next trip, will not be prosecuted does not go far enough in addressing what is clearly a flaw in S-203.

Every single Canadian has a positive obligation to comply with all relevant sections of the Criminal Code at all times, and simply stating that while an act might be illegal, because the person breaking the law is unlikely to be prosecuted, is not OK.

If members pass S-203 with the current wording contained in the 'entertainment prohibition', you will be criminalizing the actions of vacationers from your riding who head south and participate in these lawful activities and the travel agents in your riding and Province who sell these excursions.

Is it truly the intention to leave Canadians in a position where posting about their lawful experience in another country can become a criminal offence if they encourage others to swim with dolphins when they go on vacation?

Is it truly the intention to criminally charge travel agents in your riding for selling vacations to Hawaii, Mexico, Cuba, the Bahamas and including an excursion that involves swimming with dolphins or a captive cetacean show?

● (1400)

As it is currently written, that is what the legislation would do and what members would be endorsing if they voted in favour of it. It will certainly be of interest—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Unfortunately, the member's time is up. I am sure he had more to say, but I am sure that at some point his colleagues will be able to add to his comments.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Sherbrooke.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak to this bill on behalf of the people of Sherbrooke. I know that the majority of them will support this Senate bill, which is now at third reading.

I want to keep this brief so the bill can move on to the next stages and go for royal assent, which will hopefully come soon.

On behalf of the New Democratic Party, I am pleased to say that I support this bill, which is simply designed to end a practice that has been recognized as cruel, namely keeping cetaceans in captivity.

I do not think anyone in the House would challenge the validity of the scientific evidence showing that cetaceans are highly intelligent creatures that deserve to be treated well so that they too can live a happy life. No one would argue with that. The science on this point is very clear.

This bill is simply aimed at preventing the taking of cetaceans into captivity, except for certain worthy motives, such as rescue, rehabilitation and certain kinds of monitoring that must be done in a respectful manner and, ideally, in their natural state for scientific research purposes.

I think this is a reasonable, well-balanced, common-sense bill that the people of Sherbrooke are sure to support.

We need to rely on scientific data and evidence, which show that cetaceans have a reduced lifespan when they live in captivity. The infant mortality rate is higher, and the facilities that keep them in captivity cannot meet their social and biological needs. They need a lot of space to live. That is a recognized fact and the fundamental reason why this is a good, common-sense bill.

Regardless of the size of the facility, there is no way it can be big enough to meet all of the social and biological needs of cetaceans. They get bored in captivity. They cannot swim as they would in their natural habitat. They cannot swim in a straight line, swim long distances or swim in deep water. When they are in captivity, they spend about 80% of their time at the surface of the water, which is completely unnatural for them. In their natural habitat, they spend 90% of their time underwater.

In captivity, they are fed because they obviously cannot use their sophisticated hunting methods to obtain food. There is simply nothing for them to hunt in their confined spaces. Their diet in captivity is not as varied or nutritious as what they could find in the wild.

They suffer from loneliness, separated from their pods. They generally end up alone. Sometimes they are even separated from their mother and sent elsewhere to be kept in captivity and put on display for the public.

They also suffer from the absence of sounds that they would normally hear in their natural environment. These sounds do not exist in captivity. Sometimes their tanks and interactions with the public cause considerable ambient noise, producing sounds they would not hear in nature.

All these things cause cetaceans to suffer when they are in captivity. This has been proven, and it is extremely cruel to continue this practice.

● (1405)

This is why Canada must take a leadership role. A few weeks or months ago, the public became aware of this issue when they saw several dozen cetaceans being held in captivity in Russia in very small pens and in water much colder than they are used to. They cannot swim to stretch their muscles. Everyone was horrified by these images. Everyone in Canada, Quebec and Sherbrooke expects Canada to set an example and to not stand for this in our country.

Private Members' Business

The bill is sensible, reasonable and balanced. A vast majority of people in Sherbrooke agree that this practice must be stopped. Canada must step up on the world stage to put an end to this practice around the world and to make sure that we are not complicit in such cruel practices.

I want to congratulate the senator who introduced this bill as well as the bill's sponsor in the House and all those who contributed to the debate to move this bill forward, so that it will receive royal assent as quickly as possible. I will stop here. I want to make sure that this bill moves forward and will receive royal assent as quickly as possible.

• (1410)

[*English*]

Mr. Nick Whalen (St. John's East, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill S-203, an act to amend the Criminal Code and other acts, also known as the act for ending the captivity of whales and dolphins.

The bill proposes changes to three acts: the Criminal Code, the Fisheries Act and the Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act, an act whose name did not take advantage of creative acronym design.

I want to begin by first stating that I am indeed, like Canadians across the country, in favour of the bill and I know this government supports this bill.

I actually deferred my opportunity to speak on my own private member's motion, Motion No. 196, and work with the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands in order to help advance this important legislation before the session ends. Who knows, maybe I will not get the opportunity to speak on my motion, but I know this is very important to Canadians. Seeing it so close to the finish line, it felt like it was the right move to make. I am honoured by the small role I may have been able to play in advancing the common good across party lines and between the other place and this place.

I also want to highlight the Liberal members of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, who passed the bill unamended at committee.

[*Translation*]

The bill has progressed thanks to their leadership and is now even closer to being passed after years of debate in the Senate.

[*English*]

There is no doubt, as we have come to learn more about the living needs of whales and other cetaceans, that keeping them in captivity is simply the wrong thing to do.

[*Translation*]

Support for a ban on keeping whales in captivity has grown and is continuing to grow, not only in Canada, but around the world.

Canadians can see some of Canada's most majestic marine animals in their natural habitat all around Newfoundland and along all our coastlines from St. John's, Newfoundland, and Vancouver Island to the Arctic and Chaleur Bay.

[*English*]

We know from research on these animals that living in captivity is far from being in their best interest and that is why Canadians across the country have shown continued support for the banning of whales in captivity.

I would also like to add that while the banning of whale captivity is not yet in legislation, the practice has been in place for years in Canada, and our government continues to support this.

[*Translation*]

Licences for the capture of live cetaceans are issued only by the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard for scientific research or rehabilitation.

[*English*]

In the past 10 years, as we have heard, only one licence has been issued for the rehabilitation of a live-stranded pseudo-orca calf.

Our government has also taken notice of the growing concern to ensure cetaceans are not being captured for the sole purpose of being kept for public display. That is why our government introduced Bill C-68, which is currently before the committee in the other place, and we hope will be reported out of the committee next week. It contains amendments that would prohibit the captivity of whales and would allow the minister to put in place regulations to ban the import and export of cetaceans.

Today, there are only two facilities in Canada that house cetaceans: Marineland in Niagara Falls, Ontario, and the Vancouver Aquarium in British Columbia.

Marineland is a commercial facility with approximately 60 cetaceans. Most are belugas with one being a killer whale.

The Vancouver Aquarium is a not-for-profit facility and has one cetacean at its facility, a 30 year-old Pacific white-sided dolphin that was rescued from the wild and has been deemed to be unfit for release back into the wild. The Vancouver Aquarium works with Fisheries and Oceans Canada to rescue and rehabilitate marine mammals in distress.

• (1415)

[*Translation*]

We know we must do more to keep protecting cetaceans. That is why we need to send a clear message through legislation that whales do not belong in captivity. Today we are debating the importance of keeping whales in the wild, but I also want to emphasize the importance of ensuring their marine habitats are protected.

[*English*]

Over the past few years, the government has made real investments to protect and conserve our marine environment. In 2016, the Prime Minister announced \$1.5 billion dollars for the oceans protection plan, which has since funded 55 coastal restoration projects, helped to address threats to marine mammals from vessel noise and collisions, increased our on-scene environmental response capacity and much more.

Private Members' Business

As part of budget 2018, this government also announced \$167.4 million for the whales initiative, which has further funded recovery plans for endangered species, such as the southern resident killer whale, the beluga whale and in my area of the world, the North Atlantic right whale.

[*Translation*]

Our government continues to take action to protect our environment. We recently announced new standards for marine protected areas to ensure that ecologically significant areas are not disturbed by oil and gas exploration. This measure was introduced in response to the recommendations of an independent expert advisory panel on marine protected areas. This announcement was well received in Canada and around the world.

[*English*]

Our move toward protecting important marine environments will help ensure a good future for a healthy ocean and the health of marine species such as whales and dolphins. However, I really cannot say enough about the oceans protection plan: infrastructure; coastal restoration; the abandoned, derelict and wrecked vessels programs; arctic marine protection; science and research and the pilotage review.

In my riding of St. John's East, there is an institute called the Marine Institute. I had the good fortune to be there in September 2011 with the minister of fisheries and oceans and the Canadian coast guard at the time, now our good friend from Beauséjour who is on leave, the former minister of veterans affairs, now the Minister of Indigenous Services, and my good friend and colleague the member for Avalon to announce important work that is being done to restore marine habitat in Avalon using expertise that comes from the university in my riding, the Marine Institute.

We announced a program to re-establish the eel beds in Placentia Bay to increase that habitat. That is where lots of species, including scallops, shrimp, cod and whales, start their lives. It is important to protect these areas to improve the health and ability of our oceans to be fully functioning in certain areas where they have become damaged due to industrial activity.

This particular project is small in comparison to the overall total. It is about \$7.4 million. Although it was announced on my wedding anniversary, my wife was not too upset. We had an opportunity to celebrate later. The money is actually already being spent. Last summer, scientists were able to go into Placentia Bay, do the diving and begin that restoration work in Placentia Bay that will pay dividends for years to come.

It is wonderful to work with the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands on this. As we did a little social media earlier, a lot of people came back to me and asked some important questions on how our government can be supporting industrial activity in the oil and gas sector and at the same time support environmental protections. They felt that it was counterintuitive or perhaps even contradictory. That could not be further from the truth.

The only way the government can move forward, protect the environment and fund the transition of our economy to a clean economy is with economic growth from our traditional sectors in resource development. We must continue to work on the demand

side, and this means the purchasing decisions made by consumers and how they engage in their daily lives, and at the same time allow our natural resources sectors to engage in environmentally responsible development so that we can tap into export markets.

We cannot allow countries that do not have good environmental records to capitalize on oil and gas profits from their exports and not allow our industry to thrive. That is why our government, at the same time it is doing all this great work to help whales in the wild and help prevent whale captivity, is also funding the Trans Mountain expansion and has recently approved, with many conditions, continued exploration for two projects on the northeast coast of Newfoundland and Labrador for oil exploration. ExxonMobil and Equinor now have the opportunity this summer and over the course of the next decade to drill exploratory drills in our waters, subject to conditions that protect the right whales and protect our oceans. We will use this prosperity to fund things like the oceans protection plan.

• (1420)

[*Translation*]

In closing, let me say that I am very pleased to be here today to join with Canadians from coast to coast who have come out in favour of ending the captivity of whales. Whales have been kept in captivity for too long, and that has to change.

[*English*]

Whales do not belong in captivity; they belong in the wild. I encourage all members to support this legislation.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to join the debate on Bill S-203, for which I have received a fair volume of correspondence from constituents in my riding of Calgary Shepard, whom I am pleased to represent. A lot of them were sent to me on behalf of various organizations across Canada that have been promoting Bill S-203 as a solution to cetaceans in captivity.

Before I continue on with the bill, I want to make one mention. The member for St. John's East had the best observation regarding a Senate bill I have ever heard in this chamber when he said it did not take advantage of creative acronym design. It has been four years and I will give him that. How acronyms are created with certain bill is probably one observation I have not made, so I will give him kudos for that one, but not for the content of what he said, especially on the oceans protection plan, which is a \$1.5-billion plan, with very little spending so far. The Coast Guard ships that have been built are still in dock in Nanaimo with no crews to service them and make them ready for use in the field. I have not seen any actual spending of the dollars associated with the plan. That is the first part of my reply to what he mentioned.

Private Members' Business

With respect to the substance of the bill, I feel the need to provide an introduction. I have been writing back to my constituents who have been writing to me on Bill S-203, and I have had some back-and-forth conversations with a few of them on disagreements over some of the technical aspects of the bill.

One thing I want to mention is that the bill broaches a certain area of provincial jurisdiction—animal welfare laws, typically—by going after the Criminal Code. It is a way for Parliament to make a judgment call about a certain practice in Canadian society. In this case, it is the captivity of cetaceans.

I share the same concern that a lot of my constituents have and that a lot of members of Parliament in this chamber have expressed over the necessary protection of whales, dolphins and other aquatic animals, which is that nobody wants to see them suffer. The member for Sherbrooke brought up an example of what happens in the Russian Federation. Of course, there are examples all over the world of abhorrent animal husbandry and captivity practices that most of us would say are brutal and should not be happening. Unfortunately, they do, because people use animals for entertainment purposes and to generate an income.

With respect to some of the historical aspects, as I think another member mentioned, there have been no live captures since 1992, although it is true that beluga whales and bottlenose dolphins have been imported from foreign sources.

It has been reported in various CBC articles and other media that parts of this bill seem to be veering into areas of provincial jurisdiction over animal welfare laws. Ontario has already banned the captivity and breeding in captivity of orcas, which is one of the concerns I had with the bill going the route of amending the Criminal Code. Perhaps it is more of a process issue that I have.

Going back to the previous debate we had earlier today on Bill C-55, with respect to the intent of a bill like this one, Bill S-203, I do not think many members disagree with the principle of the matter; rather, it is the execution we have concerns with.

There are a few scientists I am going to quote, some of whom provided testimony at committees and some who of whom provided feedback through correspondence that the member for Cariboo—Prince George and I have received.

I want to mention that this is a very unusual bill, because it has received review at over 17 committee meetings in an eight-month period. It was tabled way back in 2015 and has been on the public record for quite a long time. It has been debated for quite a long time. It had what I would say was a difficult process through that other place, the Senate chamber, with several senators expressing deep concern over the technical aspects of the bill in its interaction between provincial laws and federal jurisdiction over the Criminal Code. That area is where I am going to express some of my concerns as well.

The provinces are responsible for passing animal welfare laws. In this chamber we have pronounced ourselves on matters affecting what I would also think are areas of at least partial provincial jurisdiction, as in the bestiality bill the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice mentioned earlier. I do not think there is anything wrong in going the route of the Criminal Code, but in this case in

particular the member for North Okanagan—Shuswap mentioned that it could potentially criminalize individuals that the law did not intend to criminalize, such as the booking of travel vacations or some service provision in tourism.

• (1425)

I do not think that was the intent of the law. However, I have seen before, as I mentioned in the House on Bill C-55, that with regulations passed by officials, written by officials and confirmed through the gazetting process that the Government of Canada has, the intention is typically lost. Nice words are shared by officials about the intent of the bill when the members of Parliament and senators express their will by passing a piece of legislation, but then the actual execution is not there.

Sometimes this debate among officials lasts well over a decade, two or three decades of quibbling over exactly what the law permits one to do and to whom it can apply. I think the concerns expressed by the member for North Okanagan—Shuswap on our side are that the lens with which the Criminal Code will be applied may be broadened by officials in the departments at a later point, far beyond the lifespan of any member here, or at least our elected lifespan. I wish all members good health.

I think there is a concern there about that mission creep, about going after individuals or applying the law to individuals whom we had not intended it to be upon. That is why many amendments were moved at committee by the opposition side to try to improve and clarify this particular piece of legislation, of course not to obstruct it. Attempting to amend a piece of legislation is never about obstruction. It is about an improvement to the bill, especially when the intent is there. The technical aspect, the delivery of the bill and its execution, is perhaps lacking.

I want to mention the scientists. The member for Cariboo—Prince George previously made comments about an email from Dr. Laura Graham, a professor at the University of Guelph. I am going to read the quote, and then perhaps I can express some of my thoughts on the scientists' view on the impact that this bill would have.

The member for Cariboo—Prince George said:

Her speciality is endocrinology and reproductive physiology of wildlife species, including looking at factors that can impact the welfare of wildlife species managed by humans and using science to solve some of the challenges wildlife managers face as they work toward optimizing the welfare of animals in their care.

Thereafter, that information can be used in the general practices of the Crown when it is managing wildlife populations on behalf of Canadians. I am going to read a direct quote from the correspondence that the member for Cariboo—Prince George read, so that I can remind the chamber of what Dr. Laura Graham said:

As an expert in endangered species physiology I can tell you that this bill is short-sighted and will do irreparable harm to critical research on the marine mammals listed under SARA, including the Salish Orca. Over 90% of what we know about marine mammal biology is based on research on individuals under human care. And we need these captive animals to develop research techniques that can be applied to free-ranging animals.

The discussion goes on from there. The quotations given by this particular specialist, I think, are really important to keep in mind.

Private Members' Business

Many members have said that the economic operations of the aquariums, and those operations that save marine mammals and then perhaps keep them temporarily in captivity so that they can nurse them back to health, typically have some research component. It is never a purely economic operation.

Again, I could be wrong in the case of Marineland, which seems to be the best example being used. I am a member from Calgary, after all, so I do not head out to Toronto too often. However, on this particular piece of legislation, I think the intent is there but the execution is lacking. As I read from the scientist, I think there will be harm done on the research side of things that we were not able to fix at committee. In eight months and 17 committee meetings, we were not able to reach that mechanical fixing of the bill.

That is why I will be voting against this piece of legislation, just as I have been telling my constituents that I would. I implore all members to look at that fact and to vote against this particular law.

● (1430)

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The time provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

[*English*]

It being 2:30 p.m., the House stands adjourned until Monday at 11 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

I wish all mothers a very happy Mother's Day this weekend. Members, do not forget to spoil your wives.

(The House adjourned at 2:30 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Friday, May 10, 2019

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Oceans Act

Ms. Murray (for the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard)	27657
Motion	27657
Mr. Casey (Charlottetown)	27657
Ms. Gladu	27659
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	27660
Mr. Bittle	27660
Mr. Nantel	27660
Mr. Arnold	27660
Mr. Arnold	27661

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Flooding in the Outaouais

Mr. Amos	27664
----------------	-------

Bobcaygeon Awards of Excellence

Mr. Schmale	27664
-------------------	-------

Mathieu Froment-Savoie

Mr. Fergus	27664
------------------	-------

Seniors' Concerns

Ms. Benson	27664
------------------	-------

Flooding in Ottawa West—Nepean

Ms. Vandenberg	27664
----------------------	-------

National Nursing Week

Ms. Gladu	27665
-----------------	-------

The Environment

Mr. Long	27665
----------------	-------

Prince Edward Island

Mr. Casey (Charlottetown)	27665
---------------------------------	-------

Government Policies

Mr. Davidson	27665
--------------------	-------

Vaudreuil—Soulanges

Mr. Schiefke	27665
--------------------	-------

First Responders

Mr. Samson	27666
------------------	-------

Natural Resources

Mrs. Kusie	27666
------------------	-------

Williams Syndrome Awareness Month

Ms. Damoff	27666
------------------	-------

Quebec Diabetes Association

Mr. Dusseault	27666
---------------------	-------

Government Policies

Mr. Kelly	27667
-----------------	-------

Speech and Hearing Month

Mr. Serré	27667
-----------------	-------

ORAL QUESTIONS

Justice

Mr. O'Toole	27667
Mr. Lametti	27667
Mr. O'Toole	27667
Mr. Lametti	27667
Mr. O'Toole	27667
Mr. Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)	27668
Mr. Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)	27668
Mr. Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)	27668
Mr. Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)	27668
Mr. Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)	27668

The Environment

Ms. Ashton	27668
Ms. McKenna	27668
Ms. Ashton	27668
Ms. McKenna	27669

Natural Resources

Mr. Dusseault	27669
Mr. Lefebvre	27669
Mr. Dusseault	27669
Ms. McKenna	27669

Justice

Mr. Nicholson	27669
Mr. Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)	27669
Mr. Shields	27669
Mr. Lametti	27669
Mr. Martel	27669
Mr. Lametti	27670
Mr. Martel	27670
Mr. Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)	27670
Ms. Gladu	27670
Mr. Vaughan	27670
Mr. Motz	27670
Mr. Lametti	27670

Seniors

Ms. Benson	27670
Mr. Vaughan	27670

Infrastructure

Mr. Nantel	27671
Mr. Lightbound	27671

Democratic Reform

Mrs. Kusie	27671
Mr. Virani	27671
Mr. Nater	27671
Mr. Virani	27671

Veterans Affairs

Mr. Lloyd	27671
Mr. MacAulay	27671
Mr. Barrett	27672

Mr. MacAulay	27672
Automotive Industry	
Ms. Hardcastle	27672
Mr. Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia) ..	27672
Mr. Masse (Windsor West)	27672
Mr. Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia) ..	27672
Employment	
Mr. Arya	27672
Mr. Cuzner	27673
Natural Resources	
Mr. Liepert	27673
Mr. Lefebvre	27673
Mr. Schmale	27673
Mr. Lefebvre	27673
Mr. Barlow	27673
Mr. Lefebvre	27673
Mrs. Stubbs	27673
Mr. Lefebvre	27673
Rural Economic Development	
Ms. Brosseau	27674
Mr. Serré	27674
Foreign Affairs	
Ms. Laverdière	27674
Ms. Goldsmith-Jones	27674
Mr. Chong	27674
Ms. Goldsmith-Jones	27674
International Trade	
Mr. Généreux	27674
Ms. Goldsmith-Jones	27674
Justice	
Ms. Rempel	27675
Mr. Lametti	27675
Social Development	
Mr. Fisher	27675
Mr. Vaughan	27675
Natural Resources	
Mrs. McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	27675
Mr. Lefebvre	27675
Science and Technology	
Ms. Yip	27675
Ms. Duncan (Etobicoke North)	27676
Fisheries and Oceans	
Mr. Arnold	27676
Mr. Casey (Charlottetown)	27676
International Trade	
Mr. Thériault	27676
Mr. Poissant	27676
Mr. Thériault	27676
Mr. Poissant	27676
Public Services and Procurement	
Mr. Thériault	27676
Ms. Qualtrough	27676

Indigenous Affairs	
Mr. Tootoo	27677
Mr. Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs)	27677

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Interparliamentary Delegations	
Mr. Easter	27677
Petitions	
Equalization	
Ms. Rempel	27677
Animal Welfare	
Mrs. Kusie	27677
Religious Freedom	
Mr. Shipley	27677
Privacy and Data Protection	
Mr. Genuis	27677
Carbon Pricing	
Mr. Genuis	27677
Canada Summer Jobs Initiative	
Mr. Genuis	27678
Human Organ Trafficking	
Mr. Genuis	27678
Falun Gong	
Mr. Genuis	27678
Human Organ Trafficking	
Mr. Kmiec	27678
Mr. Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)	27678
Mr. Arnold	27678
Questions on the Order Paper	
Ms. Chagger	27678

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Oceans Act	
Motion	27678
Mr. Arnold	27678
Mr. Amos	27681
Mr. Dusseault	27681
Mr. Kmiec	27682
Mr. Dusseault	27682
Mr. Kmiec	27685
Bill C-55—Notice of Time Allocation	
Ms. Chagger	27687
Business of the House	
Ms. Chagger	27687

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Ending the Captivity of Whales and Dolphins Act	
Bill S-203. Report stage	27687
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	27688
Bill S-203. Motion for concurrence	27688
(Motion agreed to)	27688
Third reading	27688
Mr. Virani	27688
Mr. Bittle	27689
Mr. Nicholson	27689

Mr. Virani 27689
Mr. Arnold 27691
Mr. Dusseault 27692

Mr. Whalen 27693
Mr. Kmiec 27694

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