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Monday, May 13, 2019

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, May 13, 2019

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayer

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1105)

[*Translation*]

CITIZENSHIP ACT

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ) moved that Bill C-421, An Act to amend the Citizenship Act (adequate knowledge of French in Quebec), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I introduced a very simple bill with a clear objective, and that is to enable newcomers who want to become citizens and reside in Quebec to integrate into their host society.

In order to integrate, newcomers must be able to communicate with members of their host society. In Quebec, the common language is French. The purpose of the Charter of the French Language is to make French the official and common language of Quebec.

As a result, newcomers must learn French in order to integrate into Quebec society. This matter is in keeping with the commitments of the current Quebec government and enjoys a broad consensus in Quebec. According to a recent survey, 73% of Quebecers believe that a basic knowledge of French should be mandatory in order to live in Quebec and 84% believe that newcomers should be required to take French classes.

In 2017, the Auditor General released a report in which she concluded that efforts to encourage immigrants to learn and use French had failed. Under Canadian law, knowledge of one official language, either English or French, is required for citizenship. The Bloc Québécois introduced Bill C-421 to make knowledge of French mandatory in Quebec.

That is no more coercive than what is already in place: knowledge of one of the two official languages is mandatory for obtaining Canadian citizenship. Many members of the Council of Europe require knowledge of the adopted homeland's language either as a condition of entry, to obtain permanent residence or to become a naturalized citizen, yet the federal Liberals seem to find the idea unacceptable and inconceivable.

When Bill C-421 was presented to the subcommittee on private members' business, the members declared that it was unconstitutional and therefore non-votable. We appealed the decision, but because they have a majority, they refused to budge even though the law clerk and several members of other parties disagreed.

An extremely rare secret vote was held to save Canadian parliamentarians the trouble of publicly stating their position on this issue of importance to Quebecers. Democracy was hijacked, and the people need to know.

The Premier of Quebec said:

We would want newcomers to pass a French test before getting their permanent resident status or citizenship. That is what the Bloc wanted. I think it is unfortunate that the debate is not being allowed to move forward with legislation.

Bill C-421 will not be voted on, but we have not been given much time to present it, so I will focus on the substance of the debate, rather than on the constitutionality of the bill.

As I alluded to earlier, Quebec's blueprint for linguistic development, as defined by the Charter of the French Language, also known as Bill 101, is meant to establish French as the official and common language of Quebec. This approach is based on collective territorial rights. As the common public language, French in Quebec should not only be the language used by francophones when speaking to one another, it should also be the language used in inter-linguistic communications, the language spoken between people with different mother tongues.

Making French the common language is essential for integrating newcomers into Quebec society and ensuring the future of French in Quebec and in North America.

When the language of the majority is the official language and the common public language, newcomers naturally tend to learn and use that language in order to participate fully in their host society. That is what happens in many western countries.

Research on language development models around the world shows that this approach is the only one that is able to prevent the assimilation of minority languages in countries with several national languages. The only countries that have multiple national languages and no assimilation are those that use language management models based on the principle of collective territorial rights, like Belgium or Switzerland.

For instance, in Flanders, the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium, the only official language, the language in which public services are provided from kindergarten to university, is Dutch. For newcomers, learning Dutch is compulsory.

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The same thing goes for French in Wallonia, and people there can still learn any number of second languages. The fact that French is the common language in Quebec seems to be unacceptable or even unthinkable to varying degrees for all the national parties. We saw how the member for Honoré-Mercier completely overreacted. For him, making knowledge of French a requirement for citizenship is the same as segregating people based on colour.

The Liberal member for Laurentides—Labelle, a staunch defender of “hello, bonjour”, and the Liberal member for Rivière-des-Mille-Îles gave some examples of people in Quebec who do not speak French, adding that it would have been unacceptable for those people to be forced to move to Ontario for not passing the French test. They do not seem to agree that learning and using French could be considered a tool for integrating into Quebec society.

A Conservative member of the Standing Committee on Official Languages said that if a condition were created requiring people to speak basic French, the anglophone minority community in Quebec would have a much harder time surviving within our province.

The Canadian model, defined by the Official Languages Act, is based on fundamental principles that differ from the Quebec model and its approaches that recognize territorial collective rights. For one thing, the Official Languages Act excludes Quebecers as an integral part of Canada's francophone minority. The act governs official language minorities designated by province. In that sense, Quebec anglophones are considered a minority just as much as francophone and Acadian communities, when in fact, they are part Canada's anglophone majority, as was even confirmed by the UN Human Rights Committee.

The best example is that the federal government and the predominantly English speaking provinces have no problem weakening Quebec's legislation, including by imposing a Constitution in 1982 against the will of the Government of Quebec, a Constitution under which the Charter of the French Language was weakened in every key area of application. As a result of the principle of linguistic minorities per province, Quebec's anglophones, who already anglicize five times the number of new citizens than their demographic weight, receive steady support to promote more services in English not just for anglophones, but for everyone, including allophones and francophones.

The official languages program allocates more than \$75 million a year in support of anglophone communities in Quebec, including lobby groups such as the Quebec Community Groups Network, alias Alliance Québec, which successfully led a legal battle to restore institutional bilingualism. The other major founding principle of Canada's official languages legislation is a bilingualism policy for federal institutions based on the linguistic rights of individuals across Canada.

As soon as Bill C-421 was introduced, former official languages commissioner Graham Fraser stepped in. In his opinion, requiring adequate knowledge of French would contravene the Official Languages Act, as it would supposedly prevent individuals from communicating with the government in the language of their choice. Even though some members openly stated that the bill was votable, no member in the House openly supported the bill.

Whether the bill is constitutional or not, the crux of the problem is that most of the federalist members in this place do not accept that French is the common language in Quebec, the language of convergence, the language of interlinguistic communication. This implies that people can communicate with the government in the language of their choice and that English and French have equal status and privileges with respect to their use in the institutions of Parliament and the Government of Canada. That is the foundation of the Official Languages Act. French cannot be the common language, the official language, the language of convergence in Quebec, but there must be two common languages. Some researchers, for example Jacques Leclerc and Marc Termote, have noted that equal rights granted to unequal groups inevitably lead to inequitable results.

• (1110)

In some way, it is as if there were no laws to protect workers or the environment. It would leave it up to market forces to decide.

Marc Termote said:

Most countries abide by what is known in linguistics as the “law of the land” whereby for every given territory, only one language is used in the public sphere....

However, in some Anglo-Saxon countries, such as Canada and therefore Quebec, individual rights prevail over societal rights in many instances...individual freedom to choose does not mean that the individual's choice will not be influenced by external factors. For Quebec, being the last majority French-speaking society in North America and a tiny minority “surrounded” by 300 million English speakers is certainly not a minor factor. Additionally, free choice paves the way for a fair balance of power.

As Lacordaire said, “Between the strong and the weak, between the rich and the poor, [we could say ‘between the English-speaking majority and the minority’] it is freedom which oppresses and the law which sets free”.

This explains why across just about all of Canada, outside Quebec, nearly all language transfers for allophones happen in English. If you go to Toronto or Ottawa, you quickly see that it is difficult to function without speaking English.

However, in Quebec, the majority of newcomers settle in Montreal, where all services are accessible in English at all levels of government. Since English is the majority language in Canada and even more so in North America, there is a natural tendency to use English.

In addition, access to the official languages in federal institutions is not equal. By design, services are provided in French where numbers warrant. As we saw once again in the report from the Commissioner of Official Languages, even when the numbers warrant, services are not always offered in French.

Fifty years ago, before the Official Languages Act, francophone and Acadian communities had suffered through assimilation policies in all of the provinces that are now primarily anglophone. For them, bilingualism was a huge step forward in accessing the public services in French that were severely lacking after being prohibited for years.

The “where numbers warrant” principle means that, if the number of French speakers in a region decreases, fewer services are offered. In some way, it is as if the government were to reduce EI benefits or job creation measures in an area that is prone to unemployment. This way of doing things officially misrepresents Canada’s language situation.

• (1115)

Francophones are therefore strongly encouraged to increase their numbers if they want even basic services in French. However, it would be much more logical to change the “where numbers warrant” criterion rather than misrepresenting the language situation, as the government has been doing for the 50 years that the Official Languages Act has been in force.

In the beginning, intergenerational language transfers were measured using mother tongue as an indicator. When the decline in mother tongue became too pronounced, the indicator was changed to language used at home and then to first official language spoken. Today, the government is coming up with new indicators to inflate the number of francophones and justifying that action by saying that it is going to offer more French services to official language minorities. That does not make any sense.

A study on language planning around the world showed that an approach based on institutional bilingualism and portable individual rights is unable to counter the assimilation of minority languages. That has been proven over the 50 years that the Official Languages Act has been in force. During that time, the assimilation of francophones has increased with every census.

In short, the Canadian language planning model runs counter to Quebec’s model. Most MPs and all of the parties in Parliament support the Canadian model rather than the Quebec model.

As Jacques Leclerc, an expert who worked on the language planning study, said:

As soon as the demands of the francophone province of Quebec offend the sensibilities of the anglophone majority, they are denied. Discussions then become pointless and come to a standstill.... Under the current regime, Quebec is always democratically penalized and cannot impose anything on the majority across Canada.

• (1120)

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-421, which seeks to amend the Citizenship Act to require that residents of Quebec between the ages of 14 and 64 have an adequate knowledge of French in order to obtain citizenship.

The bill also proposes that these same citizenship applicants be required to prove their knowledge by passing a French test.

The government places tremendous value on Canada’s linguistic duality, and we oppose this bill for several reasons. However, it is worth pointing out that we do provide support to encourage francophone immigration across Canada.

The Government of Canada welcomes newcomers by providing a range of services, from pre-arrival information to supports within the community, settlement services, language training and skills development.

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This investment is paying off. Given that language training is the settlement service that is most often requested, it is obvious that Canada’s linguistic duality must remain an important factor, for francophones and anglophones alike, in every region of the country.

Over the past few months, the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship has met with people who are dedicated to helping French-speaking newcomers settle and integrate into francophone communities outside Quebec.

The Government of Canada knows that immigration has a positive impact on Canadian society and our economy. We also strongly believe that newcomers to Canada contribute to the vitality of Canadian communities, including minority francophone communities outside Quebec. That is why we are taking numerous measures to increase francophone immigration outside Quebec, support the integration and retention of French-speaking newcomers, and build capacity in francophone communities.

The government has emphasized this support as part of our new five-year action plan for official languages, and this priority is already having an impact on immigration in Canada. For example, we are seeing positive results from the changes made to the express entry system in 2017, when we started awarding additional points for strong French language skills.

As of November 2018, 4.5% of express entry invitations to apply were issued to French-speaking candidates, compared to 2.9% in 2017. Promising trends like these support our goal of increasing the proportion of French-speaking immigrants outside Quebec to 4.4% by 2023. In short, we are on the right track.

We are collaborating with communities to ensure our approach is designed by and for francophones. That approach will guide the development of policies and initiatives related to the promotion and delivery of settlement services.

Stakeholders want to support refugees, so we are taking steps to develop an action plan that will strengthen our approach to resettling and integrating refugees.

We are also consolidating our francophone integration pathway, as announced in the action plan for official languages. Thanks to an additional \$40 million over the next five years, the francophone integration pathway will help French-speaking newcomers connect to francophone communities, settle in and integrate.

I would like to share more details about certain aspects of the francophone integration pathway that the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship announced in November during National Francophone Immigration Week.

First, we are investing up to \$11 million over five years in pre-arrival settlement services for French-speaking newcomers. La Cité collégiale is leading the initiative in collaboration with four regional Canadian partners.

• (1125)

They help connect newcomers and francophone service providers across the country.

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Furthermore, we have addressed the need for newcomer services in French at Lester B. Pearson International Airport in Toronto. As of this spring, the Centre francophone de Toronto has been providing services to French-speaking newcomers who arrive at the airport.

In November 2018, we launched an expression of interest process seeking an organization to deliver official language training for French-speaking immigrants and allophone newcomers who have declared French as their official language of preference.

Furthermore, the Centre international d'études pédagogiques has been designated as a second French-language tester for economic immigrants, which will make the tests more accessible to French-speaking immigrants and applicants.

Lastly, with the support of the Réseaux en immigration francophone, the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne and the Comité atlantique sur l'immigration francophone, we have launched the welcoming francophone communities initiative. This initiative aims to find and create spaces where French-speaking newcomers will feel welcome.

The Government of Canada is committed to supporting the development of francophone minority communities and increasing the proportion of French-speaking permanent residents outside Quebec.

The initiatives I mentioned are designed to meet these objectives.

To do so, we will continue to work with various stakeholders to support linguistic duality in Canada and to support dynamic francophone communities across the country. This will help French-speaking newcomers settle in Canada and help them integrate into francophone communities outside Quebec. Overall, these measures will help French-speaking newcomers build a new life in Canada and will reflect this government's support for linguistic duality in Canada.

Given the fundamental importance of linguistic duality across Canada, the government cannot support a bill that could jeopardize a permanent resident's ability to request citizenship in the official language of his or her choice.

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is not without a certain bitterness that I join the debate on this bill.

Of course, we can tout the merits of Canada's two official languages. I rise in the House with all due respect for francophone minority communities outside Quebec and anglophone minority communities in Quebec. There is no denying, however, that, over the past few years, there has been an effort to relegate the sovereignty issue to the dustbin of history and to downplay the importance of acknowledging Quebecers' quiet nationalism, which concerns me greatly. I have observed firsthand that the French language is at the heart of culture.

Last week, we debated the bill on indigenous languages. We heard from several people who stated just how important indigenous languages are to the indigenous identity and culture, and how it is very important to preserve them. The situation in Quebec is obviously not the same because Quebecers have had the opportunity to take strong positions and to implement measures

such as Bill 101. It was highly controversial at the time but it ultimately played an important, structural role in Quebec culture, and is a critical part of French's resilience in Quebec.

I am talking about our national question being turned into a bit of folklore, because, I would remind hon. members, Quebec is a distinct nation. I immediately think of simple things like the fact that our parliament is not called a legislature, but a national assembly, like in France, to reflect the fact that we adhere to the Civil Code instead of common law. We have a republican-like way of thinking, a way of seeing society that is more reflective of France, but includes a healthy mix of our status as Canadians and North Americans in the Westminster system.

My general impression when it comes to defending the interests of Quebec is that there are not too many Quebec MPs who want to talk about quiet nationalism, an expression that I quite liked and adopted. It was coined by Alain Dubuc, and economics columnist at La Presse. This is a nod to the Quiet Revolution and a characterization of our nationalism. In Quebec today, in 2019, this is a consensual nationalism, in the vast majority of cases.

Some hon. members represent largely anglophone communities where people are not inclined to be open to this idea. I forgive those members for not rising often enough to stand up for the quiet nationalism we are seeing in Quebec. As for the other MPs, I honestly have to say that I am very frustrated. For four years now, I have been front and centre at all times. My party, the NDP, gives me room to talk about how vital culture is to our television and popular music industries. Quebec's cultural industries are thriving. Every time we talk about a Canadian filmmaker doing well internationally we are proud of that, but often that filmmaker is from Quebec. We are so proud we might as well be talking about an Olympic champion. However, this does not come from nothing.

In the Olympics, there are programs such as own the podium. In Quebec and Canada, Quebec culture was allowed to thrive in television, film and music. How did we do that? By enforcing regulations; not letting ourselves be colonized and stepped on like doormats; and telling industry stakeholders interested in developing international culture that we had a weakness and that we needed to be a part of the story. If there is foreign content, there will have to be local content. This goes for all Canadian content, and everyone knows it, but it takes on a whole new meaning in Quebec. Both Canadian and Quebec content are hugely successful and have exceptional ratings, and ultimately, they also have a positive impact on society.

I will stop there to return to the bill introduced by my colleague from La Pointe-de-l'Île.

•(1130)

In Quebec, protecting culture means ensuring that the stories we tell reflect peoples' lives. I often give the example of the show *Fugueuse*, which had great ratings and a profound social impact. Every day after an episode would air, social workers and screenwriters would come to Longueuil station to talk about child prostitution, which is a blight, especially in my constituency. The show is having an impact.

In Quebec, we have invested in this particular way of telling our stories and expressing our love to one another, of greeting the world and welcoming new communities that come here. Last year, at a televised gala, we learned that *Fugueuse* helped 20 or so young people get out of prostitution after speaking to their parents. How marvellous is that?

Some people might say they are sick of hearing about the bloody Quebec culture and would rather watch Netflix anyway because the content is more relatable and much better. Is it though? I myself obsessively watched *13 Reasons Why*, a series about teen suicide, before my daughters watched it, because I wanted to make sure it was appropriate for them. Then I learned that, according to American studies, youth suicide rates rose by 27% after the first few episodes were released. That is a huge increase.

The reason I bring this up is that we need to defend the Quebec nation in a constructive way. That is why we in the NDP strongly objected when this bill was designated as non-votable. Incidentally, I tip my hat to the member for Hamilton Centre, who fought to convince all his colleagues to vote to debate the bill. This bill represents an idea that could be immensely improved by the work of all the legislators in the House. I do not want to hear anyone telling me this bill is silly. If there is one bill that was sloppily cobbled together without constructive input from all members of Parliament, it is the omnibus bill that contained a certain little provision about SNC-Lavalin. We know all about the disastrous consequences for that company, which is Quebec's leading engineering firm, and above all for my dear Liberal colleagues, who really messed up.

The NDP believes this is an important issue because we are acutely conscious of the significant contributions that these new cultures make. They are going to help us build a stronger Quebec. Naturally, teaching French to newcomers is the central issue. We actually adopted a resolution on this topic at the last NDP convention in Trois-Rivières: Whereas immigration is essential to address the labour shortage, which is hurting the economy; whereas the Conservative and now the Liberal governments did nothing to support francophone immigration and make French language classes more accessible—God knows that is true; and whereas francophone immigration is indispensable for ensuring the future of Quebec and francophone communities across Canada outside Quebec; be it resolved that an NDP government will commit to providing adequate funding to increase the required percentage of French-speaking immigrants and will adapt existing immigration programs to Quebec's unique economic, social and labour needs.

That is why the Quebec caucus would surely have voted in favour of this bill at second reading so that it could be sent to committee. We are not getting anywhere by cutting ourselves off and talking past one another. It is shameful and disrespectful for any Quebec MP

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to ignore the vulnerability and value of Quebecers' quiet nationalism and to fail to proudly defend Quebec's distinct identity.

In closing, we are very disappointed that we are not able to vote on this bill. This really is a dialogue of the deaf. It seems like members just want to put a lid on this issue and not talk about it. I would urge my dear friends to wake up. There is a quiet nationalism in Quebec, and it is high time we helped it along rather than stand in its way.

•(1135)

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my speech will focus on three important things: the situation of French in Quebec, the important role French plays in social cohesion, and parliamentary democracy as it applied to Bill C-421.

What was the most important news about the language issue in Quebec in recent years? It was the record drop in the demographic weight of French speakers and the unprecedented rise in the demographic weight of English speakers.

English is not threatened in Quebec; French is. We are not the ones saying that. It is Statistics Canada, and it cannot be said that Statistics Canada is an organization that supports Quebec nationalism.

Here is what is being said:

The Language Projections for Canada, 2011 to 2036...indicate that, if the demographic conditions observed since 2011 continue, the balance between French and English in Quebec will continue to quickly tip in favour of the latter. According to those same projections, between 2011 and 2036, the weight of French-home-language speakers is expected to drop by approximately seven percentage points, while that of English-home-language speakers is expected to rise by two percentage points.

On the 40th anniversary of Bill 101, Guy Rocher, a sociologist, professor and renowned speaker, quoted some figures from Statistics Canada, as well. These figures relate to the census, which showed that French is declining in Quebec, as a mother tongue, language of work and language spoken at home. This has become a language crisis. We cannot keep turning a blind eye, because we now have figures showing how bad it is. Once again, I remind members that Statistics Canada as an organization is not very supportive of Quebec nationalism or independence.

The situation is critical. Play time is over and now is the time to act. French is under threat in Quebec. I am not fearmongering here. I am simply stating the facts, and everything that can be done to protect the French language must be done. This is what my colleague's bill was designed to do.

Here is another quote from Statistics Canada that demonstrates how important the French language is to social cohesion:

The ability of immigrants to speak one of the official languages is considered an important condition for their full participation in Canadian society.

That is what Statistics Canada says about Canada, and rather emphatically at that. It seems to me that what is good for the goose should be good for the gander. French in Quebec should also get special consideration.

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The government is trying to brainwash us into believing that the battle for French is won and that we no longer need to worry our pretty little heads about it. The fact remains, though, that mastering French is less beneficial to immigrants than mastering English. There are social reasons for all that, of course. There are unilingual English brand names and the Internet. Information and communications technology has exploded in recent decades, and with it the use of English at the expense of every other language in the world.

The Government of Quebec also has its own unique problems, such as the language of administration, which is often English; the sign law, which is often disregarded; and challenges related to officially bilingual municipalities. Those are all consequences of the many attacks on Bill 101, our language charter.

Knowledge of French is fundamental to successful integration and access to employment. Knowledge of French is fundamental to strong social cohesion.

Marina Doucerain, a researcher in the area of immigration psychology, has done studies on this. She has indicated that all studies of immigrants in the greater Montreal area that she has been involved in have been unequivocal. It is very clear that the majority of participants, whether they come from the Maghreb region, Russia or elsewhere, want to make Quebecois friends and integrate into the majority culture, which means they must learn French. However, the francization and cultural integration of immigrants remain problematic.

Let us now look at what happened here, in the House of Commons, with my colleague's bill. The exceptional procedure applied to the bill introduced by my colleague from La Pointe-de-l'Île prevents the bill from even being voted on in a recorded division. This is basically just another attempt to relegate the Quebec nation to a minority status just like every other ethnic minority in Canada.

• (1140)

Canadians, who are still 100% behind Pierre Trudeau's charter, will not stop until there is linguistic free trade from coast to coast.

In closing, what we want is for French, the common language of Quebec, to have the chance to counterbalance English, the common language of Canada, the United States, and globalization because our distinctness is important to us.

I will take a few moments to read a motion that was moved at the end of November 1995 by Mr. Jean Chrétien, who was prime minister at the time.

The motion moved:

That

Whereas the People of Quebec have expressed the desire for recognition of Quebec's distinct society;

- (1) the House recognize that Quebec is a distinct society within Canada;
- (2) the House recognize that Quebec's distinct society includes its French-speaking majority, unique culture and civil law tradition;
- (3) the House undertake to be guided by this reality;
- (4) the House encourage all components of the legislative and executive branches of government to take note of this recognition and be guided in their conduct accordingly.

In his argument, the former prime minister said:

The purpose of the motion we are debating today is to have the elected representatives of Canada recognize that Quebec is a distinct society within Canada. As a Quebecker and a francophone [we know that Mr. Chrétien is a Quebecker and a francophone, of course], I understand and share the desire of my fellow Quebeckers to have our difference recognized.

Today I call on Canadians who demonstrated their attachment to Quebec during the referendum campaign to support our government's initiative to recognize Quebec explicitly as a distinct society.

This was adopted on December 11, 1995. Is the quiet nationalism mentioned by the member from Longueuil—Saint-Hubert possible in this country? It would seem it is not. This motion should have been applied to Bill C-421, but it was not.

Federalists are upset by our desire to have our own nation, a nation that proclaims loud and clear our pride in speaking French, and to give it the tools needed to keep our language alive. It also bothers them that we want to base our identity on the common values that bring us together and unite us. "The moment Quebec stands up for itself, federalists become outraged." These words were spoken by my colleague, the member for La Pointe-de-l'Île. He said them in 2015, and we fully endorse them.

• (1145)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have some thoughts on this bill's subject matter. I come from the province of Manitoba, where the French language is actually loved and cherished, and it is in fact expanding. When making reference to immigrants, we should think of those hard-working immigrants who truly care about contributing to our society. Often, we will find that their children are going to immersion schools. A number of people speak French, which is a beautiful language and one I wish I could speak. When people hear my surname, most assume that I can speak French. Unfortunately, we did not have the same sort of schooling back then that we have today in the province of Manitoba.

There has been a genuine growth of a beautiful language, a language that should be treated as equal to English, with a high sense of pride. Often, when I go to many events in my constituency, I am amazed when I run into someone of, let us say, Filipino, Punjabi or Indo-Canadian heritage who can speak not only Punjabi or Tagalog, but also English and French. More and more we see what I believe is a very healthy French community in Manitoba. When one really looks at it, one will find that it is a growing community.

I believe that in the province of Quebec, where French is spoken more than English, it will continue to be that way. I am not naive. I understand that there are pressures outside of the province of Quebec with respect to languages, but I do believe that the language itself is something that will continue to be exceptionally well spoken outside of the province of Quebec, where it continues to grow and prosper. Within the province, there are very strong personalities who will ensure that Quebec continues to lead the country and demonstrate to other countries around the world where French is spoken or continues to expand that Canada can be a role model. We can look at the very character and the vibrant society of the province of Quebec and what it has been able to contribute in the past, and it will continue as a community leading on the francophone file.

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I do not think that it is all bad news. I was listening to the members opposite, who recognized French for the beautiful language that it is. It will always be an official language of Canada and respected in all regions of our country. As I protect the minority rights of francophones in the province of Quebec, I also encourage others to recognize that so many good things are happening outside the province of Quebec in ensuring that the French language is growing and becoming a larger part of Canadian society. I see that as a good thing.

With respect to citizenship issues, the only thing I would say is that as a government we have done exceptionally well in speeding up the immigration process. It takes nowhere as long today to acquire citizenship, because of the work of the current Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship. I see that as a positive thing. We have a minister who really looks at the ways in which we can use immigration as an effective tool to enhance and complement our francophone communities, whether working with Quebec or with other provinces, to see a minority language continue to grow and prosper. I just say that for what it is worth.

• (1150)

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. member for Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel has five minutes remaining before the hon. member who moved the motion can close the debate.

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we all want to rise to defend the French fact in Quebec. We all want to propose solutions to ensure that this beautiful language remains a living language.

Contrary to what the previous speaker said, the use of French is declining in Quebec. Our language is at risk. We are not saying that immigrants are bad people. However, the conditions for welcoming them do not currently include the obligation to learn French. That is what my colleague's bill is proposing.

Naturally, we agree with protecting francophone minorities outside Quebec, and the government should take action on many fronts in that regard. However when we compare this to what is provided to the anglophone minority in Quebec, we are completely off course.

I did a little experiment. I went to Crescent Street in Montreal. I went into six restaurants and I was first greeted in English at each one. When I spoke French, they spoke to me in French. English is far from being at risk in Quebec.

There are two major hospitals in Quebec, each with a \$2-billion price tag. One is French and the other is English. In Montreal, there are more English than French movie theatres, and there are more English publications than French ones.

We polled immigrants, who make up 50% of Montreal's population. According to the poll, most believe that francophones only make up 25% of Quebec's population. They are not aware of the French reality. That is why we must establish mandatory measures to ensure they learn French, integrate into the francophone majority and ensure the survival of French in Quebec.

Bill C-421 does that. It is a very moderate bill. It would inevitably be accepted by immigrants if they knew before arriving in Quebec that they had to comply.

My colleague, who also wants to address this bill, will speak for the two minutes remaining.

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I do not want to repeat what my Bloc Québécois colleagues have already said, but in light of what has been said, I would like to look at the subject from another angle, with concrete examples.

I would remind members that the comments made by my colleague from Winnipeg North did not exactly respond to what we were saying. Perhaps some of what we said was misunderstood, misinterpreted or misconstrued, for when we talk about the minority, as my colleague from Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel said, Quebec is already a minority within North America. That is what my colleague from La Pointe-de-l'Île noted earlier. The threat to the French language is concrete and real.

I said I would give the House a concrete example. I am the member for Manicouagan. The riding of Manicouagan is located in eastern Quebec, bordering Newfoundland and Labrador and the Maritimes. There are, of course, immigrants in my region, although sometimes people think that immigrants would not want to settle on the North Shore, an administrative region of 350,000 kilometres that is often thought to have nothing but spruce trees, snow and whales. People do live there. People have settled in Sept-Îles, Havre-Saint-Pierre, Baie-Comeau and Haute-Côte-Nord, for example. They are settling in lots of places. These immigrants do not speak either French or English as their primary language, but they choose to settle there and learn the language. I see them as success stories. These people are welcomed by the community, which is happy to teach them French, the language they need to know in order to live in those regions, where English is nearly non-existent. Anglophones make up only about 1% of the population, with the exception of the lower north shore, where the proportion of anglophones is a little higher.

Those are excellent positive examples of people who go to school in French, work in French and receive all their services in French. That is what enables people on the North Shore to live their lives in French and play an active role in society. Just like the rest of Quebec, Manicouagan has programs designed to help immigrants integrate. Language is the doorway to culture, as my colleague from Longueuil—Saint-Hubert said earlier. By learning the language, which is the best way to learn about culture, newcomers can play a full and active role in the community.

I know that because, having taught literature at university, at CEGEP and in a bunch of other places, I have seen it. Having access to a body of literature connects people to history, sociology, the arts, music and more. People who can access the language rapidly also become part of the community very rapidly. That is what we want for everyone. That is what I would want for myself if I were to move to another country. I would want access to everything that country had to offer—for newcomers, that means everything the Quebec nation has to offer—and that is really the purpose of the bill introduced by my colleague from La Pointe-de-l'Île.

Government Orders

In conclusion, I wish we could debate this bill in the House. Beyond the issue of language rights, which the bill introduced by my colleague from La Pointe-de-l'Île defends, this is an exercise in democracy that demonstrates to me the contempt—I do not want to put it that way, but it is what first came to mind—that my fellow MPs and also my colleagues from Quebec have for the French language issue.

I mentioned contempt, but I believe that transparency is also lacking in this process. In fact, since elected officials are accountable to voters, I wish they could rise in the House to indicate whether they support or oppose this bill, which is a bill for all Quebecers.

Montreal was mentioned quite a bit. Montreal may simply be a symptom of what is not working in terms of the French language, because we must protect it.

• (1155)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): It is now time for the right of reply.

The hon. member for La Pointe-de-l'Île.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Longueuil—Saint-Hubert.

What happened today is another black mark on Parliament. Today, on May 13, 2019, the House of Commons of Canada behaved as if it were the House of Commons of English Canada.

It decided that taking steps to integrate immigrants into French Quebec was unconstitutional despite the well-known fact that the integration and inclusion of newcomers is critical if we want to continue to live and thrive in French. The member from Honoré-Mercier and others said that making French the common language is socially divisive when, in fact, the opposite is true. Making French the common language allows us to include everyone and build a coherent and inclusive society so that everyone can fully participate in Quebec society.

The Canadian model of institutional bilingualism does not work. We know this. Over 85% of newcomers in Quebec live in Montreal. In Montreal, all services are provided in English, upon request, or, in the federal government, by default. Newcomers come to Canada, where the majority speaks English. They come to North America, where an even greater majority speaks English. As a result, they are naturally inclined to choose English.

That is why Bill 101 sought to make French the language of the government, with exceptional measures to allow anglophones in Quebec to continue to thrive and live in Quebec. We did not want a repeat of what happened to francophone and Acadian communities outside Quebec. They were prohibited from having French-language schools. For years, French was completely banned from institutions.

Now that the Official Languages Act has been implemented, we must move on to another stage. The House of Commons is demonstrating that it is impossible to do that in Canada.

I thought that getting my bill passed would be difficult but still possible. It is not being given a chance. The most shocking thing is that, despite the opinion of Parliament's legal counsel, the bill was deemed unconstitutional. The truth does not matter, what matters is that the majority can impose its will, like it imposed the Constitution

in 1982. It was the Constitution of English Canada and we never signed on to it. Today, the Liberal MPs are hiding behind the Constitution, and it seems there are not too many Conservatives who are interested in this.

We built an original society in Quebec. By rejecting my bill as non-votable and refusing to discuss it seriously, the House of Commons is showing its true colours. Hon. members are sending us a very clear message today. They are telling us that French Quebec is unconstitutional. They are telling us to stop striving for it because it is unconstitutional, illegal and impossible, and it is time to move on to something else. They are saying that if we really want a French Quebec, we should do that by leaving Canada.

I got the message loud and clear, and I hope that more and more Quebecers will too. The only option, the only way forward for French, is independence for Quebec.

• (1200)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired. As the motion has been designated as non-votable, the order is now dropped from the Order Paper.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

OCEANS ACT

BILL C-55—TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.) moved:

That in relation to the Senate amendment to Bill C-55, an act to amend the Oceans Act and the Canada Petroleum Resources Act, not more than one further sitting day shall be allotted to the consideration of the Senate amendment to the bill; and

That fifteen minutes before the expiry of the time provided for Government Orders on the day allotted to the consideration of the Senate amendment of said bill, any proceedings before the House shall be interrupted, if required for the purpose of this order, and in turn every question necessary for the disposal of the stage of the bill then under consideration shall be put forthwith and successively without further debate or amendment.

• (1205)

Ms. Sheri Benson: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I wonder whether we have quorum in the House at this time.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I will check that out right now.

We have quorum. Thank you for pointing that out. We were very close.

Pursuant to Standing Order 67.1, there will now be a 30-minute question period. I invite the hon. members who wish to ask questions to rise in their places so that the Chair has some idea of the number of members who wish to participate in this question period.

Government Orders

Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am disappointed to be rising in this House to discuss the fact we are once again ending debate early on an important item.

I think this will be almost the 70th time the government has had to use this tool to move its agenda forward. As an opposition member, I feel my privilege to be able to bring forward my constituents' points of view on bills and laws that are going to affect their lives is being unduly harmed in this way. I am very disappointed we once again find ourselves not able to fully debate a bill for which there was a lot of public input and opinion that is not included in some of the amendments. I am again standing up to voice my concern that democracy is struggling in this House when time allocation is called for by the government time and again.

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me start by outlining the facts.

Bill C-55 was introduced on June 15, 2017. Five days in total were spent debating this bill at second reading and three days in total spent at third reading. In total, there were nine House committee meetings and eight Senate committee meetings. In the House fisheries committee, five amendments were proposed to the bill by Conservative, Green and independent members, which were adopted by the House on April 25, 2018. The House committee heard from 36 witnesses, representing a range of different stakeholders. The bill spent over a year in the Senate. It was first read May 26, 2018, and was sent back to us just two weeks ago.

Therefore, I think the record shows that a significant amount of time and discussion have gone into this bill.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is coming from a minister who now has protests outside his office and has to be escorted. It is because of a lack of consultation and a lack of engagement.

Closure of debate has been levied on this House 59 times. This represents the 59th time. There is a number for my hon. colleague across the way. It was the 10th day of the 2015 campaign when the member for Papineau, now our Prime Minister, said that he would let debate reign. He promised Canadians, and that was one of the promises that he broke.

On a piece of legislation as important as Bill C-55, I will grant that our hon. colleague, the minister across the way, was not involved in the debate at that time; it was the former fisheries minister, who has been quietly shuffled out because of a corruption issue over surf clam harvesting. It was the former fisheries minister who also said that he would truly consult and engage Canadians, but we have seen time and time again from this government and this minister that consultation and engagement were not there.

I would like to ask our hon. colleague a question. Debate has not reigned free or supreme, but has been closed 59 times. On such an important piece of legislation, on which reasoned amendments have come back from the Senate, why do the Liberals feel the need not to engage the 338 members of Parliament who have been elected to be the voices of those who put them here in this House? Why? Why is that the case with the government, time and time again? Why does it continue to invoke closure?

•(1210)

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Mr. Speaker, with respect to my colleague's introductory comments, he has actually never come to talk to me about this bill. I would be more than happy to have a conversation with him about the issues to which he is referring.

This particular bill was introduced in June 2017. It has now been almost two years, and Canadians are counting on the government to pass this bill so that we can better protect our marine environment.

The Conservative Party has no plan for the environment and no plan for climate change. If it were up to them, we would never finish debating this bill, because they simply do not want environmental protections.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, if it were not so sad, it would almost be laughable to hear my Conservative colleague complaining about the number of time allocation motions we have been imposed since the Liberals took office. I thought the previous Conservative government's record could not be topped. That being said, at the rate the Liberals have been going for the past few weeks, I cannot help but think they are making a point of breaking the record. However, my question is not about that.

My Liberal colleague listed the various interventions that have been made on this bill, and he apparently wants us to think this is something out of the ordinary, whereas the truth is that the bill is following the normal process. What is not normal is that the Liberals are now disrupting the normal process to achieve their ends by force. It is probably because they have just noticed that the session is about to end, that the election is fast approaching and that, due to their bad planning, they do not have enough time to fulfill so much as a small fraction of their promises. I could list all the promises they have not kept, but it would take hours and hours.

Time allocation must and should remain an exceptional measure used to meet an urgent need. That is what the Liberals used to say when they were in opposition. However, what we are seeing now is that a bill is following the normal process and the Liberals' bad planning may have led them into a blunder.

Where is the urgent need for this new time allocation motion?

[*English*]

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Mr. Speaker, there has been significant and sustained discussion of this bill in this chamber, at committee and in the other House. Bill C-55 was introduced two years ago.

As I said, there were five total days at second reading debating this bill, three total days at third reading, nine total House committee meetings, and eight Senate committee meetings in total. The House committee introduced amendments that were accepted in this House. The House committee heard from over 36 different witnesses, representing stakeholders across the piece. The bill was in the Senate for over a year, in part because of stalling on the part of the Conservative Party, and it was sent back to us two weeks ago.

There has been comprehensive debate and discussion of this bill, and now it is time to move forward.

Government Orders

Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I found the comments from the minister about our environmental track record to be ludicrous. This is clearly a government with an environmental and fisheries policy that is show over substance. I can prove that.

When the Conservatives were in government, we introduced the recreational fisheries conservation partnerships program, which funded 800 on-the-ground fisheries conservation projects by local communities. The minister and the government cancelled that program. Fisheries conservation communities and organizations from across the country have been denied the support they so desperately need from the government, and the fish stocks are suffering. I will prove that.

Under the government and the minister, Atlantic salmon fish stocks have collapsed and Pacific salmon stocks are in jeopardy, all because of the inaction of the government. This is a government that has denied local people the right to consult.

The minister presides over the most arrogant department in the history of Canada. He says that marine protected areas are something local people want. Given his and his department's track record in terms of dealing with local communities, as well as their dismal track record in conserving fish stocks across Canada, why should we believe him?

• (1215)

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Mr. Speaker, I am more than happy to talk about the environmental track record of this government relative to that of the Harper Conservatives.

The Harper Conservatives gutted the protections in the Fisheries Act and gutted the environmental assessment process. They had no plan to address the most significant issue we are facing on an environmental basis, which is climate change.

This government has developed a plan to address climate change. We have put in place measures to address the decline in biodiversity and to take care of species at risk. We have put in place a new Fisheries Act, which hopefully will be coming to this chamber in the short term. We are also putting in place a new environmental assessment process.

This government has done an enormous amount to ensure that on a go-forward basis, the environment and the economy will go hand in hand. That stands in stark contrast to the terrible environmental record of the Harper Conservatives.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Before we move to the next speaker, I want to remind hon. members of the procedure. It is not screaming during the question. Members should wait their turn, and then they can ask a proper a question.

The hon. member for Courtenay—Alberni.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to correct my friend from Cariboo—Prince George. This is actually the 71st time the government has invoked time allocation and shut down debate.

It is important that Canadians have an opportunity to have their voices heard. This is a very important piece of legislation. The bill clearly fails to set the minimum targets and standards that have been

set by the international community. We were hoping to bring forward some of the concerns raised by Canadians that are very important and that the government should be listening to.

I share the concerns of my colleague from Cariboo—Prince George with respect to consultation. It has been inadequate, especially on Vancouver Island regarding recent fishing closures.

However, I share the minister's view that a lot of damage was done under the Harper Conservatives. There was a decade of cuts to science and a decade of cuts to fisheries. However, the Liberal government dragged the puck with respect to fixing the damage done under the Conservative government. It has not been getting money into our communities. This is an opportunity for the Liberals to do something right to help protect our fish, especially at a time when our chinook and sockeye are in trouble in certain areas. We were hoping to bring these concerns forward.

I hope the minister can address concerns about the 71 times time allocation has been used to close debate and shut down the voices of Canadians, who should be respected and heard.

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Mr. Speaker, the bill is about interim protection. It will enable us to move forward with respect to the protection of our marine environment.

With respect to my hon. colleague's comments regarding standards, about two weeks ago, I announced Canada's approach to marine protected areas and other effective area-based measures at a conference in Montreal. They are world-leading in the context of how we go about ensuring that standards exist. I am more than happy to review those with the hon. member if he has not yet seen them.

Bill C-55 was sent to the Senate last May. A year later, it has finally been sent back to the House. Many senators in the other place have noted that we need to pass the bill now. We have put in an amendment to their message that captures the intent of their message. It is time for us to finish debate so that we can start protecting our marine environment more effectively.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is important to recognize that, including today, there are only 25 more sitting days scheduled in the calendar. It is interesting that the New Democrats say that time allocation is bad, even though when they were in opposition and prioritized a bill and said they wanted it to pass, they supported time allocation.

Within government, there is very important legislation we have to get through in the next 25 days. Would my colleague, the minister, be able to provide his thoughts on how important it is that we continue to pass legislation all the way to the end and that the expectation of Canadians is that we do not just coast through but continue to recognize the important legislation and allow it to be passed? Just because there are only 25 days to go does not mean that we should sit back and not do anything. There are things that need to be done, and as a government, we should be prepared to do them. Would my colleague not agree?

Government Orders

• (1220)

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Mr. Speaker, I certainly agree with my hon. colleague. There are a number of pieces of legislation before this House that it is very important to Canadians across the country, from coast to coast to coast, we move forward with and ensure are implemented effectively. Certainly Bill C-55 falls into that category.

The ability to ensure that we are able, on an interim basis, to protect areas of great ecological and biological significance is very important in a world where biodiversity is in decline and the impacts of climate change are increasingly prevalent. We need to move forward in a way that allows us to ensure that the future of the environment is a clean one for our children and our grandchildren.

Mr. Phil McColeman (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I can recall in the last Parliament the shouting and the disapproval of the members across the way when our government was using time allocation, and the member from Winnipeg was one of them. The Liberals' promise to Canadians in the last election was to do government differently, but that has proved false on many fronts.

That being said, the issue of there being 25 days left only illustrates the fact that the current government's legislative agenda has been so weak over its period in office as a four-year majority government that now the Liberals have to force through in 25 days legislation that should have been dealt with in the first two or three years, or certainly prior to the last six months.

The minister claims that this is essential. The amount of consultation with people outside committee is almost nonexistent on this bill. How does the minister justify the promise that the Liberals were going to do things differently, when we are looking at time allocation for the 79th time?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Mr. Speaker, I would invite my hon. colleague to review the record. This government has achieved far more, from a legislative perspective, in three and a half years than successive Harper governments were able to achieve over the course of a decade.

Let me again return to the facts, something I know my hon. colleague sometimes likes to avoid. Bill C-55 was introduced on June 15, 2017. There were five total days spent at second reading and three total days at third reading. There were nine House committee meetings. There were eight Senate committee meetings. In the fisheries committee, five amendments to the bill, proposed by Conservative, Green and independent members, were adopted by the House in April 2018. In the House committee, the members heard from 36 different witnesses. The bill spent over a year in the Senate, in part because of delay tactics by the Conservative Party. It was first read on May 26, 2018, and was sent back to us two weeks ago.

This is a very important bill for us to ensure that we are moving forward with an agenda that allows for the protection of areas of ecological significance on a go-forward basis to ensure that we will have a strong environment and a strong economy in the future.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Speaker, for Canadians listening in, and indeed those in the gallery, Bill C-55 is about interim marine protected areas. The Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard as well as the Minister of Environment would have the ability, in the absence of science, to immediately designate a marine

coastal area a marine protected area. The concern is that in the absence of consultation, it could do this.

Today we are talking about closure. We have had it 71 times, as my friend from Courtenay—Alberni corrected me. Perhaps I was being too light on our Liberal friends across the way.

The concern all along has been that those who matter the most in our coastal communities, those who would be most impacted by marine protected areas, whether they are first nations or non-first nations, those who depend on those coastal areas for their livelihoods and way of life, are not being consulted or engaged adequately. We heard this time and time again.

Our Conservative senators put forth two amendments.

The first amendment would ensure that prior to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard designating an interim marine protected area by ministerial order, the proposed order would be posted on the minister's website, and a 60-day comment period would be provided for. Written notice given to jurisdictions whose lands or interests may be affected by the proposed order would also be provided for in this amendment. This sounds reasonable. The rationale for this amendment came out of the Bill C-55 consultations, which did not include Nunavut. The senator from Nunavut said that consultation on Bill C-55 was not happening. He said:

The lack of a requirement of express permission for the adjacent province...to proceed with an establishment of an MPA has been interpreted by the Government in Nunavut as an act of bad faith, given the ongoing nature of the current devolution negotiations.

The second amendment, put forth by another Conservative senator, proposed to ensure that a certain level of detail, such as what we would be protecting, would be available to the public prior to the minister designating an interim protected area by ministerial order.

These are all things that came up in testimony. It is common sense.

Will the member be voting in favour of these common sense amendments from Conservative senators, or is it just because Conservative senators put them forth that the Liberals would vote them down?

• (1225)

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that my hon. colleague read the bill in detail. There are requirements for consultation in the bill, significant and active consultation, as well as public documentation associated with the consultations on the geographic range and the nature of what is being protected. This is already in the bill. To respond to the intent of some of the amendments put in place by senators in the other place, we have also added a proposed amendment to ensure that there would be transparency about what consultations took place.

Government Orders

With respect to the absence of science, it is a bit rich for a member of the Conservative Party, whose previous government gutted the scientific capacity of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and Environment Canada in a deliberate manner, to be complaining about a lack of science. However, yes, within the context of the designation of interim protection, it would absolutely be informed by science. It would absolutely be informed by indigenous knowledge. It would absolutely be informed by consultations.

We are working to ensure that this important bill would allow us to move forward with interim protection for areas of ecological significance.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Mr. Speaker, when I took my biology degree at university, I learned that an environmental statement without a number attached to it was completely useless. All we heard from the minister was basically a word salad.

Quantitatively, under the Stephen Harper Conservative government, sulphur dioxide and nitrous oxide went down and the amount of park land preserved across the country went up. Fish stocks were in great shape. Under our Conservative government, the 2010-14 sockeye salmon run set records on the west coast. I will stand and defend the real, honest and measurable achievements by the Conservative government.

The difference between a Conservative environmentalist, which I am, and a left-wing environmentalist, like across the way, is that we actually believe in delivering real and honest results. Here are some measurable results. I know the minister does not want to hear numbers because he is not used to that.

In the first year alone under the Conservative Recreational Fisheries Conservation Partnerships Program, 94 habitat restoration projects were undertaken. This included 380 partners, 1,700 volunteers, the restoration of 2.4 million square metres of habitat and the enhancement of 2,000 linear kilometres of recreational fisheries habitats. Those are real numbers and real achievements by a real government that cared about the environment.

On the science, Sean Cox, a professor of fisheries from Simon Fraser University, an unbiased fisheries professor, said:

Looking at some of the previous testimony, there was a claim that there was overwhelming scientific proof that MPAs are beneficial and widely successful. I think that was misrepresentation of the actual science.

With respect to consultation with communities, what did the minister tell the communities, which are so dependent on these marine resources, they could expect under MPAs, apart from kicking them out of important fishing grounds?

• (1230)

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Mr. Speaker, I would be more than happy to put this government's environmental record alongside that of the Harper Conservative government, which gutted the Fisheries Act, gutted the environmental assessment process, had no plan with respect to climate change, oversaw significant declines in biodiversity, did nothing to implement the Species at Risk Act and gutted the scientific capacity of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and Environment Canada.

With respect to marine protected areas and other effective area-based measures, those are moving forward to ensure we can protect,

on an interim basis, areas of high ecological value. We obviously are in ongoing discussions with local communities to ensure they will benefit from these mechanisms as well.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank our hon. colleague from Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa for the work he has done, not only in this session but in previous sessions. He is, as he said, a stalwart in the conservation world. He lives, eats and breathes this. Therefore, it is shocking when we have a colleague across the way wanting to disparage Conservatives on our conservation record.

When we did the studies on the Fisheries Act and any fisheries-related policy, because we would think that all of those protections were decimated, it was interesting that not one witness who came before the committee, including the environmental groups, could provide any details or proof to show that any changes previously done by the former Conservative government in the Fisheries Act and the Environmental Protection Act resulted in the loss of fish and fish habitat. They could not provide any, and that is the truth. That was prior to our hon. colleague coming on to this file, so I will forgive him for that lack of knowledge.

However, our hon. colleague is a knowledgeable person, and I have great respect for him. When we talk about species at risk such as chinook salmon, Atlantic salmon and northern cod, could our hon. colleague give any demonstrable data as to how the Liberals' record in the last three and a half years has increased any numbers of fish or fish habitat?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Mr. Speaker, as I said, an enormous amount of work has been spent on a range of environmental files, not the least of which being species at risk.

My hon. colleague knows the conversations that are going on with respect to the protection of South Mountain and Boreal caribou.

With respect to chinook salmon, we have fixed and upgraded the Fisheries Act to restore loss protections from what was done in 2012 under the Conservative government. We announced just recently, with Premier Horgan in British Columbia, \$142 million for salmon habitat restoration. We are working with the University of British Columbia on a symposium to address issues around prey and predators with respect to seals and sea lions. We have put in place fisheries measures aimed at protecting threatened Fraser River chinook salmon stocks.

We have a comprehensive approach in this case, and in every case, for addressing the threats and for looking to rebuild stocks over time.

Government Orders

● (1235)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Minister of Fisheries for commenting on other actions.

I support Bill C-55, but I cannot support the continual use of time allocation. We have seen a steady increase in its use in this place. It was shocking when it happened under the previous government. I have bemoaned this over and over again.

The reality is that a government with a majority of seats can treat Parliament as if it is basically a nuisance. The debate in this place is not about improving legislation or actually about doing our work as members of Parliament, but rather just somehow wasting time. That does a disservice to this place.

It was probably not the hon. member's decision to place time allocation on this legislation. I beg the Liberal majority to stop using time allocation over and over again. It has now become the normal procedure instead of the rare exception.

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for her support of this legislation, which is extremely important in ensuring we are protecting the environment on a go-forward basis.

I certainly agree with her that it is important we have time to debate and discuss issues in the chamber. I would simply reiterate that a significant amount of time has been spent at second and third reading, at committee and in the Senate over the course of the past two full years on the bill. The issues have been canvassed broadly and deeply, and we intend to move forward.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): It is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith the question necessary to dispose of the motion now before the House.

[*English*]

The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rota): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rota): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rota): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rota): Call in the members.

● (1315)

[*Translation*]

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

(*Division No. 1315*)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Amos	Anandasangaree
Arseneault	Badawey
Bagnell	Bains
Baylis	Beech
Bennett	Bittle
Blair	Boissonnault
Bossio	Bratina
Breton	Caesar-Chavannes
Carr	Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Casey (Charlottetown)	Chagger
Chen	Cormier
Cuzner	Dabrusin
Damoff	DeCoursey
Dhillon	Drouin
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Dzerowicz
Easter	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Ellis
Erskine-Smith	Eyking
Eyolfson	Fergus
Fillmore	Finnigan
Fisher	Fonseca
Fortier	Fragiskatos
Fraser (West Nova)	Fraser (Central Nova)
Freeland	Fuhr
Gameau	Gerretsen
Goldsmith-Jones	Goodale
Gould	Graham
Hardie	Hébert
Hehr	Hogg
Housefather	Hussen
Hutchings	Jones
Jordan	Jowhari
Kang	Khalid
Khera	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
Lebouthillier	Leslie
Levitt	Lightbound
Lockhart	Long
Longfield	Ludwig
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)	
May (Cambridge)	
McCrimmon	McDonald
McGuinty	McKay
McKenna	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod (Northwest Territories)	Mendès
Mendicino	Mihychuk
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Sœurs)	
Monsef	
Morrissey	Murray
Nassif	Ng
O'Connell	Oliphant
Oliver	O'Regan
Ouellette	Paradis
Peschisolido	Peterson
Petitpas Taylor	Picard
Qualtrough	Ratansi
Rioux	Rodriguez
Rogers	Romanado
Rudd	Ruimy
Rusnak	Sahota
Saini	Sajjan
Samson	Sangha
Sarai	Scarpaleggia
Schiefke	Schulte
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan

Points of Order

Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)	Simms
Sohi	Sorbara
Spengemann	Tabbara
Tan	Tassi
Vandal	Vaughan
Virani	Whalen
Wilkinson	Wrzesnewskyj
Yip	Young
Zahid— 153	

● (1320)

[English]

POINTS OF ORDER

MOTION NO. 167—INSTRUCTION TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise in my capacity as the chair of the public safety and national security committee.

The hon. member for Lakeland made an intervention last week. Regrettably, I had no notice of the intervention, and I would have preferred to bring my point of intervention after hers, but it is what it is. The hon. member was concerned about the pace at which Motion No. 167 was proceeding through the committee. I want to offer some observations with respect to that particular motion.

It was, in fact, referred to the committee on May 30, 2018, which is roughly a year ago. I would just note that the language of the motion was that it should be “instructed” to undertake, which I would note is not an obligation to undertake. Nevertheless, the committee did hear from the hon. member fairly shortly thereafter, on June 12, as she presented her concerns on Motion No. 167.

Subsequent meetings were held on October 16, October 18, October 23 and October 30. Then, through November and December, the committee was seized with other committee business, namely supplementary estimates, Bill C-83 and a variety of other things. This is an extraordinarily busy committee with private members' bills, private members' motions, supplementary estimates, main estimates and government business.

The first consideration of a draft report occurred on December 4, and then subsequently on March 20. After hearing all of the witnesses and the intervention by the hon. member for Lakeland, receiving four briefs, hearing 19 witnesses and having seven meetings, there is significant disagreement in the committee as to what the report should say, not only the body of the report in recitation of the testimony but also the recommendations. I would be remiss if I did not note that there is significant disagreement in the committee.

In addition to all of the above, I would just note, as you, Mr. Speaker, are considering the hon. member's intervention that, one, the referral is not a mandatory referral, and if the Speaker does do an intervention, I would like that to be taken into consideration; two, this is a very busy committee; three, there is very significant disagreement in the committee as to the way forward; and four, there is consequence to the continuous disruptive nature of House business. Just this motion alone takes all committees off their business, and of course, like all of the other committees, we have suffered the consequence of all these motions.

As due consideration is given to the motion by the hon. member for Lakeland, I would ask that those things be taken into consideration as well.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I will take that under advisement.

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif	Albas
Albrecht	Alleslev
Allison	Anderson
Angus	Arnold
Aubin	Barlow
Barrett	Beaulieu
Benson	Benzen
Bergen	Berthold
Bezan	Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Boucher	Boutin-Sweet
Brassard	Brousseau
Caron	Carrie
Chong	Choquette
Clarke	Cooper
Davidson	Davies
Deltell	Diotte
Doherty	Dreeshen
Dubé	Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Dusseault	Duvall
Eglinski	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Garrison
Généreux	Gill
Gladau	Godin
Gourde	Harder
Hughes	Jeneroux
Johns	Julian
Kelly	Kent
Kitchen	Kniec
Kusie	Kwan
Laverdière	Liepert
Lloyd	Lobb
Lukiwski	MacGregor
MacKenzie	Maguire
Martel	Masse (Windsor West)
Mathyssen	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McColeman	McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Motz	Nantel
O'Toole	Paul-Hus
Pauzé	Plamondon
Poillievre	Rankin
Rayes	Rempel
Richards	Saroya
Schmale	Shields
Shiplee	Sopuck
Sorenson	Stetski
Strahl	Stubbs
Sweet	Thériault
Tilson	Trost
Trudel	Van Kesteren
Viersen	Wagantall
Warkentin	Waugh
Webber	Weir
Wong	Yurdiga— 106

PAIRED

Nil

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I declare the motion carried.

OCEANS ACT

The House resumed from May 10 consideration of the motion in relation to the amendments made by the Senate to Bill C-55, An Act to amend the Oceans Act and the Canada Petroleum Resources Act.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I wish to inform the House that because of proceedings on the time allocation motion, Government Orders will be extended by 30 minutes.

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be here today to talk about the message to the Senate on Bill C-55, a bill that will amend the Oceans Act and the Canada Petroleum Resources Act.

First, I want to thank the parliamentary secretary, the member for Charlottetown, for starting the debate off last Friday and for his work on this file. I would also like to thank the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands for supporting this bill and for echoing the need to have this type of legislation so that we can move forward with protecting our marine spaces.

I would like to begin with an overview of the bill we are debating today, then an overview of the motion itself.

• (1325)

[*Translation*]

Bill C-55 seeks a new ministerial order instrument to establish interim protection marine protected areas to protect ecologically sensitive and important marine areas in cases where initial science and consultations tell us it is urgently needed.

The process to establish interim protection will not be a shortcut to any science and consultation processes that are integral to how we establish marine protected areas today.

[*English*]

The fundamental principle underlying interim protection is the application of the precautionary principle. This principle is not new under Bill C-55. It is already found in many pieces of modern environmental legislation. It is also consistent with the Privy Council Office's framework on precaution, elaborated in 2013. This framework outlines guiding principles for the application of precaution to science-based decision-making in areas of federal regulatory activity for the protection of health and safety, the environment and the conservation of natural resources.

Indeed, we have received the bill with an amendment. While we respectfully reject the amendment, we are adding an amendment that we feel respects the intent of the amendment from the other place. As indicated by government officials during Senate committee deliberation, as well as expressed by members in the the other place during third reading, the amendment proposed is duplicative and would also make the interim protection of a marine protected area process more complex than the designation of a permanent marine protected area. Therefore, the amendment would go against the very objective of the bill to provide faster protection and to freeze the footprint of activities in areas where we are proposing a permanent designation, all while ensuring that we continue our high standard of consultations.

Let me explain.

Government Orders

The first part of the amendment from the other place requires that the approximate geographical location and a preliminary assessment of any habitat or species in the area be published prior to an order for interim protection being made. This is already covered under the cabinet directive on regulations, which requires all regulatory process to be open and transparent. This is the reason why, today, one can go online to look at an area of interest, which is the first step in the current process of developing a permanent MPA, and see a description of the area, a map of the area and all other relevant information, such as the key objectives.

The second part of the amendment, which was added by Senator Patterson, would require an additional consultation period to take place outside what is already required under the Oceans Act and the Gazette process. This amendment would add another consultation period that is, at minimum, 60 days, and would require the government to respond to all comments within 30 days. That brings the added consultation period to a possible 90 days before an order can be made. Indeed, this only applies to the interim process and would therefore make the interim designation process more complex than the process for a permanent designation.

As I have mentioned, these amendments were also duplicative. The current Oceans Act already explicitly outlines consultation requirements under sections 29 through 33. As mentioned on Friday by the parliamentary secretary, section 33 states under the oceans management strategy:

(1) In exercising the powers and performing the duties and functions assigned to the Minister by this Act, the Minister

(a) shall cooperate with other ministers, boards and agencies of the Government of Canada, with provincial and territorial governments and with affected aboriginal organizations, coastal communities and other persons and bodies, including those bodies established under land claims agreements;

(b) may enter into agreements with any person or body or with another minister, board or agency of the Government of Canada;

(c) shall gather, compile, analyse, coordinate and disseminate information;

For these reasons, our government is rejecting these changes and proposing an amendment that we believe captures the intent of the message from the other place. This amendment will require the geographical location and all other relevant information to be published, along with the consultations that were undertaken when an order is made. This will ensure that the information that communities need will be provided, and that the process for interim protection is streamlined to ensure that protection is provided in a manner consistent with the objective of this bill. That is, to provide faster protection on an interim basis to marine areas until a decision, after comprehensive consultations are undertaken, is made on whether to designate the interim area as a permanent MPA.

Government Orders

This bill was first introduced in the House of Commons on June 15, 2017. Since then it has had the benefit of many hours of debate, discussion and review. The House of Commons Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans spent a great deal of time carefully reviewing its proposals. From October to December 2017, that committee heard views and opinions from many orders of government, partners, stakeholders and experts on the bill. Following this in-depth review, the committee made five amendments to the bill that were proposed by Conservative, Green and independent members, which were adopted by the House on April 25, 2018.

The House of Commons committee's amendments add new and important elements to the bill without undermining its spirit and intent. This bill is truly one of those rare bills that has had co-operation and agreement at the committee stage by all parties, and I urge all members to put their partisanship aside to support a non-partisan issue of protecting our oceans.

• (1330)

[*Translation*]

Since February 2019, the committee in the other place has further reviewed Bill C-55, hearing from more witnesses and experts. I am grateful for the effort and attention paid by the other place to this important legislative proposal. However, their additional amendments do not align with the spirit of Bill C-55 to apply interim protection in a timely manner.

[*English*]

Consultation is the cornerstone of effective oceans protection in Canada. The transparency we will exercise for interim protection will be no less than for establishing more permanent marine protected areas.

What is our current practice? We consult and collaborate with provinces, territories and indigenous groups. We include marine resource users, such as fisheries groups, aquaculture groups, the oil and gas sector, mining, shipping, tourism and other stakeholders. We reach out to other experts, such as environmental groups, academics and various community members. Finally, we also, of course, consult with the public.

All of this collaboration is extensive and conducted at various stages of the process. Advisory committees with partners, indigenous groups and interested and affected partners are established to provide input to this work.

We consult at the outset, to identify and select an area needing protection; to gather information about the ecological importance of a sensitive marine area, the socio-economic considerations related to the area and any current or planned activities that may be of concern; to identify initial boundaries and conservation objectives for an area based on the best available science, including indigenous and local knowledge and a risk analysis; to develop a proposed regulatory approach and study the benefits and costs of such an approach, including a 30-day public comment period when the regulations are pre-published in the Canada Gazette, part I; and on an ongoing basis to provide input to the development of the management plan for the area.

Over and above this extensive consultation, marine protected areas are collaboratively managed with local partners through an adaptive management approach wherein ongoing science and socio-economic and cultural information are all considered.

[*Translation*]

This government is committed to both the precautionary principle and the need for ongoing scientific analysis and consultation. Our commitment to science and consultation does not end once interim protection is in place. These activities would continue for up to five years, with an aim to establishing a permanent marine protected area. We continue to consult and improve our scientific understanding of the area following its establishment, as part of ongoing management efforts.

[*English*]

Bill C-55 reflects the government's commitment to indigenous rights and the requirement to respect the duty to consult and accommodate. This requirement is already provided for within common law. Moreover, the Oceans Act and the cabinet directive on regulation recognize the importance of working with and consulting indigenous organizations.

In addition, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans added an amendment to Bill C-55 to reiterate that marine protected areas establishment cannot be conducted in a manner that is inconsistent with any land claims agreement.

Bill C-55 will go a long way toward ensuring that as Canadians we protect our marine ecosystems. Supporting the health of our oceans is essential so that we can benefit from the unique and precious marine ecosystems and resources that we will rely on for generations to come. Canadians are counting on us to protect our oceans.

Our marine protection work seeks to preserve ecosystems and species to ensure that Canada's marine resources can continue to support sustainable industries, local economies and coastal communities. As we progress, Canada's marine protected areas will become part of a global network that will contribute to healthier and more sustainable oceans for generations.

• (1335)

[*Translation*]

Many senators supported passing this bill as quickly as possible. However, here in the House, two years after the bill was introduced, despite the amendments agreed to by all parties in committee, the Conservatives continue to oppose this bill. That is disappointing but not surprising because, unlike our government and our Prime Minister, who have a plan for the environment, the Conservatives have no plan to protect the environment or to address climate change.

[*English*]

I believe that Bill C-55 is a very significant step in the right direction, and I am confident that all members will agree. Bill C-55 has been subject to thorough parliamentary review, as well as public debate and discussion, for nearly two years. The time to act is now. With interim protection, we will be able to act now to protect our oceans from coast to coast to coast.

Government Orders

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yes, there has been considerable amount of debate, but not enough for this side of the House with the amendment that has come forth. Time and again, the committee heard that the consultation was not thorough. As a matter of fact, there were groups, as well as the Premier of Nunavut, that said they were not consulted at all. Indeed, three territorial premiers issued a statement indicating that “the proposed amendments to the Oceans Act and the Canada Petroleum Resources Act included in Bill C-55 allow for the creation of Interim Marine Protected Areas by a federal minister without prior consultation.” How long would initial consultations be conducted before interim protection is provided for a marine protected area?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Mr. Speaker, as I noted in my speech, sections 29 to 33 of the act spell out the requirement for consultation. We believe that the intent of the amendment that was made in the other House was already reflected in the existing bill. However, when the bill was sent back to us after nearly a year in the Senate, we suggested an amendment to capture the intent of the message that the other chamber sent to us, such that it is very clear that not only would the requirement for consultation exist, but also the requirement for transparency in terms of what consultations have taken place.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the minister for moving forward and imposing some stricter measures to protect marine protected areas.

I note that the new standards would apply to marine protected areas but not to refuges. I also note that the minister, as I understand, has recently announced that there will be longer boundary distances set where ships and so forth cannot come near threatened species, such as the orca. Where threatened species are flowing through areas that are not marine protected areas, what kind of new measures and expenditures is the minister going to put in place, for example through the Coast Guard, to ensure that in fact those species are not impacted, not just by drilling but also by shipping?

• (1340)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Before we go to the minister, I would like to instruct the Sergeant-at-Arms to just step outside. It sounds like there is some noise going on in the hallway and it is getting a bit out of hand. It is making it difficult to hear what is going on inside the chamber, so he could just check it out and make sure everything is fine and working.

The hon. Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Mr. Speaker, with respect to standards for conservation areas, which we announced a couple of weeks ago, there are two categories: marine protected areas and other effective area-based measures. We have put in place guidelines with respect to what is and what is not allowed in both of those. With respect to other effective area-based measures, including marine refuges, the focus is on ensuring that activities that are not inconsistent with the conservation objectives can continue. This is compliant with international guidance by IUCN. To be honest, that is a standard for the global community, in terms of what kinds of standards need to be put in place for marine conservation areas around the world.

With respect to protection, I think the hon. member is referring more specifically to the southern resident killer whale announcement. The focus is on expanding the zones to ensure that vessels do not come within a 400-metre radius of southern resident killer whales. That is something that would apply generally to all vessel traffic, whether it is in a marine protected area or not. In terms of enforcement, we have created a separate enforcement group in the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. We are hiring 13 or 14 enforcement officers, who will focus 100% of their time on ensuring that those regulations are respected.

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Whitby, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, the government has put in place a number of different initiatives that preserve and conserve not only life on land, but, in particular with this bill, life underwater. I voted in favour of time allocation because this is an important piece of legislation.

Could the minister expand on how the bill demonstrates Canada's leadership as we look to meet our sustainable development goals regarding life underwater and agenda 2030?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Mr. Speaker, the bill is important in the broader context of the commitment to nature that the government has demonstrated through the significant amount of funding that has been put into the nature agenda.

The bill would enable us to more rapidly protect, on an interim basis, areas of high ecological significance to ensure that ecologically significant attributes and biodiversity are not affected during the process of assessing permanent status.

The bill is important for us in terms of meeting our international commitment, which is to protect 10% of marine areas by 2020. We are now at 8.27%. This is well beyond where we were in 2015, which was less than 1%. We are absolutely committed to achieving the 2020 target.

We will then be engaging in a conversation about what the target beyond that should be and how we will go about reaching that. We have set standards in terms of what can take place within these conservation areas, which I believe will set a standard for the international community to ensure there is integrity to these concepts.

Canada is more than punching above its weight in the context of this conversation.

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the fisheries minister claims that the new consultation process under the bill would be improved and satisfactory. However, I would like him to answer to the protests that have been taking place in front of his offices and outside the meetings that he has been holding over the past few weeks.

I believe he was in Nova Scotia over the past week and there was a large protest outside of the meeting he was holding there because consultation had not taken place. Fishermen were extremely upset about what was taking place and about the decisions that were being made under the fisheries minister. Again, this happened in front of his office in B.C. over the past couple of weeks.

Government Orders

Fishermen's views are out of line with the direction the fisheries minister is claiming to take regarding adequate consultation. That consultation is not there, and I would like him to answer to that. Why does he think it is?

• (1345)

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to distinguish the two issues. Certainly, the issues in British Columbia have nothing to do with marine protected areas. They have to do with conservation for the purpose of saving Fraser chinook salmon.

Extensive consultations went on over many months with all relevant stakeholders and first nations communities with respect to Fraser chinook salmon and the fisheries regulations. However, that needs to be seen in a broader context. This government has brought forward a new Fisheries Act to restore the lost protections that were taken out under the previous government. We just committed \$142 million for salmon habitat restoration, alongside our partner, the Government of British Columbia. We are actively working with stakeholders on a whole range of other issues, including the use of hatcheries and the idea of marked fisheries.

However, we also have to ensure that in the short term, enough of these salmon are getting back to the spawning grounds so they will be able not only to stabilize but to recover. I have said very clearly in the press that I will not be the minister who makes the easy political decision and knowingly allows these stocks to become extinct.

That was the basis on which the decision in British Columbia was made. It was the right decision from an environmental perspective, and it was the right decision from a biodiversity perspective.

On the Atlantic coast, there is an issue regarding the proposed east coast marine protected area. It relates to some of the concerns the lobster harvesters have. We have been very clear that lobster harvesting would not be impacted.

I went to have this conversation with the lobster harvesters last week myself. We engaged in the conversation, and I intend to continue that conversation. I have indicated to them that I will come back to further that conversation. We will take the time necessary to ensure that all perspectives are considered, and ideally all concerns can be addressed.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to give a shout-out to everyone at home who is participating in the first-ever Olympic surfing competition to qualify to participate in the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo. I hope they have a safe competition. I am sure everyone here in the House wishes them the best.

I wonder if the minister could clarify whether oil and gas will still be permissible in these MPAs with this piece of legislation and the amendments, or could he clarify whether they will be completely banned in all of these MPAs?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Mr. Speaker, in the regulations in the guidelines that we have established with respect to conservation areas, there are two categories. One is marine protected areas and the other is other effective area-based conservation measures.

In marine protected areas, oil and gas extraction, bottom trawling or dumping will not be allowed.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Resuming debate, the hon. member for Cariboo—Prince George.

I want to remind the hon. member that he will have approximately 12 minutes before we hit question period. Upon return to debate, he will have another eight minutes coming to him.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague, the member for North Okanagan—Shuswap, who spoke on this topic for over an hour on Friday. It was fish Friday. Fish was even served in the lobby, and he spoke eloquently for over an hour on Bill C-55 and Bill S-203, which is on ending the captivity of whales.

I was back in the riding talking about species at risk, in particular the issue we have with the southern mountain caribou. Members might wonder why I am bringing up this issue. It is because my colleague across the way wants to talk about consultation and how it has been thorough.

He would probably stand up and say that the consultation on the southern mountain caribou issue in the province of British Columbia was been thorough as well. I can tell members that what has been very thorough and robust is the attendance at these town halls done by the Province of British Columbia, and the reason attendance has been robust is that there has been no consultation. Here is an issue that is going to have detrimental impacts on our province in terms of industry and our way of life.

I also want to say at the very beginning that nobody wants to see a species such as the southern mountain caribou become extinct, or our chinook or our Atlantic salmon or our northern cod. One of the challenges we have with the current government is that its members stand up and say that they have consulted Canadians thoroughly, from coast to coast, but indeed they have not. Why would the minister be getting protests outside his door by angry fishermen, angry groups, and have to be spirited away under the protection of security?

When we stand up on this side to talk about consultation, even the NDP members are in agreement with us that consultation is not there.

I will bring members back to earlier today, and for those in the gallery and for Canadians just tuning in to the debate, it has been 71 times that we have voted on time allocation. This is closure of debate. It has happened 71 times to this point under the current government.

I will bring members back to day 15 of the member for Papineau's campaign to be our Prime Minister. It was day 15 in the 2015 election when he stood up and said that under his government, we would be the most open and transparent government in the history of our country. Well, we have seen where that has gone.

He also said that he would run small deficits and then all of a sudden balance the budget in 2019. Well, where are we now? We have huge debt.

One of the other things he said was that under his government, they would not resort to parliamentary tricks and tactics such as omnibus bills, invoking closure or using time allocation. He would let the debate reign, because after all it was not about us as parliamentarians, but about the people who voted us in and got us here.

With that, I have to bring members back to today. I will remind those in the House who are checking their iPads and checking their messages and not really paying attention to the debate that this is not about them and it is not about the Prime Minister; this is about the electors who voted for 338 members of Parliament here to be their voice. When the government invokes time allocation and closure on debate, it is saying that the voices of those who elected members of the opposition and many others do not really matter.

● (1350)

We have seen that time and time again, and it is usually when Liberals do not like what they are hearing. It is usually when valid points are being brought up. We now see it again. We are sitting at 71 time allocation motions. I said 59 earlier, but my great colleague from Courtenay—Alberni reminded us that it is 71 times. I do not think that is letting the debate reign.

I also want to talk about consultation.

Liberals stand and talk about consultation. Throughout the southern mountain caribou exercise, a slide was brought out and then taken down very quickly. The slide said “consultation versus engagement”. That prompted me to think about this a little more. Liberals in government—and perhaps we on this side too, as elected officials—throw the terms “engagement” and “consultation” around as though they are interchangeable. The reality is that they are not. They are vastly different. Depending on the underlying motivation and the process, they come at different solutions.

In consultation, I would tell you, Mr. Speaker, that I have a great idea and ask you what you think about it. You may say that the hon. colleague from Cariboo—Prince George has a great idea, but there are some ways it could be tweaked to make it better. I would respond by saying that these are great ideas and I would think about them. However, with engagement, I would go to you, Mr. Speaker, and say that we have a problem and I would really like your help to try to figure it out. You and I would go back and forth in a transactional kind of dialogue, and I would take your thoughts, ideas and concepts, say that I think we have come up with a solution, and tell you what it was and away we would go.

I am probably going to elicit some boos from that side of the House, because in terms of what I just said about consultation versus engagement, it is engagement that Canadians truly want, especially those in fishing and coastal communities and first nations that depend on the fisheries for their sustenance. When we levy a policy such as what is found in Bill C-55, we are not consulting Canadians on what we should be doing but engaging Canadians from the grassroots on the issue. However, the problem with that is that at times, they cannot tell us what they want to protect.

Mr. Speaker, you just gave me a three-minute warning, but I think I have 11 minutes. It is three minutes until question period. That is going to ruin the video. Let the record show that I am splitting my

time with question period, with 338 members of Parliament, unlike our colleagues across the way, who would not allow that.

Whether it is Bill C-55, the Fisheries Act, the northern cod study, the Atlantic salmon study or the aquatic invasive species study—which we will never get to, because our friends on the fisheries committee continue to delay it—Canadians are looking for engagement on policy that is going to impact them.

I have tried to change my vocabulary, my use of “consultation”, since that southern mountain caribou fiasco we dealt with in the province of British Columbia, and I now use “engagement”.

● (1355)

It is not an engagement. It is really just a check in a box to say that my colleagues across the way have talked about it. I wonder if it is because they do not believe Canadians are smart enough to come up with an idea. After all, we live in coastal areas and depend on the water, so maybe we are not smart enough to come up with a solution to the problem. Maybe they are worried the problem is that Canadians are too smart and will figure it out.

I have listened to a number of fishers, fishing organizations and first nations. They are concerned about the lack of consultation on Bill C-55. Our hon. colleague across the way is saying that the amendment that came back from the Senate is redundant and is way too much. After all, it would listen to Canadians, who time and again said that they were not consulted enough. They said that they were not being engaged enough.

We should always strive to be better. Bill C-55 is core legislation under the Liberal government. Now the Liberals say that time has dithered away, and I think my hon. colleague mentioned that there were only 25 sitting days left, and that is why there is an urgency to push it through. However, there are serious concerns with Bill C-55, which is why that amendment came forward. What they are essentially saying, which is no different than time allocation, is that because it is a Conservative amendment, it does not really matter. That is wrong.

With that, I will cede the floor and pick it up after question period.

● (1400)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): As was discussed prior, the hon. member for Cariboo—Prince George will have eight minutes coming to him to complete his presentation after question period and another 10 minutes of questions and comments after that.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

FLOODING IN GLENGARRY—PRESCOTT—RUSSELL

Mr. Francis Drouin (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the past few weeks, flooding along the Ottawa River has been affecting residents of my riding in Cumberland, Clarence-Rockland, Alfred-Plantagenet and Champlain. The community has come together at this difficult time to help those affected by the flooding.

Statements by Members

Businesses have given food, money and resources, and neighbours have been working side by side for hours to fill, transport and place sandbags.

[*English*]

We witnessed the great work of our Canadian Armed Forces, which, on short notice, were deployed in Cumberland and Clarence-Rockland to lend a hand to residents. There is nothing more powerful for affected residents than seeing our men and women in uniform.

Now that the water has peaked for a second time and is receding, I would like to take the opportunity to thank the residents, city officials, emergency services and members of the Canadian Armed Forces who worked together to overcome this flooding.

* * *

[*Translation*]

LÉVIS—LOTBINIÈRE

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this year, spring is as slow in coming as the end of the Liberal rule. We have been buried in debt and looking like fools in everyone's eyes since 2015.

The torture is almost over. The Conservative Party has always proven to be the only transparent, ethical, credible and responsible choice to govern our country.

This summer, the values that reflect who we are and bring us together will be on display in Lévis—Lotbinière. I will have the privilege of sharing and celebrating those values with people of all ages at the Canada Day celebrations being held at the Expo de Lotbinière site and at our play, *Comme dans le temps*, a local cultural production being performed in Saint-Gilles.

There is still time to choose initiatives to improve our communities, especially with the upcoming election this fall.

Quebec deserves better.

* * *

[*English*]

JEWISH HERITAGE MONTH

Mrs. Deborah Schulte (King—Vaughan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last year, Bill S-232, sponsored by the member for York Centre, passed unanimously in the House and designated May as Canadian Jewish Heritage Month. By enacting this law, Parliament has provided Canada's Jewish community much-deserved recognition.

My riding of King—Vaughan is home to a vibrant and diverse Jewish community. Like Jews throughout Canada, the Jewish community in my riding has contributed immensely to growing a dynamic, successful and inclusive society.

In this disturbing period of rising anti-Semitism, it is right and just that all of us, whatever our faith, both recognize and celebrate the contributions Jews have made to Canada, but also work to support and defend our Jewish neighbours, friends and institution, not only this month but every month.

During Jewish Heritage Month, I want to pay particular attention to the good work undertaken by the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs and the Canadian Jewish Political Affairs Committee, both of which work hard to educate politicians, students and community leaders on the issues of importance to Israel, Canada and the Jewish people.

Let me conclude by wishing everyone *chodesh tov*.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today I would like to show parliamentarians what leadership looks like.

Under the guidance of Ms. Gina, the grades six and seven students at Hastings school organized an amazing assembly to celebrate Earth Day. This project included a beautiful art piece of the Earth, with a handprint of each student that delivered his or her message on how to save the Earth.

The students are gripped with the most important issues of their generation: climate catastrophe, species at risk and forced migration. These young engaged citizens want actions and solutions. They want us to “Keep fossil fuels in the ground (coal, oil and gas).”

Like the students at Hastings, thousands of students took part in the climate strike on May 3. Their demands are clear: a 65% emissions reduction by 2030; the separation of oil and state; a just transition; the right to a safe environment; indigenous rights; conserve biodiversity; and, the protection of vulnerable groups.

It is time to put “Planet before profit. To stop pollution, we are the solution.” In other words, we need a green new deal now.

* * *

MULLIVAIKKAL

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Scarborough—Rouge Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this May 18 we mark the 10th anniversary of the genocide in Mullivaikkal. Over 70,000 Tamils were killed, 300,000 detained and countless disappeared. I want to remember and honour those who died, their families and survivors.

Within the designated no-fire zone, the makeshift hospital was repeatedly bombed by the Sri Lankan military. The last remaining medical team became the lifeline for many. Its members saved thousands of lives, working in treacherous conditions and putting their own lives at risk, all the while reporting on the atrocities of the world to whomever would listen. They became the face of humanity at a moment when humanity forgot those on the small sliver of land called Mullivaikkal.

I am honoured to welcome to Parliament Hill today Dr. T. Varatharajah and Mrs. K. Kanadasamy, members of the medical team, whose courage, valour and heroism have left their Tamil nation and all of humanity forever in their debt.

• (1405)

HOUSING

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, most Canadians dream of owning a home, but the Liberals' mortgage rules are keeping many of these individuals out of the market.

Owning a home, of course, comes with a sense of pride, a sense of accomplishment and a sense of joy. It is an honour for Canadians to have a permanent place where they get to build a life.

However, more and more young Canadians are finding it very difficult and are reporting that they are giving up on the dream of home ownership. They are struggling to afford daily necessities, let alone be able to save for a down payment. To make matters worse, the current government has implemented a mortgage stress test that makes it extremely difficult for first-time homebuyers to get into the market.

Canadians build wealth by owning a home. It is very key. By blocking millennials from this opportunity, the Liberals are keeping them from being able to build equity and create a life for themselves, enjoying the stability of a home.

The Conservatives are committed to ensuring that Canadians in all regions of the country are able to afford a home, to realize their dream. We will continue to implement policies that will serve Canadians well and help regular Canadians get ahead.

* * *

BRAIN TUMOUR REGISTRY

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in 2006, I was asked for help by the families of two young boys, who each had been diagnosed with brain tumour.

Working with the Canadian Alliance of Brain Tumour Organizations, we developed private member's Motion No. 235, which called on the government to help develop a national brain tumour registry.

Tomorrow, the brand new Brain Tumour Registry of Canada will be launched for the first time to ensure every brain tumour in Canada is counted and studied.

When the motion was passed by the House in 2007, young Brandon Dempsey and his mother Jennifer were in the gallery. Sadly, Brandon passed away in 2012, but I am very pleased that his mother is back in the gallery today.

I want to recognize Matthew MacDonald of Truro and Brandon Dempsey of Amherst, two young Canadians who did not survive their brain tumours. Without their courageous fight and the determined support of their parents, the Brain Tumour Registry might not have been created.

I also want to recognize my assistant, Lorne Berndt, for his tireless efforts, and all the brain tumour community which helped developed the national Brain Tumour Registry.

* * *

RAMADAN

Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every year Muslims across the world take part in Ramadan. As we

Statements by Members

fast from dawn to sunset for the next month, we take the time to reflect on ourselves, our actions and our values.

The month of Ramadan is a time of patience, empathy and compassion. It is a time when we grow closer to our families, friends and community. We open our hearts and strive to give back to our community through charity and volunteerism. We share these values as Muslims and Canadians who work every day to make our country a better place.

In my riding of Scarborough Centre, Ramadan brings people together. Our multi-faith council, which regularly brings community members of different faiths together, will be hosting a multi-faith iftar, or the breaking of the fast.

I am proud to be part of the Muslim community in Canada, a community that contributes to the diversity that makes Canada strong. I would like to wish everyone observing this month Ramadan Mubarak.

* * *

• (1410)

GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker,

It is three and half years in and Canadians now realize.

The Prime Minister is just not as advertised.

With his hand on his heart, he promised reconciliation.

Instead, he is pitting first nation against first nation.

On softwood and the economy he said "just trust me".

Yet investment and companies continue to flee.

There are no savings left for those rainy days.

As the bank account has been drained by his sunny ways.

He jets off to exotic locations on vacations,

Offending our neighbours and many foreign nations.

He bought Loblaw's their fridges and freezers and such.

Even though he promised to be there after the fires

Aside from photos and selfies he really has not given us much.

Our fire-damaged fridges and freezers replacement, we paid.

His fake environment plan, just a carbon tax raid.

"Let the debate reign" said the Papineau PM.

"It's not about us; it's all about them."

Seventy-one times he has shut down debate.

Another Liberal promise broken by this date.

All was forgotten after the ballots were cast.

But all is not lost.

This October, Canadians can ensure it is his last.

*Statements by Members***PRESIDENT OF CROATIA**

Mr. Bob Bratina (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the diversity of our great country creates historic events, and for Canadians of Croatian descent, today is such a day. Today our Governor General will host Her Excellency Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic, President of the Republic of Croatia, at Rideau Hall. This marks the first official state visit of Croatia's head of state since the declaration of its independence in 1991.

It is a tribute to the thousands of Croatian immigrants, such as my father and grandparents, who have contributed to the success of Canada at every level, from common labour to arts, science, politics, sports and perhaps most importantly, as great neighbours and citizens.

President Grabar-Kitarovic has made a remarkable impact on the world scene since her election and currently holds the Chair of the Council of Women World Leaders. So many Canadians have received a warm welcome visiting our beautiful homeland, which we call *Lijepa nasa domovino*, that we can now say to her excellency, *dobro dosla u Kanadu*, welcome to Canada.

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WOMEN DELIVER

Ms. Kamal Khara (Brampton West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Vancouver will soon host the Women Deliver 2019 Conference, the world's largest gathering on gender equality and the health, rights and well-being of women and girls.

Women Deliver is more than just a conference; it is a movement to take action and make our voices heard. During the month of May, we are calling on all Canadians to mobilize to advance gender equality in their communities, in Canada and around the world. The yellow arrow pointed toward ourselves is a reminder that each of us is an ally for change.

In May we call on all to drive progress and leave a lasting legacy of a fairer and more equal society, where Canada continues to be a leader on the international stage, because we know that when we empower women and girls, we not only empower their communities or their countries, we empower the entire world.

* * *

JUSTICE

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on March 31, one of the Prime Minister's lawyers sent a letter threatening a lawsuit if the leader of the official opposition did not withdraw the following statements regarding the Prime Minister's involvement in the SNC-Lavalin corruption scandal: that "documents and recordings are concrete evidence that proves [the Prime Minister] led a campaign to politically interfere in SNC-Lavalin's criminal prosecution"; that the Prime Minister "personally gave the orders and when the former Attorney General refused to follow them and break the law, she was fired"; that the Prime Minister "looked Canadians in the eye and told them that no one had raised concerns with him. This is false"; and that "[t]he entire SNC-Lavalin scandal is corruption on top of corruption on top of corruption".

The official opposition leader responded saying that if the Prime Minister intends to commence a lawsuit, he should proceed

immediately. That was more than a month and a half ago. Is the Prime Minister's threatened lawsuit, like the Prime Minister, simply not as advertised?

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as it turns out, someone ended up being better than advertised. The number of the day is 107,000, and 107,000 is the number of jobs Canada added in April alone. It is undeniable proof from Statistics Canada that our economy is booming, with the most jobs added in one month since 1976.

As stated by one senior economist at TD Bank, this is "a solid message that employers have faith in the Canadian economy." In fact, since 2015, Canadians have created over one million jobs, smashing growth records and bringing unemployment levels to the lowest this country has seen in generations.

While Conservatives carry on with drumming up slogans and personal attacks, while systematically voting against every policy that has led to these historic employment levels, on this side of the House we will remain focused on building a robust economy that drives Canada forward and improves the quality of life for everyone.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, what if I told you we could produce plastic-like products made from natural agricultural waste fibres that are 100% compostable? I am proud that this exact innovation has been created by two of my constituents from Kingsville. Last week Mike and Victor Tiessen received the 2019 National Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada Synergy Award for Innovation. They helped create a biomass product created from coffee plants that is 100% compostable.

Prism Farms partnered with three Ontario companies to develop biodegradable materials that are a substitute for petroleum-based plastics. They use natural fibres and resins found in non-food, agricultural material and waste streams to create these bio-composite materials. One of their materials is now used in single-serve coffee pods by companies like McDonald's and Club Coffee.

This innovation will reduce our dependency on single-use plastics and the waste that is building up in our landfills and oceans. Canadians like Mike and Victor are working hard to create cutting-edge, enterprising solutions that could truly change our world for the better.

Oral Questions

ORAL QUESTIONS

• (1415)

[Translation]

INTERESTS OF QUEBEC

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government was not ready to manage our country. Its spending is out of control, and it is accumulating permanent deficits.

Now the Liberals are doing what they have always done best, which is bickering. They are infighting, arguing with the provinces on the carbon tax, and rekindling old quarrels with Quebec by refusing to respect provincial jurisdictions.

The Liberal government attacked Quebec by giving up percentages of supply management in its negotiations. The steel and aluminum tariffs are still in effect. Quebec's forestry industry is taking a beating, with Canada still in a dispute over softwood lumber and the legislative changes that are threatening forestry co-operatives. Restrictions are being considered to protect the woodland caribou. Mismanagement of the fighter jet renewal file is threatening Quebec's aerospace industry. Davie delivered the *Asterix* on time and on budget, but it is still waiting for more contracts, like the one for the *Obelix*.

Quebec deserves better.

* * *

[English]

LEONA ROMANADO

Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday was Mother's Day, and it was the first one without my mom. Leona Laurent Romanado passed away suddenly at the tender age of 67 on November 30. She was married to my dad for 49 years.

Leona, or Lee, as she was known to her friends, was a stay-at-home mom who raised me and my two brothers. She was the grandmother of five grandchildren. She was the caregiver, the cook, the maid, the maker of Halloween costumes and thousands of cups of coffee, the disciplinarian, the doer of homework, the applier of band-aids, the one who united us all.

Lee was the queen of Christmas and spent weeks decorating the house. She loved spending time with my dad up at camp tending to her flower garden.

After my election, my mother would put CPAC on hoping to catch a glimpse of me speaking in the House. I know she is watching me from above.

Today and every day, I honour her and the lessons she taught me. Happy Mother's Day.

[English]

JUSTICE

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Vice-Admiral Mark Norman and his defence team have been clear. The Prime Minister and his office tried to interfere in the case against the vice-admiral, both prior to the charges being laid and during the proceedings. In fact, Marie Henein said, "you don't put your finger and try to weigh in on the scales of justice, that is not what should be happening". She was talking about the Liberals.

Just exactly why did the Prime Minister try to weigh in on the scales of justice and interfere in the vice-admiral's court case?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. As we have said a number of times on this side of the House, we have full faith in our institutions in Canada.

The charges in question were laid by the prosecution service by the director of public prosecutions. The process was managed by the prosecution service of Canada, and the stay was decided by the prosecution service of Canada. The evidence was gathered by the RCMP. It was turned over to the prosecution service of Canada.

The director of public prosecutions as well as the prosecutor in this case have both stated that there was no government interference or contact.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are not questioning the independence of the public prosecutor. We know that the decision to stay the trial was theirs, but as Norman's lawyer said very directly, the decision to stay the charges was made independently, despite the attempts of the Liberals to interfere—not because of but despite their attempts.

Here we are five days later and still no answers from the Prime Minister. Will he get up today and answer this question, or will he appear before the defence committee and start answering some questions on this?

• (1420)

[Translation]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to last week's decision, the charges brought against Vice-Admiral Norman were stayed. As confirmed by the Public Prosecution Service of Canada last 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 is completely absurd.

[English]

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister engaged in political interference in this case from the beginning. Vice-Admiral Norman's defence counsel said, "No person in this country should ever walk into a courtroom and feel like they are fighting their elected government or any sort of political [interference]". She was talking about the Liberal government.

Oral Questions

Will the Liberals on the defence committee block the truth from coming out, or will they allow this to come before the committee, allow us to call witnesses, and get to the bottom of this, yes or no?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the committees operate independently of the government, and we will wait for the results of their deliberations. As for the legal process involving Vice-Admiral Norman, the Public Prosecution Service of Canada noted when it stayed the charge that no other factors were considered in that 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 completely absurd.

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INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me reiterate that the Liberals are the only ones who do not think there was any interference in Vice-Admiral Norman's case.

Today, the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities was on Montreal's north shore to make an announcement about an infrastructure project in Quebec, but there was a big problem. The Government of Quebec was not even there. It is an infrastructure project in Quebec, a federal provincial-partnership that did not seem to include Quebec.

My question for the Prime Minister is simple: Why was the Government of Quebec not there for the federal-provincial announcement?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am thrilled to have this opportunity to talk about the Government of Canada's \$187-billion, 10-year infrastructure plan. Our historic plan is not only changing the way our country works and will work in the future, it is also making significant investments in middle-class families, investments that achieve both environmental and economic goals, investments that will bring about major change across Quebec.

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government is at war with Ontario, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, New Brunswick, British Columbia and Quebec. This weekend, the Minister of Families, who is from Quebec, and his colleague from Louis-Hébert directly and publicly attacked the Premier of Quebec and the Government of Quebec. Their attitude is disrespectful towards the Government of Quebec.

I will repeat my question. Why did an announcement for a provincial-federal project, an infrastructure project for Quebec, take place without the Government of Quebec present?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am even more delighted to talk about the Canadian government's investments in the Quebec City region.

Working in collaboration with major partners in the Quebec City region, we developed a modern, defining transit infrastructure project for my city, Quebec City, and the surrounding region. This project will reduce congestion and let families spend less time

driving to work or day care. It will reduce pollution, increase families' quality of life and boost economic growth. We are very proud of this project.

* * *

[*English*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, across Canada we are hearing a powerful sense of urgency around fighting climate change. While Liberals and Conservatives use the issue to beat each other up, a closer look shows that they actually have the same emission targets and the same love of pipelines, and that both parties will exempt the biggest polluters from paying a price.

New Democrats, though, are bringing people together with concrete action, ambitious targets and making sure no worker or community is left behind. Will the Liberals join us in declaring a climate emergency?

● (1425)

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we work very hard every day to reduce pollution, create good middle-class jobs, keep life affordable and build a clean and prosperous future for our kids and grandkids. We have a serious plan that was built, with Canadians, to tackle climate change and to make the clean economy affordable for everyone, with more than 50 measures that include investing in renewables to get 90% cleaner electricity, supporting a thousand projects across the country when it comes to transportation, and also phasing out coal. We will work tirelessly to make sure we reduce pollution.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, people are paying the price for climate change. If we do not act now, the cost will be enormous. The Liberals' policies are sending the country in the wrong direction. They bought a pipeline, and they continue to subsidize the oil sector and exempt big polluters. We have to make different choices if we want better results.

Will the Liberals have the courage to support our motion to declare a climate emergency?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are working hard every day to reduce pollution, create good jobs for the middle class, keep life affordable and build a prosperous future for our children and grandchildren.

We have a plan to fight climate change and strengthen the economy for everyone. Our plan includes 50 measures, including investing in renewable energy to have 90% more clean electricity, supporting more than 1,000 public transit projects across the country and phasing out coal.

We will continue to work hard to ensure that we reduce pollution in Canada.

*Oral Questions***FINANCE**

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians from coast to coast are paying the price for the Liberals' inaction on money laundering. This inaction leads to higher housing prices, loss of public funds and an increase in organized crime.

Instead of leading the charge, the Liberals refuse to act and are leaving the British Columbia government to fend for itself. The Liberals must strengthen our laws to ensure that the guilty parties are held accountable.

Will they do it?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government realizes the importance of maintaining a fair and equitable housing market for all Canadians. That is why the Canada Revenue Agency increased audits on real estate transactions in British Columbia and Ontario.

Since October 2015, these audits have brought in more than \$794 million. The \$50-million investment allocated in budget 2019 will help the Canada Revenue Agency step up its efforts by creating four new teams dedicated to real estate audits.

Let me be clear: tax cheats can no longer hide.

[*English*]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, across this country, Canadians are struggling to buy a home, but it turns out that money laundering has directly increased the cost of housing. In fact, last year alone, there was \$47 billion of money laundered in Canada.

Conservative inaction got us into this mess. The Liberals have done little to fix it. Will the Liberals now commit to creating a registry for real owners, to making sure the money-laundering unit actually does its work and to ensuring that there are meaningful penalties imposed on criminals who break the law?

Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of Border Security and Organized Crime Reduction, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have the opportunity to direct the member opposite to take a look at budget 2019, where our government has made significant new investments in increasing law enforcement capacity and brought forward new regulatory changes in the budget implementation act, which I urge them to support.

These new regulations will provide for greater transparency for federal organizations in determining beneficial ownership. They also create a new offence of recklessness, which will facilitate both investigations and successful prosecutions. As well, we are making significant investments in enhancing the capability of FINTRAC and the RCMP to work collaboratively with our provincial and territorial partners.

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JUSTICE

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister said at an event that he regrets the process Vice-Admiral Norman had to go through, but he seems to have forgotten that it was the Prime Minister who hung the Vice-Admiral out to dry in the first place. Now that Vice-Admiral Norman has been declared innocent, it is time for this corrupt Liberal government

to explain why it obstructed justice, used code words to hide its actions and refused to turn over evidence.

Will the Prime Minister allow the national defence committee to examine the politically motivated attack against Vice-Admiral Norman, yes or no?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Serge Cormier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as my colleague is aware, since he sits on that committee, the committee operates independently—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

● (1430)

The Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence.

Mr. Serge Cormier: Mr. Speaker, as the member is aware, since he sits on that committee, the committee operates independently from the government and we will wait for the results of their deliberations.

As for the legal process involving Vice-Admiral Norman, the Public Prosecution Service of Canada noted when it stayed the charge, that 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 from the opposition is completely absurd.

[*English*]

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what is absurd is the Prime Minister's own actions. While the Prime Minister claims the process was free from interference, Vice-Admiral Norman was vindicated in spite of the Liberals' attempt to obstruct justice and politically interfere in his case. The miscarriage of justice is yet another example of someone standing up to the Prime Minister and getting crushed for getting in his way.

Will the Prime Minister apologize to Vice-Admiral Mark Norman, show Canadians what they have been hiding and give Vice-Admiral Norman his old job back?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Serge Cormier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, the PPSC said that no other factors were considered in this decision, nor was there any outside contact or influence, including political influence, in either the initial decision to prosecute Mr. Norman or in the decision to stay the charge. Once again, any accusation to the contrary is absurd.

As we said, general Vance will sit down and speak with Vice-Admiral Norman about what comes next at the appropriate time.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, do the terms “Kraken”, “C34” and “The Boss” mean anything to you? They are code names used to secretly identify Admiral Norman to prevent information about him from being released under access to information requests.

Oral Questions

What is more, the Privy Council Office confirmed that at least 73 people were aware of the Liberal cabinet discussion about taking the *Asterix* contract away from the Davie shipyard. However, the Prime Minister only gave the RCMP the name of Vice-Admiral Norman for investigation. That is political interference.

When will the Liberals admit it and apologize?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the investigation in question was led by the RCMP, an institution that we, in Canada, are very proud of. The RCMP turned the evidence it collected over to the Public Prosecution Service of Canada, another institution that we are very proud of. This was a criminal prosecution led by the director of the Public Prosecution Service and she was the one who decided to stay the charges. There was no interference.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if the Prime Minister did not have a grudge against Vice-Admiral Norman, he would have given the 73 names to the RCMP. He would not have prevented Mr. Norman's lawyers from getting the documents they requested. He ruined Vice-Admiral Norman's reputation and nearly succeeded in making Davie lose a large contract.

Will the Prime Minister allow the Standing Committee on National Defence to shed light on this affair, or will he continue with his political obstruction?

Mr. Serge Cormier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, my colleague knows that committees operate independently from the government. We will wait for the outcome of the deliberations. Once again, with respect to the legal process involving Vice-Admiral Norman, the Public Prosecution Service of Canada noted when it stayed the charge that 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. Once again, any accusations otherwise from the opposition are completely absurd.

[*English*]

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Public Services and Procurement says the government cannot be apologizing for the public prosecution doing its job in the Vice-Admiral Norman case. However, let us be clear. The public prosecution protected the rule of law and requires no apology. It is the Prime Minister and the Liberals who politically interfered to tip the scales of justice and punish Vice-Admiral Norman.

When will the Prime Minister admit to Canadians that what he did was wrong and apologize to Vice-Admiral Norman?

• (1435)

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Public Services and Procurement and Accessibility, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me be very clear. The process that unfolded did so completely independent of our government. The investigation, the decision to stay proceedings and, in fact, the prosecution itself were handled by the Public Prosecution Service of Canada.

Canadians can be very confident in the independence of our judicial system.

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are confident in the director of public prosecutions, but the Minister of Public Services and Procurement stated that the Prime Minister's saying Vice-Admiral Norman would be in court before he was even charged was "not the best framing of words".

It was also not the best framing when the Prime Minister refused to provide court-ordered documents and tampered with witnesses, or when the Minister of National Defence refused to pay Norman's legal fees, stating he was guilty. Clearly, the only one being framed was Vice-Admiral Norman.

When will the Prime Minister apologize for what his government has done to Mark Norman?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there were requests from the court, and we provided the court with more than 8,000 documents from seven different government agencies. In fact, the court complimented us on our co-operation in this matter. The decision to redact those documents was made not by the government but by an apolitical agency.

Canadians can be assured that our judicial system, our prosecution system, operates completely independent of government, and we can be proud of this.

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians deserve a transparent and open legal system. The Norman case has been anything but.

We know that the Prime Minister's Office, the Department of Defence and the Privy Council Office withheld important documents in this case. How is it that Gerald Butts got his old texts and emails within days of quitting, but Vice-Admiral Norman has waited a year and a half?

Liberals have interfered with yet another judicial process. If they value the rule of law, why are Liberals blocking Canadians' access to this information?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all the various premises of that question are categorically false.

The Department of Justice co-operated with the court in order to provide the requested documents. The documents that were requested were given, more than 8,000 of them from seven different agencies. Of course that takes time. The redaction was done independently of political bodies.

The court itself cited the government and its co-operation in this matter.

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the denial story is not working. The Liberal government does not get to decide to uphold the rule of law when it benefits only the Liberals.

The Prime Minister promised he would do things differently, but his office has now been involved in two different cases of potentially interfering in our independent justice system. Mark Norman's lawyer clearly said the PMO was "counselling witnesses as to what they could and could not say".

Oral Questions

Our independent justice system does not belong to the Liberals. When will they get out of the way and allow Canadians to know what happened?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a curious question with an accusation that is baseless.

In fact, in this particular case, the PPSC was acting independently of the federal government because the supervisory role in this case, under the Criminal Code, was actually held by the Attorney General for Ontario.

The director of public prosecutions and the prosecutor in question have said that there was no contact or government interference in this case.

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[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after two months of inaction on the canola crisis with China, the Prime Minister is finally realizing that this is a political crisis. His reaction, however, is surprising: he is going to continue to do nothing and wait. He did not file a complaint with the WTO and he has not appointed a new ambassador. He is doing absolutely nothing.

The Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food is returning from Japan after a two-day meeting of G20 agriculture ministers.

Did she stand up for Canada's canola farmers? Did she demand that her Chinese counterparts set a firm date for us to send a delegation of scientists to China? Yes or no?

[English]

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of International Trade Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am sorry that the hon. member has not been paying closer attention to the file. If he had been paying closer attention to the file, he would know that there has been continuous engagement and that we seek to be invited to China to talk to the scientists about the accusation that there is impurity in our canola.

Second, had he been paying attention to the generous support for producers, which has been called a very important—

• (1440)

The Deputy Speaker: Order. I will ask the hon. minister to finish up in the last 10 seconds or so, and then we will go to the next question. There is too much noise in the House.

Hon. Jim Carr: Mr. Speaker, the member is not paying attention to what the Premier of Saskatchewan has said, nor is he paying attention to the expansion of export markets, nor is he paying attention to the very interesting meeting that the Minister of Agriculture had in Japan with her counterpart. We will know more about that in a matter of days.

Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a loan guarantee is no substitute for weak trade policy.

The Conservative leader has outlined three concrete steps to stand up for canola farmers: appoint an ambassador to China, launch a WTO trade complaint against China, and pull funds from the Chinese-run Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. Instead of taking

our advice, the Prime Minister sent the agriculture minister to the G20, where she could not even be bothered to raise this issue once with the Chinese.

Will the Liberals ever stand up to China and take action?

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of International Trade Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are signing trade agreements, which means 1.5 billion customers in Canada's free trade zone. Canada is the only G7 nation to have a free trade agreement with the other six. That sounds like a strong trade policy to me.

How about an increase of 17% in Canadian exports to Japan after ratification of the CPTPP? I would call that a strong trade policy.

What is weak is the Conservative opposition's understanding of what strength means in trade policy.

Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our relations with China are at an all-time low, and all the Prime Minister is willing to do is to blame the Americans.

China has banned Canadian pork, banned Canadian canola and detained two Canadians.

While China is bullying Canada, the Prime Minister is giving over a quarter of a billion dollars to China's Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

Will the Prime Minister quit blaming others for his failures, pull all funding to the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, file a trade challenge at the WTO and immediately appoint a new ambassador?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance (Youth Economic Opportunity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again the Conservatives continue the Harper era of turning their backs on the world.

They should not be cheering. As a result of the types of policies that the Conservatives had, they had some of the lowest growth since the Great Depression.

We on this side, with Canadians, have created over one million jobs, and that is because we know a strong global economy is good for Canada and good for Canadians.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last week the Liberals dispatched one of their MPs to China, not to demand the release of Canadian citizens and not to fight for our exporters, but to suggest partnership in our Arctic with China. Days after the United States questioned our sovereignty and raised risks about Russia and China in the Arctic, the Liberal government rushes to partner with China.

When will the Liberal government start getting serious with China?

Oral Questions

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me start by addressing the question of the Northwest Passage to which the hon. member has alluded.

It is important to state very clearly in the House and for all Canadians who are listening Canada's absolute claim to the Northwest Passage. This is a claim based on geography. It is a claim based on history. It is a claim based on who we are as Canadians, and we are very clear on that, as I was in my meeting with Secretary Pompeo in Finland last week.

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[Translation]

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when the government asks regular folks to pay their taxes but gives tax breaks to billion-dollar companies, there is clearly something wrong.

Canada is the only G7 nation that applies sales tax as if the Internet did not exist.

The NDP will shortly be introducing a bill that will finally extend tax compliance to Facebook, Google and Netflix. Multinational web corporations need to follow the same rules as Canadian companies; otherwise, the playing field will not be level.

Will the government finally join the 21st century and support the NDP's bill to adapt our tax laws to the digital economy?

[English]

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance (Youth Economic Opportunity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to ensuring that Canada's tax system is fair and creates a strong middle class, but the issue of how to appropriately tax web giants is not uniquely Canadian. In fact, it is a global issue. That is precisely why Canada is working with our international partners, including the OECD, to come up with a consensus-based approach, one that ensures every company pays its fair share but that also fosters in the country a space of innovation in digital technology.

* * *

● (1445)

FINANCE

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the fact is that the Liberals are protecting the web giants from paying taxes, and that is irresponsible.

Now a B.C. report estimates that money laundering in Canada under the Liberals now reaches close to \$50 billion annually. Money laundering is not a victimless crime, and it has caused a major increase in home prices in the Lower Mainland and elsewhere. The Liberal government refuses to crack down on rampant money laundering. It failed to allocate staffing and resources; it refused the necessary tools.

Why is the government refusing to take these actions, and who are they protecting now?

[Translation]

Hon. Diane LeBouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government recognizes the importance of ensuring a fair housing market for all Canadians. That is why the Canada Revenue Agency has increased audits of real estate transactions in British Columbia and Ontario.

Since October 2015, these audits have resulted in more than \$794 million in unreported assessed income. Budget 2019 announced a \$50-million investment that will help the CRA step up its efforts by creating four new dedicated real estate audit teams.

Let me be very clear that tax cheats cannot hide anymore.

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[English]

STATUS OF WOMEN

Ms. Iqra Khalid (Mississauga—Erin Mills, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in June, Vancouver will host Women Deliver, the world's largest conference on gender equality and the health, rights and well-being of women and girls around the world. Women Deliver brings together people from over 160 countries with a common goal of activating and mobilizing communities across the globe to push the needle toward progress.

Can the Minister of International Development and Minister for Women and Gender Equality tell this House how Canadians can join this movement, promote gender equality and change the narrative worldwide?

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of International Development and Minister for Women and Gender Equality, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in Canada and around the world, women are rising. Global women's marches, #MeToo and other movements like it remind us of the progress made, the work remaining and the need to push back against the push-back.

This June, in Vancouver, we will be hosting Women Deliver, an opportunity to raise awareness and build momentum to achieve the sustainable development goals by 2030. Our government believes that advancing gender equality is the right thing to do. It is also about tapping into the \$150-billion economy in Canada and the \$12-trillion economy around the world.

Our approach is working. A million jobs have been created in Canada since we were elected.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am quite sure that two hon. members over here could participate in this very important issue too.

[Translation]

The Prime Minister said something particularly remarkable in December 2015. He said that his pledge to balance the budget in 2019 was "very" cast in stone. That is what the Prime Minister said. He said that a zero deficit in 2019 was cast in stone, but exactly the opposite is true.

Oral Questions

The Prime Minister's word on public finances is worthless.

When the country is in a period of economic growth, particularly when that growth is due to American wealth, that is the time to pay off our debts, not rack up more. Are the Liberals aware of that?

[English]

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance (Youth Economic Opportunity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am thrilled to answer this question from my hon. colleague.

Let us talk about our record: a million new jobs created by Canadians, the best growth we have seen in decades, unemployment rates down, lifting 300,000 children out of poverty and giving more benefits to Canadian seniors. I am not surprised it has taken them this long to ask a question about the budget, because when we look at the Conservatives' record, we see they are failures.

This Prime Minister and this Minister of Finance have delivered for Canadians, and that is precisely what we are going to continue.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when the Conservatives were in office, Canadian job creators generated one million jobs. The Conservative government did that with a balanced budget. The Liberals may be creating jobs, but they are also running massive deficits, even though they promised to run only small deficits and to balance the budget by 2019. They did exactly the opposite of what they promised.

Are the Liberals aware that, in a few months, when they travel around Canada to tell Canadians how they plan to manage the public purse, they will not have any credibility because they lied to Canadians in 2015?

• (1450)

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am always astonished that my colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent is able to keep a straight face when he says that the Conservatives balanced the budget, since they actually added \$150 billion to the national debt.

What was the result? The Conservatives had the worst export growth since the Second World War, along with the worst job growth. Canada's growth was anemic for 10 years. It was a decade of economic failure.

I will say this next part slowly so that he understands. Since we took office three and a half years ago, we have created one million jobs in Canada and 20%—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Carleton.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the difference is this: We created a million jobs when the world was in economic crisis. We did it while raising middle-class incomes more than any government before or since. We did so by increasing the amount people had in their pockets and making it possible to pay their bills. Right now, half of Canadians are \$200 away from insolvency while their government drowns in debt.

Is that not really the Liberal agenda: more debt, lower incomes and a declining economy?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance (Youth Economic Opportunity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite just described the failed Conservative plan: more debt, lower wages for Canadians and less growth in the economy, but they did increase unemployment rates.

We cannot take any lessons from the Conservatives. They just simply cannot stand it. Their plan does not work, and now they do not know what to do.

However, on this side of the House, our plan is working. We have invested in the middle class, and as a result we have created over a million new jobs.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: This back-and-forth is interesting, but it is taking some time. These presentations and standing ovations and such are cutting into our time. I would ask hon. members to use their discretion in that regard.

The hon. member for Carleton.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Actually, Mr. Speaker, the cold hard facts delivered from Statistics Canada demonstrate the best middle-class income growth of any government, before or since, happened under the Conservatives: a million net new jobs, the lowest debt and deficit in the G7, the highest economic growth in the G7, the last in and first out of the great global recession.

That is what we did in the hard global times. Imagine what we can do when times are good. We will eliminate their deficit, lower taxes and leave more money in the pockets of people who earned it. When will Liberals learn that their theory of trickle-down government does not work?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance (Youth Economic Opportunity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not have the stomach to imagine what the Conservatives would continue to do with our economy after the disastrous 10 years they had. I am glad that they also recognize now the importance—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: It is now too noisy. I am sure there are other hon. members who wish to hear what the parliamentary secretary is saying. The same thing can happen when we have responses from the other side. I would ask all hon. members to keep the noise down.

I would ask the parliamentary secretary to wrap up in 15 seconds.

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell: Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day, the Conservatives will continue the Ford government plan, which is cuts to Canadian families who need help and increased spending for millionaires. We are focused on Canadians, and as a result we have one of the best economies in the G7. We are going to keep working for Canadians.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, William Morissette lives in New Brunswick and has a cancer that makes it impossible for him to work. He has used up his 15 weeks of sickness benefits and does not have access to disability benefits.

In addition to fighting cancer, William has to fight the Liberal government, even though there are 32 Liberal members in Atlantic Canada. William, like thousands of others, believed the Prime Minister and the minister responsible for this file when they promised to enhance the EI's unfair sickness benefits.

When will they keep this promise to William and thousands of other sick people who cannot work and do not have a dime?

• (1455)

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for raising this issue, which is central to the mandate we received from Canadians to work for middle-class families and for those families who find it difficult to join the middle class for all sorts of reasons, including the loss of employment. Terrible health problems affect families' incomes and their confidence in the future.

We have made substantial improvements to the employment insurance regime. We enhanced the five special benefits that already existed in 2015. We added two other special benefits, but it is clear that there is still much work to be done.

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[English]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the changes to the asylum system the Prime Minister tried to sneak through in the omnibus budget bill show his true colours.

Despite Liberal promises, there was no gender-based analysis done. When experts pointed this out at the immigration committee, government members had no answers. The changes will disproportionately impact women and girls fleeing violence by denying their right to seek protection in Canada. Forty-six women's organizations from across Canada sent an open letter to the Prime Minister condemning these changes.

Will the Prime Minister do what is right and withdraw these provisions, or is he just content that his version of feminism is just for show?

Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of Border Security and Organized Crime Reduction, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me be very clear. Canada remains absolutely committed to a fair and compassionate refugee protection system, and everyone who comes to this country will be afforded a hearing.

We have been equally clear that any individual who is determined to be in need of protection will receive Canada's protection.

CARBON PRICING

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a majority of Canadians are really worried about the rising price of gas. In my riding, in my province, they are looking at tight budgets already and deciding what essentials need to be cut.

The Liberals' handing out millions of dollars to their billionaire friends at Loblaws is doing nothing for affordability. Meanwhile, we have the Prime Minister and the environment minister jet-setting around the world with abandon.

When will the Liberals finally admit that their carbon tax is hurting those who are the most vulnerable?

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would point out to the hon. member that a majority of Canadians are similarly opposed to provincial governments wasting taxpayers' dollars to fight climate action instead of climate change.

The fact is that we are moving forward with a plan that is going to reduce our emissions. Our climate is facing a crisis, but we can actually do something about it if we pull together. The Conservatives have not asked me a single question about what we can do to protect our environment, despite having been in this chamber for months. They would reverse course.

We are bringing emissions down, and we are doing it in a way that is helping to grow the economy. We have added over a million jobs to the economy with the help of Canadians, put more money in the pockets of middle-class families, and done right by our environment, as well.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals do not have an environmental plan; they have a tax plan. Since they put the carbon tax in place, the price of gas has gone up, the price of home heating has gone up, and Canadians are paying more for food as businesses raise their prices to cover the costs of the carbon tax.

Why are the Liberals continuing to raise taxes on families and seniors who can least afford it?

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows that our plan to put a price on pollution is going to put more money in the pockets of eight out of 10 families in the province of Ontario. I am curious whether the hon. member is actually going to be claiming her climate action incentive this tax year.

The fact is that the Conservatives were not concerned about affordability until it became politically convenient. When we put more money in the pockets of nine out of 10 Canadian families by improving the Canada child benefit, they voted against it. When we cut taxes for nine million middle-class Canadians and raised them on the wealthiest 1%, they voted against it. When we beefed up the guaranteed income supplement for low-income single seniors to make life more affordable for the most vulnerable Canadians, they voted against it.

*Oral Questions***SMALL BUSINESS**

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, here is how the Liberal plan is working. The number of Canadians who are \$200 or less away from not being able to pay their bills every month has climbed to 48%, while 26% cannot even cover their bills.

What does the Prime Minister do? He imposes a carbon tax on the necessities of life, driving up the cost of everything for seniors and families who cannot afford it. Gas prices are skyrocketing and groceries are going up with this new carbon tax. Why does the Prime Minister not just admit that his plan is not an environmental plan? It is a tax plan that will do nothing to reduce emissions.

• (1500)

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the first month that our plan to put a price on pollution took effect, the hon. member's province added 45,000 jobs to the provincial economy. If he is claiming that this is going to be gloom and doom, I am curious as to why it is working so well.

The fact is that, from day one, we have had a plan that is going to reduce emissions; from day one, we have had a plan that is going to grow the economy; and, most important, from day one we have had a plan that will make life more affordable for Canadians. If the hon. member does not want to take my word for it, I would gladly point him to the Parliamentary Budget Officer's report, which confirms this to be a fact.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Gordie Hogg (South Surrey—White Rock, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the United Nations recently released its report on biodiversity. The headlines read, "Nature's Dangerous Decline 'Unprecedented'"; "One million species face extinction"; and "How to fix nature to avoid human misery". Innumerable scientific studies have documented the human cost of climate change, yet many people and parties, even in this House, remain stuck in denial, with no plan to save nature and thus humanity. Will the parliamentary secretary please give us specifics with respect to the action that is being taken by our government to protect nature and thus humankind?

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the UN report to which the hon. member refers paints a very stark picture of the challenge facing nature today. The fact is that since the 1970s the world has lost 60% of its wildlife. We also know that Canada is one of five countries that represent three-quarters of the world's remaining wilderness. There is time to do something about it if we pull together. Our government has made the single largest investment in protecting nature in the history of our country and has committed to doubling protected spaces.

This is a statistic that should shock the conscience of all Canadians, but it is something we have time to turn around if we all just pull together for once.

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a tax system that is fair, efficient and modern is one of seven requests of over 200,000 Canadian businesses that just want the government to stop throwing up barriers and allow them to thrive and succeed. Instead, the Liberals have given Canadian businesses tax increases, like a job-killing carbon tax and higher payroll taxes, and complicated red tape that will hurt many small businesses. Will the Liberals accept the recommendations of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, or are they just going to keep calling Canadian small business owners tax cheats?

Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of Small Business and Export Promotion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government works hard for small businesses. We have cut over 400 regulatory irritants for small businesses. We have cut more red tape in the last three and a half years than the Conservatives did in the last 10 years. That is working hard for small businesses in this country.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the southern resident killer whales are under immediate threat of extinction, yet the Liberal government's recovery plan lacks urgency and fails to take on the major threat to these orcas: oil tankers and freighters. While the government has banned local small craft from the Swiftsure Bank, the most critical piece of habitat for the orcas, it will continue to allow more than 13,000 freighters and oil tankers to transit the bank each year. That makes no sense. In order to protect these endangered orcas, will the government act immediately to realign the commercial shipping lanes and move the major noise and pollution threats away from the Swiftsure Bank?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are taking unprecedented steps with respect to transportation, with respect to ships passing through not only the Juan de Fuca Strait, where they displace themselves, but also where they slow down when they are going through Boundary Pass and the Haro Strait. We have also put in place minimum distances from southern resident killer whales that are unprecedented and make us leaders in the world. We take this issue extremely seriously, and we are very proud of what we have done.

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SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. Kyle Peterson (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, small business owners in both Newmarket and Aurora have told me how important it is for them to export to new markets. Reaching global markets not only helps their businesses find new clients, but it also means better-paying jobs right here at home. How is the Minister of Small Business and Export Promotion helping our best and most promising small businesses prepare to export to these new markets?

Oral Questions

Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of Small Business and Export Promotion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Newmarket—Aurora is right. When small businesses export, they are more productive; they create more jobs; they grow and they scale at higher rates. Recently, I announced an investment of \$6.7 million to help 1,000 Canadian SMEs grow their businesses, including SMEs in the northern communities in Ontario, so they can successfully put a plan together and successfully export.

Canada's trade agreements give our businesses access to 1.5 billion customers in the global marketplace. Our government is going to work hard for small businesses, today and every day.

* * *

● (1505)

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Loblaw's is one of the richest companies in Canada. Canadians were outraged when they found out that the Liberals gave the company \$12 million to buy new fridges, even though Loblaw's did not need or deserve that money. This is the same company that ripped off Canadians by rigging bread prices for over a decade.

Is this the Liberals' idea of a climate change plan? Which other well-connected companies are getting handouts from the government's low-carbon economy fund?

Mr. Sean Fraser (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the low-carbon economy fund had an open application process, and we tasked officials to identify the most effective projects they could find in terms of dollars spent to have emissions come down. This was one of 54 projects.

However, I would like to point out that this is just one of over 50 measures we have implemented. We are putting a price on pollution, which is making life more affordable. We are investing in public transit, and yes, we are investing in energy efficiency. The fact is that we are able to do this at the same time that the Canadian economy has added over one million jobs.

The Conservatives have no plan for the environment, and no plan for the economy. They seem content with turning back the clock to the days of Stephen Harper.

* * *

[Translation]

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. Simon Marcell (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, not a single penny has been budgeted to compensate supply-managed producers before the election. The Parliamentary Budget Officer has confirmed it.

This means that the \$3.9 billion promised by the Liberals has become an election promise. To those farmers, however, that money is not an election issue; it is crucial to keeping their businesses afloat.

Dairy farmers are saying they want to see concrete action before the election, and that would include a cheque.

When will they get their cheque?

[English]

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of International Trade Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member knows that the minister and the department have been in constant conversation with the producers, and that the commitment was made a very long time ago. The commitment will be delivered, and there will be full and fair compensation to an industry that is so important to the Canadian economy.

[Translation]

Mr. Simon Marcell (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the time for conversation is over. It is time to write a cheque.

We are not asking the minister to reassure our farmers; we are asking him to compensate them. The Parliamentary Budget Officer said he would be worried if he were a farmer. The money the government promised is not there. It is not in the budget.

The message to farmers is that they have to vote for the Liberal Party if they want to get their money.

With the election right around the corner, instead of blackmailing our farmers, will the government send them a cheque before the end of this session of Parliament?

[English]

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of International Trade Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member knows that throughout our conversations internationally we have steadfastly supported the supply management system in Canada. We believe that it is important, not only for those regions where it has been important for a long time, but for the Canadian agricultural economy. The promise was made that there would be full and fair compensation, and that is a promise that will be delivered.

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IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Darshan Singh Kang (Calgary Skyview, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, it is great to have foreign students come to Canada to learn from our world-class educational institutions. It is good for the world, and it is good for Canada. While these students are learning in school, they are also working and contributing to our economy.

However, I read an article today about a student named Jobandeep Sandhu, who is facing deportation for working too much. This is sad, and it is not right. Will the Minister of Immigration consider raising the number of hours that an international student can legally work in Canada?

[Translation]

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government knows that international students contribute immensely to our economy, our culture and our society, with economic spinoffs worth about \$15 billion annually.

Routine Proceedings

[English]

International students are welcome in Canada. We have made changes to the post-graduate work permit to allow them to work and stay in Canada, and immigrate permanently to our country, for those who wish to do so.

It is important for all applicants to live up to the requirements of the immigration system in this stream. We are attracting the best and the brightest from around the world to contribute to our economic growth.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

● (1510)

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to one petition.

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CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-447, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (aggravating circumstance—evacuation order or emergency).

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise on behalf of the good people of Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola.

Over the past few weeks in the Ottawa-Gatineau region, we have seen the very best of Canadians, as people volunteer to help their neighbours struggling with terrible flooding. In my home province of British Columbia, I have seen the same thing when people fleeing high water or wildfires are welcomed with open arms into the homes and communities of their fellow Canadians.

However, some people use disasters as an opportunity to abuse the trust and prey on the vulnerable through theft and looting. This bill that I am introducing today would help give peace of mind to those fleeing natural disasters or emergencies by including an aggravating factor for sentencing when people commit crimes when an evacuation order is in place. When experiencing the most vulnerable time in one's life, people need to be concerned about their families' health and safety, not worried about their home being looted when they are away.

This bill would help Canadians experiencing natural disasters feel that the criminal justice system has their back. This is a common-sense change that I hope every party will support, so that we can give crucial peace of mind to Canadians in their time of need.

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

PETITIONS

NON-INSURED HEALTH BENEFITS

Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today I rise to present e-petition 2135, which was created by my constituent Jaris Swidrovich, who is the first self-identified first nations doctor of pharmacy in Canada. His petition is regarding first nations and Inuit people's coverage for medically necessary health-related goods and services from the non-insured health benefits program. In most provinces, medication assessment and medication counselling services by a registered pharmacist are not eligible as a reimbursement benefit under this program.

The petitioners are calling on the Minister of Indigenous Services to ensure that publicly funded pharmaceutical services will become a reimbursable benefit under the non-insured health benefits programs in province and territories, where this service is publicly funded to all other citizens. The petition was signed by more than 900 Canadians, and I am proud today to table it.

ANIMAL WELFARE

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am presenting a petition from my constituents in the riding of Wellington—Halton Hills. It calls upon the House of Commons to support Bill S-214, which would ban the sale or manufacture of animal-tested cosmetics and their ingredients.

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Denis Paradis (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.): Madam Speaker, first of all, I want to say that there is a landfill in Vermont right beside Lake Memphremagog. Lake Memphremagog supplies drinking water to more than 175,000 Canadians, including residents of Brome—Missisquoi.

The petitioners are calling on the Minister of Foreign Affairs to immediately ask the International Joint Commission to conduct an environmental impact assessment of the plan to expand the landfill in Coventry, Vermont, by 51 acres.

I am also presenting a second petition. Canada and the United States share many waterways along the border. There are 82 lakes and rivers. It is essential to amend the International Boundary Waters Treaty, which dates back to 1909, to bring it into line with the new climate change objectives.

That is why the petitioners, voters from Brome—Missisquoi, are calling on the Minister of Foreign Affairs to begin the process of amending the International Boundary Waters Treaty to include environmental considerations.

● (1515)

[English]

PENSIONS

Hon. Alice Wong (Richmond Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise to present a petition to the House of Commons that calls for the withdrawal of Bill C-27, an act to amend the Pension Benefits Standards Act, 1985.

Routine Proceedings

Bill C-27 tabled by the Minister of Finance precisely permits the change for defined benefits, therefore jeopardizing the retirement income security of Canadians who have negotiated defined benefit plans as a form of deferred wages.

The petitioners call on the government of Canada to withdraw Bill C-27, an act to amend the Pension Benefits Standards Act, 1985.

[*Translation*]

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Madam Speaker, it does not surprise me in the least that, week after week, dozens of residents of Trois-Rivières ask me to present a petition on their behalf calling on the government to take action on the high-frequency train file. They believe it would be an excellent way to fight greenhouse gases, develop the local economy, promote tourism and create a more seamless intercity transit system.

I am pleased to present another batch of petitions.

[*English*]

NEEDLE EXCHANGE PROGRAM

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Madam Speaker, I present a petition signed by a number of citizens and residents of Canada. It draws to the attention of the House of Commons that the Liberal government has established a prison needle exchange program and that the Union of Canadian Correctional Officers was not consulted on this plan, which puts its members and the Canadian public at risk. The previous Conservative government passed the Drug-Free Prisons Act, which revokes parole for those who are caught using drugs behind bars.

Petitioners are calling on the Prime Minister and the Minister of Public Safety to end the prison needle exchange program and implement measures that would increase the safety of our correctional officers and our surrounding communities.

PENSIONS

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, I rise to present a petition on behalf of my constituents and other Canadians.

Petitioners are calling on the government to withdraw Bill C-27. They note that in the 2015 federal election, the Liberals promised Canadians in writing that defined benefit plans that have already been paid for by employees would not be retroactively changed into target benefit plans. Of course, after the election, the government changed that and Bill C-27 came into play.

Petitioners are calling on the government to withdraw the bill and to honour what it said it would do during the 2015 election.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Madam Speaker, residents across Canada are concerned because, even though equality means that all people are treated fairly without discrimination, individuals in Canada holding certain Christian beliefs are experiencing 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.

EYE HEALTH

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have two petitions to present today.

The first relates to a national framework for action to promote eye health. Petitioners are very concerned with the fact that the number of Canadians with vision loss is expected to double over the next 20 years.

Petitioners request a coordinated response, involving government, health professionals, NGOs, industry and individuals working to facilitate the promotion of eye health and prevention of vision loss. They are asking the Government of Canada to commit to acknowledging eye health and vision care as a growing public health issue and to respond accordingly.

• (1520)

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Madam Speaker, my second petition relates to the fact that EI penalizes women with unfair access to benefits. Only 35.2% of unemployed women are eligible for regular EI benefits compared to 52.5% of unemployed men.

Petitioners want the Government of Canada to improve the current EI system by lowering the eligibility threshold, providing a minimum 35 weeks of benefits, increasing the benefit rate to 70% of salary and income, indexing the family supplement income, abolishing total exclusions and amending the Employment Insurance Act in order to ensure that any absence related to pregnancy, maternity and parental responsibilities does not prevent access to regular EI benefits.

ANIMAL WELFARE

Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise today to present a petition signed by 220 people from my riding of Red Deer—Mountain View. The petitioners call upon the House of Commons to support Bill S-214 and to ban the sale and/or the manufacture of animal-tested cosmetics and their ingredients in Canada.

REPUBLIC OF YEMEN

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to present an electronic petition that was initiated by Alan Lensink from Halifax and sponsored by former member of Parliament Kennedy Stewart, who is now mayor of the City of Vancouver. The petitioners—more than 500 from every province in Canada and northern Canada as well—are very concerned about the ongoing civil strife in the Republic of Yemen, the fact that thousands of civilians have been killed and that millions have been internally displaced and are facing famine and malnutrition.

For all of those reasons, they are calling on the Government of Canada to initiate an exceptional diplomatic effort urging the Saudi-led coalition to immediately cease all air strikes and open up all possible diplomatic channels to urge the combatants to agree to a cessation of hostilities and to work for a long-term, peaceful and democratic resolution. As well, they are calling on the Government of Canada to undertake a massive increase of life-saving humanitarian aid to Yemen.

I would add personally that the government should not be accepting arms exports.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member should know that he is to speak only about the petition itself and not provide his personal view on it.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would 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.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Cariboo—Prince George has eight minutes remaining.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will provide a refresher on this important debate for our colleagues and Canadians from coast to coast to coast who are tuning in, as I had to share my time with question period.

Prior to going into my debate, I shared with Canadians and those in this House that this is the 71st time closure and time allocation have been levied by a government led by a Prime Minister who, when he was campaigning, on day 15, the then member for Papineau said that under his government he would let the debate reign and would not resort to such parliamentary tricks as time allocation. However, that is where we are today. We have time allocation and closure forced on this important debate.

I also said that as parliamentarians and leaders in our country, when we are talking about consultation, perhaps what Canadians are looking for on an important piece of legislation such as Bill C-55 is engagement. I talked about the use of “consultation” and “engagement” as if they were interchangeable. They are not. Consultation would be me telling someone I have an idea and asking what that person thought. That person would tell me whether that idea was good or bad. I would thank that person and be on my way. There would be no onus on me to come back to that person or for that person to take my suggestion. Engagement would be me saying that

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there is a problem, asking to sit down with a someone to fix the problem and asking that person what ideas he or she has.

When we are talking about bills such as Bill C-55, the feedback we heard from fishers, first nations, scientists and even environmental groups on Bill C-55 and the marine protected area process was that there was no consultation. They were not asked what they thought about the idea. There was no engagement. It is the lack of engagement we have seen time and again from the current government, so much so that there are protests at the minister's office. Therefore, when the Liberals talk about how this is good for Canadians and that they have consulted broadly, they really have not.

I will offer this. Bill C-55 is more about a vehicle that would afford the current government the ability to reach its international Aichi targets, which state that 5% of marine coastal areas would be protected by 2017 and 10% of marine coastal areas would be protected by 2020. As a matter of fact, the biodiversity goals and targets for Canada for 2020 state:

17 percent of terrestrial areas and inland water, and 10 percent of coastal and marine areas, are conserved through networks of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures.

I will now go to a comment from a gentleman from Simon Fraser University. He said:

Looking at some of the previous testimony, there was a claim that there was overwhelming scientific proof that MPAs are beneficial and widely successful. I think that was misrepresentation of the actual science.

He also stated that some of the studies cited found that they are not broadly successful. He continued:

Just enforcing MPAs would be hugely expensive. Again, if you're looking at it from a fisheries management point of view, it's far more cost effective to do other things that don't cost that much.

I bring this up because Bill C-55 evokes a lot of questions, one being that under proposed subsection 35(2), certain activities, such as fisheries and fishing, may be prohibited, yet activities by foreign entities and other companies and countries will not be.

● (1525)

The groups that came before us at committee said that they all want to be part of the process. They asked that the minister and the department meet with those stakeholder communities and engage to develop a plan in concert with those communities that would be impacted.

The Senate amendments were fairly thorough. They did not tie the government or any future government to doing anything but thorough engagement with communities that could be impacted by the interim marine protected areas.

I will offer again that Bill C-55 is about creating an order in council that the Minister of Environment and the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans could immediately designate an area an interim marine protected area for up to five years while the study was going on.

Using the precautionary principle was also mentioned. In the absence of science, that cannot be used as an excuse for not designating that area.

Government Orders

Our biggest concern was addressed by the Senate amendments, which are very thorough. I also looked at the government's response to the Senate amendments. I would have to say that those were fairly watered down.

I will go back to my comment about consultation versus engagement. When the government or parliamentarians consider policy that is so impactful on communities, first nations, coastal communities and industry, we should be engaging, not consulting, and bringing them to the table to develop thorough solutions.

• (1530)

Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague indicates that there is some sort of distinction between consultation and engagement and that somehow this statute falls short. I am wondering if he has read the statute, in particular subsection 33(1), which says:

In exercising the powers and performing the duties and functions assigned to the Minister by this Act, the Minister

(a) shall cooperate with other ministers, boards and agencies of the Government of Canada, with provincial and territorial governments and with affected aboriginal organizations, coastal communities and other persons and bodies, including those bodies established under land claims agreements;

It says “shall”, not “may”. The statute mandates engagement. There has been no amendment put forward to alter paragraph 33(1) (a). It addresses the very perceived problem the hon. member spent much of his speech talking about. Has he read that provision of the statute?

Mr. Todd Doherty: Madam Speaker, yes, I have read the legislation in its entirety, and I will offer that there were also protections in the Oceans Act. It may be mandated in Bill C-55 or in the Oceans Act, but the reality is that the Liberals are not following that. From coast to coast to coast, time and again organizations, first nations included, have said that they are not being consulted or engaged.

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am really impressed with my colleague's knowledge on this topic. I wanted to see if he would engage with me, because the Liberals are always saying that they would like to consult, but obviously, in this situation, that is not a priority.

Even as the Liberals brag about being the party of science, as the member pointed out, I believe that with the Liberals wanting to move forward with ministerial power, the minister could actually just draw a circle in the middle of the water and say, “Nothing can happen here.”

Could the member discuss the idea of this hypocrisy but also the uncertainty it creates and the frustration it is causing in different communities?

Mr. Todd Doherty: Madam Speaker, we heard testimony, from organizations and groups, that under the Liberal government, the people who have the seat at the table are not the stakeholders in the communities. Indeed, it is environmental groups that have the stakeholders. They even said at one point that at least with the Conservatives, they knew they could get in to actually have a conversation with the minister, and here they actually have to go through different groups to get to a minister or a parliamentary secretary.

They even said that the marine protected areas and the process Bill C-55 followed has shaken the fishing industry, has shaken coastal communities and has shaken confidence in the Liberal government.

• (1535)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is interesting that in a good part of the member's comments, he talked about why we are in this process of time allocation.

I want to just remind the member that Bill C-55 was introduced back in June 2017. There were five days total spent at second reading, three days total spent at third reading, nine total House committee meetings, and eight total Senate committee meetings. In the fisheries committee, five amendments to the bill were proposed by Conservative, Green and independent members. They were adopted by the House on April 25, 2018. The House committee heard from a total of 36 witnesses representing a variety of groups, including industry, indigenous groups and academics.

I am sure my colleague would recognize that for the Conservative Party agenda, it seems that Conservatives do whatever they can to stop legislation, whether it is good legislation or bad. It does not really matter. All the Conservatives want to do is play an obstructive role by not allowing legislation. As the government House leadersaid, it is because the Conservatives really do not have a plan. That is demonstrated by the so-called phantom plan on the environment. We have been waiting for it for well over a year. It is nowhere to be seen.

I am wondering if my friend would agree that the opposition party's role is more than to just criticize. It should also be bringing forward ideas, thoughts and plans.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Madam Speaker, that is a little rich coming from a group that unveiled its plan two weeks into the 2015 election.

Canadians do not need to believe me. Let us put it in the voice of fishers. Fishers and first nations in those coastal communities are really the ones that matter. Here is a quote:

Canada should be a leader in listening to its people and taking the time to listen and spend the money to do the proper science before coming to a huge decision, such as establishing SBAs and MPAs supposedly based on science. These decisions will take time, but they should be Canadian decisions based on Canadian timelines, not offhand commitments made to international arenas void of any voices of those who will be impacted most and who are most informed on the decision.

That was from Jordan Nickerson, a fish harvester.

I said this earlier in my comments, that Bill C-55 is really a vehicle or mechanism for the Liberals to be able to make their international targets, which they announced on the world stage. Canada has the largest geographical coastline, and to reach these targets, it is the west coast and the northern coast that are going to suffer the most, or be most impacted by what the government doing. Without proper engagement, it will be to the detriment of those coastal communities and those fishing groups that depend so critically on those waterways, those areas.

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Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have a strange philosophy regarding environmental policy in that environmental policies and environmental spending should actually have an environmental outcome, a measurable environmental outcome. However, the Liberal government is more about show, talk, studies, endless meetings and spending all these resources on activities that really do not generate an environmental benefit. In fact, the Liberals go so far as to almost destroy some coastal communities with needless regulations and laws that really do not make any environmental sense.

I would like to ask my hon. friend, the fisheries shadow minister, this. Why do the Liberals prefer show over substance when it comes to environmental and fisheries policy?

Mr. Todd Doherty: Madam Speaker, it is all the pomp and circumstance. It is to put one's hand on one's heart and pledge all this and that. However, the reality is that there is no delivery. Nobody will be able to ask how all that pomp and circumstance worked out.

Again, members do not have to believe me. I will go to another comment in committee by Sean Cox, professor at Simon Fraser University. He said:

MPAs aren't likely to be effective scientific tools, either. They're not easily replicated. When you put in an MPA, it's subject to a high degree of what we call "location and time" effects. You can't just create a nice experiment where you have three of the same type of MPA in one place and then three control areas in another place. You just can't do that. They're wide open to outside perturbations, environmental changes that are not within our control.

Another witness said, "If you want to build on a process of trust and goodwill, you don't then ignore what your stakeholders say and consult on only a minority of the protected areas that were being recommended."

Fish do not follow boundaries; they are fluid and so are the conditions on what impact fish.

Even the academics are coming out against what the federal government and the minister is doing with Bill C-55.

All we are asking is to put in protections for thorough consultation. Regardless of what the mandate is, it needs to be added to clause 5. We are asking that clause 5 to be amended to include thorough consultations, including what the proposed legislation would protect, where it would be designated and all the areas of consultation that led up to that interim marine protected area being levied.

• (1540)

Mr. Churence Rogers (Bonavista—Burin—Trinity, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to inform you that I will be splitting my time with the member for St. Catharines.

Today we are talking about Bill C-55, a bill that would amend the Oceans Act and the Canada Petroleum Resources Act.

Bill C-55 is an important element of our marine conservation agenda. While the proposed amendments provide another tool for us to meet our international commitment to increase the protection of Canada's marine and coastal areas to 10% by 2020, our government's objective, first and foremost, is to protect sensitive and important marine and coastal areas for the benefit of present and future generations of Canadians.

Decades of experience in establishing marine protected areas has shown us that too many delays occur during the establishment process. Through this experience, we have learned there are circumstances where greater harm to sensitive marine areas can occur during the time it takes to establish a marine protected area, sometimes up to 10 years.

The interim protections proposed under Bill C-55 address this gap in conserving our marine biodiversity and will give us the option to establish interim protection where initial science and consultation tells us we need to afford the area extra precaution.

While I think the other place for the attention paid to the bill, the new amendments would negatively impact the government's ability to apply the precautionary principle and could put sensitive and important ecosystems at risk.

While we are rejecting the amendment from the other place, we are proposing to replace it with an amendment that would capture the intent of the changes sought by members of the other place. Indeed, we understand the concern that was shared by various senators regarding the consultations and ensuring the communities would not be negatively impacted by interim protection orders. We agree that consultations are important. In fact, they are the cornerstone of the development of marine protected areas.

That is why we are proposing an amendment that would require the geographical location, relevant information, as well as consultations that were undertaken, to be published when an order for interim protection is made. This proposed amendment will ensure that communities get the information they need and that we undertake the comprehensive consultations that are outlined in existing legislation in the designation of interim protection. It will allow us to continue to apply the precautionary approach, which underpins the objectives of this bill.

Most of the discussions held during the Senate review of Bill C-55 focused on transparency and consultations. I would like to provide an example of how the Government of Canada is demonstrating its commitment to work with many of its valued partners in an open and collaborative manner.

This government has been working steadily to build a partnership with the Government of Nunavut and the Qikiqtani Inuit Association to advance protection of Canada's High Arctic marine environment. As well, we have been engaging directly with northern communities and conducting scientific studies to better understand this ecosystem and its linkages to food security for indigenous peoples.

This area is of particular ecological importance as it maintains a relatively constant cover of old, thick and multi-year pack ice. As the ice melts in the rest of the Arctic, this area is expected to retain its multi-year pack ice further into the future and may therefore provide a last refuge for ice-dependent species, such as polar bears, beluga whales, narwhals and seals. Sea ice also provides habitat for the algae that forms a vital part of the Arctic food web. This area is also home to the last remaining ice shelves in North America.

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This ongoing collaboration has led to a memorandum of understanding with the Government of Nunavut and the Qikiqtani Inuit Association, committing us to assess the feasibility and desirability of protecting the High Arctic Basin. This work will consider the social, cultural, environmental and economic benefits and impacts of establishing a conservation area in this region.

● (1545)

This conservation effort supports the development of a conservation economy in the Arctic and our budget 2019 affirms this commitment to protect the High Arctic Basin with our partners.

The ability to provide early interim protection to the High Arctic Basin depends on royal assent of Bill C-55 in a manner that does not contradict the fundamental spirit and intent of the bill; that is to take action quickly to protect ecologically sensitive and important marine areas following initial science and consultation.

In a recent letter, the Qikiqtani Inuit Association, which represents over 15,000 Inuit, expressed serious concerns about the amendments provided by the other place. In the letter, the president, PJ Akeagok, states:

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. Interim measures allow parties the opportunity to commit to determining the final details required to establish protected areas. This important step is key to successfully ensuring all parties interests are taken into account prior to final establishment.

QIA further submits that striking a broader consultation after an interim order is appropriate and effective to assess whether formal designation of part or all of the area under an interim order should be recommended to be designated as a permanent MPA by regulation.

The Government of Canada respects the rights of indigenous peoples and we are committed to consulting, collaborating and partnering with the very governments and groups that are essential to interim protection and longer-term protection.

With the support of our Inuit and northern partners, we intend to establish an interim marine protected area for the High Arctic Basin. Following this step, Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Parks Canada agencies will continue to work with the Government of Nunavut and the Qikiqtani Inuit Association and others to continue important scientific work and explore the best ways of collaboratively protecting and managing this area through permanent protection measures.

On April 25, at the Nature Champions Summit in Montreal, the government announced new protection standards for marine protected areas. While these standards apply to future federal marine protected areas that are permanent and not to interim protection, the government's commitment to high protection standards was applauded in Canada and by the international community.

Marine conservation has always been, and will always be, an all-in effort. To date, we have protected 8.27% of our ocean estate. We did not get there alone. This tremendous achievement is the result of many protected areas established by provinces, territories and the federal government. It also includes the contribution of other conservation measures, like marine refuges, which have been developed in collaboration with many parties, most notably fisheries groups.

Reaching our target has been a high priority for this government and we are committed to achieving it together with our partners. We can no longer take our rich endowment of marine biodiversity for granted. We have been drawing economic benefit from our oceans for generations, but we need to invest in protecting our oceans to ensure the ecosystem services they provide can be maintained into the future.

Healthy marine ecosystems provide a range of vital benefits. They support climate regulation, provide nutritious food and support seafood industries and many other economic sectors and provide habitat needed to support species abundance.

Bill C-55 has been reviewed by Parliament for nearly two years. With interim protection, we will be able to act quickly and collaboratively to protect our oceans from coast to coast. Bill C-55 is based on a vision to protect our oceans for future generations, and its success depends on partnerships. We must act today and pass the bill as the House intended.

● (1550)

Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Madam Speaker, I served with the member for Bonavista—Burin—Trinity on the environment committee and enjoyed interacting with him very much.

I recall a discussion we had on Bill C-69 in the environment committee in which he expressed grave concern about the offshore oil industry in Newfoundland and the fact that Newfoundland's economy is in tough shape. The offshore oil industry is one of the major employers in Newfoundland. A badly placed MPA where drilling is prohibited could have serious effects on the local economy.

Is my colleague concerned about the oil industry in Newfoundland and the possible effects of this and other pieces of legislation on that economy?

Mr. Churence Rogers: Madam Speaker, I am always concerned about balancing the two. The fishery is vitally important to the long-term viability of our province, and it is going to be there for a long time into the future. Hopefully, it will be sustainable and provide lots of economic opportunities for Newfoundland. As well, I understand the importance of the oil industry.

The minister recently made some announcements regarding MPAs and suggested that both of these industries can work in balance and provide great benefits for the province of Newfoundland and Labrador if they are properly managed and sustainably managed for the future.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I too enjoyed serving on environment and sustainable development committee with the hon. member.

I and my colleagues are going to support this legislation and the change to the Senate amendment. We think it is much more supportive with respect to protecting marine areas and the species that may be at risk.

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There used to be a fantastic program called the Arctic environmental protection strategy. When I was assistant deputy of resources in Yukon, I participated on that body. It did a lot of co-operative work in relation to the necessary science in the North, but my understanding is that under the Conservatives and then under the Liberals, the Polaris project, which was fantastic in supporting Canadian researchers in the Arctic, has not been continued. It is absolutely critical that we co-operate with other countries, including through the Arctic Council.

Does the member not think that in addition to designating these marine protected areas, we should also be investing more heavily in science and not just in gauging the shelf to determine where the oil and gas is that we could claim?

Mr. Churence Rogers: Madam Speaker, the Qikiqtani Inuit Association, which represents 15,000 members, supports this particular legislation.

Obviously we are all concerned about making sure that we do the correct amount of science and consultation, which is and will continue to be ongoing once the bill is in place.

• (1555)

Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I also would like to thank my colleague for his work on the fisheries committee. As a Newfoundland and Labrador member of Parliament, he would be abundantly aware that negotiations were successfully concluded recently between the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and the Government of Canada with respect to the Atlantic Accord, including the designation of the Laurentian Channel marine protected area.

Could the member speak to what he is hearing from his constituents with respect to the level of consultation, the level of engagement between the respective governments and the stakeholders for this to be allowed to happen?

Mr. Churence Rogers: Madam Speaker, based on the conversations I have had with some different sectors, the most recent announcement that the parliamentary secretary refers to seemed to be well received.

The fishing industry obviously and the oil and gas industry need to be monitored for a balanced approach so that we can maintain both of these industries and reap the economic benefits from both for the long term.

Mr. Chris Bittle (St. Catharines, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am honoured to be speaking to the motion concerning the Senate amendments to Bill C-55, an act to amend the Oceans Act and the Canada Petroleum Resources Act.

As many members know, the bill was introduced in June 2017. It is almost two years later, and I believe it is time to pass the bill so we can better protect fragile marine environments.

Earlier today, many members opposite showed their opposition to passing the bill as soon as possible, despite our having had nine days of debate in the House, nine committee meetings at the House fisheries committee and eight meetings at the Senate fisheries committee. Indeed, in the time it has taken for us to get to this stage of the legislative process, we could have already designated interim

protections to some of the most sensitive marine ecosystems in our oceans. Instead, despite the importance of protecting our environment and the support from Canadians from coast to coast to coast, we are being forced to defend the merits of a bill that would simply provide a tool for the government to provide interim protection to marine areas. Again, this measure has been before us for almost two years.

The motion today provided by the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard not only is a common sense approach but shows this government's commitment to working with the hon. members of the other place. Indeed, the Senate's message received just over a week ago by the House adds an amendment that would require, before an order for interim protection is made, that the approximate geographical location and a preliminary assessment of what needs protection be published. A further amendment by Senator Patterson would require that a secondary consultation process of at least 60 days be undertaken before an order is made, and that any comments or questions be responded to within 30 days.

At first blush, these changes seem reasonable. They are, for the most part. That is why they are more or less already required under existing legislation and the Oceans Act as it is written today. In fact, sections 29-33 outline explicitly the requirements for consultations. The act says in section 33, under "Oceans Management Strategy":

33(1) In exercising the powers and performing the duties and functions assigned to the Minister by this Act, the Minister

- (a) shall cooperate with other ministers, boards and agencies of the Government of Canada, with provincial and territorial governments and with affected aboriginal organizations, coastal communities and other persons and bodies, including those bodies established under land claims agreements;
- (b) may enter into agreements with any person or body or with another minister, board or agency of the Government of Canada;
- (c) shall gather, compile, analyse, coordinate and disseminate information

Furthermore, information such as the geographical location and all other relevant information is readily available regarding areas of interest, which is the first step in the permanent MPA designation process. That means we already have in place a process that provides the information that the Senate amendment is seeking. Let me give members an example.

Race Rocks is an area of interest over which the government is currently consulting with stakeholders, the community and indigenous groups to establish an MPA. While it has yet to be designated, people can go online today to see the proposed geographical location. It is located 17 kilometres southwest of Victoria, British Columbia, in the Strait of Juan de Fuca, and consists of nine islets. The area of interest, or AOL, is approximately two square kilometres. There is also a link to a 2011 report that includes an ecosystem overview and assessment.

Again, this is an example of how the government is already open and transparent, as required by the Cabinet Directive on Regulation, and shows how the amendment from the Senate is duplicative.

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There is another interesting piece of information on Race Rocks, listed under the heading “Key Objectives and Approach”. It says, “On September 1, 1998, the Race Rocks AOI was announced by the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Canada. The objective for the proposed Race Rocks Marine Protected Area, MPA, is to conserve and protect the biodiversity and ecosystem function of the area.”

The announcement for the AOI was made in 1998. That is over 20 years ago. It seems shocking that while we have heard it takes on average between seven and 10 years for an MPA to be established, this area was announced as being ecologically significant over 20 years ago, but in the past two decades has had no interim protection because the mechanism does not exist.

● (1600)

That is why we are debating Bill C-55 today. It would create the mechanisms. It would allow us to protect areas on an interim basis until the decision is made for permanent designation.

Let me emphasize that this is not a shortcut. On average, it takes seven to 10 years to designate an MPA. On average, it takes two years to establish an AOI. If a designation for permanent protection must be made within five years of an interim protection area being designated, that brings the time down from seven to 10 years to seven years. The process for designation continues to be rigorous and robust.

I would also like to speak to the part of the Senate amendment made by Senator Patterson regarding another consultation period. To be clear, consultations are the cornerstone of the MPA development process, and even after an order for interim protection was made, comprehensive consultations would continue.

Senator Patterson's amendment would create secondary consultation processes that would require an additional 90 days before an interim order could be made. This added period would go against the very objective of the bill, which is to apply the precautionary principle and provide protection faster to areas we already know are ecologically significant while the consultations continued on a path to permanent designation.

For these reasons, the government has suggested an amendment that accepts the intent of the amendment from the other place while still respecting the objectives and purposes of the bill. Our government is thankful for the robust debate that has occurred in the other chamber, and we are happy to support this proposed amendment that would not have been developed if not received through the message from the other place and the concerns raised from their regions.

I believe it is time to move forward on this legislation.

Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Madam Speaker, one of the reasons we are so suspicious of the government is that we need only look at what happened in California with MPAs. On its coastlines, some of the best areas for fishing are now off limits to citizens. The Liberal government's track record on environmental policy is so bad in terms of affecting communities that we are sure this will be another train wreck.

I sat on the fisheries committee for around seven years. We produced a unanimous report on Atlantic salmon conservation. It is a

species that is in grave trouble. Most of the decline occurred under the current government's watch. We produced 17 recommendations, and all political parties were unanimous in supporting these recommendations. The government is not implementing any of them.

The fisheries committee operates on a principle of unanimity almost all of the time. It is a very collegial committee. Expert testimony at committee informed us as to these 17 recommendations, but the government has refused to implement them, and the species continues to decline.

Why is that?

● (1605)

Mr. Chris Bittle: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his passion on the subject of the environment, although it was interesting just a couple of weeks ago during question period that when a question regarding the price on pollution was mentioned, the hon. member heckled “You think this will change the weather?” I am shocked to learn that the hon. member did not know the difference between weather and climate, but can stand here and criticize this government for taking action on the environment.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Chris Bittle: It is shocking that the climate deniers on the other side are heckling me. I think I have touched a nerve. They deny the existence of climate change, which is in their policy and which is in their friend Doug Ford's policy in Ontario. To stand in this place and criticize us when the hon. member does not even know the difference between climate and weather is just shocking.

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to compare the knowledge level of my colleague, who has worked here on environmental issues for the last 10 years and is one of the experts in the place, with the knowledge level of the member opposite, who has nothing but personal insults for him.

I guess he could come back to answer the question. One of the reasons I would ask him to do that is related to a project in my riding that was focused around pasture land that Agriculture Canada turned over to Environment Canada. The local people had a very collegial project developing with Environment Canada until this government took over. Since then, Environment Canada has taken it away from the ranchers and farmers who have spent 100 years on this ground and have protected it. Officials have told them they will be told how to access the ground and how they will access the pasture from now on.

I am wondering why the government cannot seem to learn from anyone, whether it is from my colleague who knows this file inside out or from the people on the ground. Instead the Liberals keep coming back with these solutions that Canadians do not want, consisting more of a taxation policy than of an environmental policy.

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Mr. Chris Bittle: Madam Speaker, I will answer the question with regard to my previous comments, because the other comments had nothing to do with the motion before us. However, it is shocking. If the hon. member is an expert in environmental policy, not knowing the difference between weather and climate is a shocking issue. I am not going to retract that.

I hope that the hon. member gets up and retracts his comment, that he is willing to listen to the experts and that he is willing to listen to climate science.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Chris Bittle: Madam Speaker, it is clear that not only the hon. member himself but the other members of the Conservative Party, who are heckling me at this moment, do not believe in climate change, do not have a plan for climate change and support Doug Ford and his plan for the environment, which is in fact true.

Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Madam Speaker, lest I be accused of stirring the pot, since my colleague talked about the Conservatives' passion for the environment, I would just like to take a look at the track record with respect to MPAs. The targets were established in 2010. The Conservatives were in power for five years after that. The amount of marine areas that were protected was 1% and now we are at 9%.

What does that say about the passion for the environment, and how does that align with the views of my colleague's constituents?

Mr. Chris Bittle: Madam Speaker, St. Catharines sits on Lake Ontario. Regardless of political affiliation, we all want clean air and clean water, and I am proud that this government is actually taking action on that.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I just want to remind members, because there has been a bit of heckling going on, that when somebody else has the floor that person should have the respect of this House. If members have questions and comments, they need to wait until I ask them for their input.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa.

Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Madam Speaker, in response to my colleague's question, climate is what people expect and weather is what they get. That is the simple definition.

What is a marine protected area? Obviously it is an area that is considered important and in need of some kind of protection. Unfortunately, the devil is in the details. Marine protected areas are actually quite difficult to do. They are three-dimensional columns of water, where a lot of things are going on inside that column of water. By comparison, terrestrial conservation areas are much easier to deal with.

I would like to comment on what my friend from Cypress Hills—Grasslands said a minute ago. He talked about stewardship. When it comes to environmental conservation, local people on the ground, conducting stewardship activities and using the knowledge they have learned over generations, is by far the better way than the top-down environmental regulation that the government prefers.

What are some of the problems with marine protected areas? For example, what are they actually going to accomplish? My colleague across the way talked about an area off Victoria, Race Rocks. It was designated some 20 years ago as an important area, yet it is still in place now and the discussions are ongoing. For 20 years, the area had been de facto protected.

The other issue with marine protected areas is this. What are the terms and conditions of setting aside one of these areas? Let us just say the benthic invertebrates, like the glass sponge reefs off Haida Gwaii, are going to be protected. I think that is a worthy goal, given that some types of fishing activities can affect the benthic environment. Would ships passing over top of this area have any effect on the primary reason for the MPA?

For the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and the Minister of Transport and regional economic development ministers, it is going to be critical for them to look at the terms and conditions of an MPA. Most people think it is an area that is set aside where there is no activity at all. The point is that, if an MPA has an important benthic environment, for example, that happens to be on a shipping lane, bottom crawling can be restricted to protect the benthic environment while shipping is still allowed. Again, it is a balancing act that I think needs to be done.

This is not a partisan issue at all, but the terms and conditions are very important. Again, in terms of marine protected areas, as was mentioned by the shadow minister for fisheries, many of the fish species are migratory, and they go in and out of these marine protected areas. When one looks at the two great fishery tragedies off the east coast in the last little while—the Atlantic cod and the Atlantic salmon—right now, it is hard to see what a marine protected area would have done for these highly mobile species.

There are places where aquatic protected areas actually make sense, but they have to be very well delineated and with the proper terms and conditions. I will use an example that I am familiar with from back home, and that is lake trout spawning reefs. Lake trout spawn in the fall, and they are very vulnerable to overfishing at that time, because they concentrate on specific reefs. It makes a lot of sense—and the Manitoba government has done this in many areas—to put these lake trout spawning reefs off-limits to fishing, even catch-and-release fishing, during the sensitive time when the lake trout are using these reefs.

Again, the devil is in the details, and it is far too easy to call an area “protected” when that protection does not really do a lot.

I sat on the fisheries committee when Bill C-55 was being discussed. A lot of the reaction from communities was quite negative. A lot dealt with consultation, and a lot dealt with the effect on the local economy. Leonard LeBlanc, managing director of Gulf Nova Scotia Fleet Planning Board said:

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

● (1610)

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

[We] have concerns surrounding the tight timelines to accomplish these goals... The displacement of fishers from one community to another as a result of an MPA would shift the economics of the island.

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

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

She continued:

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...deserve access to local, sustainable...food.

My colleague, the shadow minister for fisheries, quoted Mr. Sean Cox, a professor of fisheries from Simon Fraser University, who said:

Looking at some of the previous testimony, there was a claim that there was overwhelming scientific proof that MPAs are beneficial and widely successful. I think that was misrepresentation of the actual science.

Therefore, the Liberals' rationale for the MPAs, which is that they have done enough consultation and there is a scientific basis to them, is clearly shown to be bogus.

As I said in one of my questions earlier, I have a very strange environmental philosophy, which is this. Every environmental policy and environmental decision that government makes and every single dollar that is spent on the environment or fisheries by a government should generate a clear and measurable environmental result. So far, the track record of the current government is poor.

I also want to talk about some of my time on the fisheries committee dealing with the Atlantic salmon. As I mentioned earlier, I have the report here. The fisheries committee is different from a lot of other committees in that we operate on a very collegial basis and try very hard to have unanimous reports, which I think is still the case. We on the fisheries committee are treated to some excellent science witnesses, and there is robust debate about the data and evidence that is presented, yet it is always respectful. We produced a report in January 2017 entitled "Wild Atlantic Salmon in Eastern Canada". Under the current government's watch, the populations of Atlantic salmon have plummeted for a whole bunch of reasons: the very high seal populations; the very high predation rates; the predation rates by striped bass on Atlantic salmon smolts; the overfishing by Greenland of our multi-sea-winter fish; and the issue of the smallmouth bass in Miramichi Lake, to look at one specific water body there.

We produced a report with 17 recommendations. They were very specific recommendations. In one, in particular, we recommended a target the government should have of restoring the Atlantic salmon populations to 1975 levels, with measurable results reported on a

regular basis. We talked about engaging with Greenland. We talked about increasing the seal harvest to help the salmon out. There were other recommendations as well. These have all been ignored.

The letter the minister sent in response to this report was a disgrace. The words "restore" and "rehabilitate" did not occur in that letter at all. It was a fluff piece that talked about consultation and so on, in spite of the fact that our Atlantic salmon report had very specific, broadly based and widely supported recommendations. As I said in some of my earlier comments, the current government prefers show over substance.

On the west coast, things are not much better. I have an article here from the CBC, dated December 2018, just a few months ago. It states that more than a dozen B.C. chinook salmon populations are in decline and only one population in the southern group is doing well. The article reports that there is one population that is down to 200 fish. All of this is on the current government's watch. It is doing nothing to deal with some of the crises occurring with our fish stocks right now.

I will go back to my point about generating real and measurable environmental results. When we were in government, we had the recreational fisheries conservation partnership program. Over the life of the program, while we were in government, some 800 projects were funded. Indeed, in one year, for example, the first year, 380 partners undertook 94 habitat restoration projects; 1,700 volunteers donated their time; 2.4 million square metres of habitat were restored; and 200 linear kilometres of recreational fisheries habitat were enhanced. These were real and measurable environmental results.

● (1615)

In fact, it was unanimous at the fisheries committee that the Liberal government continue funding the recreational fisheries conservation partnerships program, which delivered real and measurable environmental results. Guess what. It killed the program and the hopes and dreams of many small communities that depend on fisheries.

One of the projects that I am very proud of, which was funded by the recreational fisheries conservation partnerships program, was in a nearby constituency to mine, the constituency of the member for Brandon—Souris, Pelican Lake. Why am I mentioning this? The reason is that this was a project funded by the recreational fisheries conservation partnerships program. In this particular lake, people used to winter kill. This community is partly based on tourism. Sport fishing is very important. With a very small grant from the recreational fisheries conservation partnerships program, aerators were installed on Pelican Lake, and now the fish population has been conserved in that particular lake. People do not winter kill anymore and the economy is booming because of it. Again, it is a real and measurable fisheries result from a program, something that the government simply does not do. It does not deliver results, and it does not measure results.

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In terms of the effect on local communities, the government talks a good line on conserving marine mammals, but recently it implemented new whale-watching regulations. I happened to be in Churchill last summer. If any members have had the pleasure of going to Churchill, and I know some of them have, it is an unbelievable experience. I was there in July, and at that particular time of year, thousands of beluga whales crowd into the estuary. The new whale-watching regulations have minimum distances and the animals cannot be approached. It is clearly ridiculous for Churchill, because the minute people launch their boats from the shore, the whales come up to them and they are now technically doing something illegal.

DFO's concern should be the sustainability of populations. The population estimate of beluga whales on the west coast of Hudson Bay is around 55,000, and it is slowly increasing. That trend continues. This is a population of beluga whales that is thriving, yet for no conservation reason at all, DFO is imposing these whale-watching regulations on a tourism-dependent community, on an activity that generates millions of dollars per year. Again, the government's unthinking approach to fisheries and environmental policy is hurting communities.

In his comments earlier, the minister spoke about the Fisheries Act. I was on the fisheries committee when the Fisheries Act was changed in 2012. The Fisheries Act was written in 1898 and was in desperate need of modernization. The definition of what was designated as fish habitat kept expanding, so that puddles in farmers' fields, drainage ditches and so on were now considered fish habitat.

In 2009, for example, the Auditor General did an audit of the original Fisheries Act, after the act had been in place since 1898. The Auditor General found this:

Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Environment Canada cannot demonstrate that fish habitat is being adequately protected as the Fisheries Act requires. In the 23 years since the Habitat Policy was adopted [in 1986], many parts of the Policy have been implemented only partially by Fisheries and Oceans Canada or not at all. The Department does not measure habitat loss or gain. It has limited information on the state of fish habitat across Canada—that is, on fish stocks, the amount and quality of fish habitat, contaminants in fish, and overall water quality. Fisheries and Oceans Canada still cannot determine the extent to which it is progressing toward the Policy's long-term objective of a net gain in fish habitat.

The Fisheries Act was so broad that it was ineffective, so our changes made a lot of sense.

• (1620)

For example, in the Prairies, there was an issue in the early 2000s when DFO went hog-wild trying to enforce this unwieldy and unnecessary act. It sent around what we called the “fish cops”, which really riled up rural communities and delivered no significant environmental results.

I was very impressed by the testimony of a Mr. Ron Bonnett, who was president at the time of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture. He said:

The experience that many farmers had with the Fisheries Act, unfortunately, was not a positive one. It was characterized by lengthy bureaucratic applications for permitting and authorizations, and a focus on enforcement and compliance measures taken by officials.... Many farmers were then relieved when the changes that were made just a few years ago [by the Conservative government] drastically improved the timeliness and cost of conducting regular maintenance and improvement activities to their farms as well as lifting the threat of being deemed out of compliance.

Mr. Bonnett went on to point out:

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

He continued:

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

He also noted, “The current streamlined approach is working far better for all and efforts should continue this approach.”

Then he made this incredible statement, which backs up what I was saying earlier:

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

I note that on his own farm, Mr. Bonnett is legendary for his conservation work in keeping cattle out of streams and working very well with the conservation community to enhance and protect all kinds of habitats.

In terms of the Senate amendments, I do support them. It is very important that we get this right. The Senate amendments are very clear that what an MPA is needs to be clearly specified and flexibility allowed. If an area is just closed off to everybody without any thought as to what the goals and objectives are, it would hurt coastal and rural communities.

Obviously, this legislation will pass, as the government has a majority. As I said early in my speech, it is very important that the needs of local communities be taken into account. For example, off the coast of Newfoundland there is a significant food fishery for cod. It is a very important activity there, one that I would like to participate in one of these years. What if the issue in that area is the protection of the benthic environment? Obviously, a food fishery for cod should not affect the benthic environment. Therefore, commercial fishing technologies that have the potential to harm the benthic environment could be dealt with, while at the same time ensuring local community benefits.

Also, I will go back to the notion of stewardship, which my friend from Cypress Hills—Grasslands talked about. I have the honour of representing a large rural community with agriculture, trapping, hunting, fishing, forestry and some oil and gas development. The environment in my particular constituency is one of extremely high quality, and that is because of the conservation efforts by people who are on the ground, who have years and years of experience and know what they are talking about. They will deliver environmental conservation on time and under budget in a way that benefits the environment for all of us.

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•(1625)

Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech and his passion for this topic. It is very clear that he has an extensive background and experience in these matters, as we heard in his speech. There were actually a couple of things in there that I could agree with. When he talked about how important the terms and conditions are, he was absolutely right. In any marine protected area, the restriction on any activities is tied to the conservation objectives of that marine protected area, and they are not uniform.

There were a couple of things in particular that I wanted to ask my colleague about. One, he seemed to indicate that if this act passes, it will be possible for the government to shut down everything. No, what this bill does is give the minister the power to make an interim protection order. What that order does is freeze the footprint. Everything that was allowed in that area the day before the order is allowed the day after the order and for the next five years. Therefore, the suggestion that everything can be instantly shut down with the stroke of a pen is dead, categorically, wrong.

The other thing my colleague said is that the government is going too fast on this. However, the average time for the establishment of a marine protected area in this country is seven to 10 years. Is that too fast?

•(1630)

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Madam Speaker, it is fast for government time.

I appreciate the parliamentary secretary's comments. Again, as somebody who has done a little bit of work in the fisheries field, I had talked about the lake trout spawning reefs and the notion of specific protections for highly sensitive areas that are clearly defined. I call them, for example, fish sanctuaries. That has been used with great effect in New Zealand to support its commercial fishery.

In my own case, I am not intrinsically opposed to all of this activity. It is just very important that it be thought out very carefully. Given the track record of some governments, what is promised one day often does not happen on the ground. I go back to the issue in California. It all started out with wanting to protect these fisheries, and everybody was going to benefit and so on. However, there was mission creep in this particular case, and more and more areas were deemed off-limits to citizens.

Having said that, it is important to get this right and get the local communities on board and involved in the conservation programs because they are the ones who know what is really going on out there.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, most still allow extractive fishing activity, and one allows oil and gas exploration currently. We know that the government recently announced that it will now prohibit oil and gas activities, mining, dumping and bottom trawling in MPAs. However, it stopped short of creating no-take areas, which has long been the recommendation of conservation groups.

I wonder if my hon. colleague has any comments on that, given that, if we think of a national park, we certainly do not allow

extractive hunting to occur in national parks. Why would we allow extractive fishing to take place in marine protected areas? Does he have any thoughts on that?

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Madam Speaker, I live right next to a national park, and the interaction between the national park and the local community sometimes has been very rocky. Having said that, most of us moved there because of the national park.

I happen to be an avid angler, and one thing I am very proud of in the angling community is how the catch-and-release ethos has taken root. Based on studies, the hooking mortality of fish is about 5%. When it comes to “extracting”, recreational fishing is a hugely lucrative activity in this country, supporting many small communities. It is an activity of about \$8 billion a year. I see no reason why a “gentle form” of fishing, where the recreational fisherman catches the fish and then gently and properly releases the fish, cannot go on in almost any marine protected area, given the importance of the recreational fishery to many local communities. It is one of the least intrusive extraction activities one could ever think of, and I strongly support it.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. I gather there are many big lakes and waterways in his riding. I am sure this issue hits home for him and his constituents.

I would like to know his thoughts on what a number of members have said about how certain marine protected areas would be excluded from the list under this bill.

Am I mistaken, or does he see that as a good thing?

[English]

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Madam Speaker, I am afraid that is a question I really cannot answer. However, as I said earlier, whether an MPA is excluded or included on some lists, what is important are the terms and conditions under which that MPA has been formed, what the local people are allowed to do in there and what the goal of the protection is.

•(1635)

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as has been mentioned in this debate, when we took office in 2015, less than 1% of our oceans and waterways were protected. We promised to get to 5% by 2017, on which we delivered. We are at 8% now. We have a goal of getting to 10% by 2020. Given the track we are on, we know we will reach that goal.

Why were we only protecting less than 1% of the waterways under the previous government?

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Madam Speaker, I assume my friend across the way is referring to the Navigable Waters Protection Act, which we changed to the Navigation Protection Act. One of the reasons we made that change was that a judge ruled that little trickles of water were now navigable and caused greater consternation for local communities.

With respect to this, the word “protection” needs to be defined. There is “protected” and there is “conserved”.

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I will use the example of my own farm where 320 acres of it is under a conservation easement, which means that the land will remain wild in perpetuity. However, I still hunt on my land, cut firewood there, enjoy my trails and I trap. Therefore, is that land considered protected? I would certainly say so.

The goal of any kind of conservation program has to be the protection of ecological processes. Drawing artificial lines around a piece of land does not fulfill the goal. Working with people who farm, fish, hunt and trap and know the land and can aid in the conservation of wide areas of land to preserve ecological processes is the way to go.

Ms. Gudie Hutchings (Long Range Mountains, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to hear my colleague from Dauphin—Swan River—Neepeewa. We share a great passion for the outdoors and all the treasures it holds.

As the member knows, Newfoundland and Labrador has over 18,000 kilometres of coastline and with that, many coastal communities, of which about 200 are in my riding. He made comments about the food fishery in our province, but trust me, the MPAs that we are speaking about today will not impact the food fishery or any legitimate and sustainable fishery.

However, the question I have for the hon. member is on something I have seen in my riding many times, not only in the last four years that I have been privileged to be here but many years before, which is how climate change is really having an impact on our coastal communities and fisheries. We are seeing water temperatures change and water levels rise, which is having a huge impact.

I would love to have my hon. colleague's comments on how climate change is also having an impact on our fisheries and how, perhaps through MPAs, we can have an impact there as well.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Madam Speaker, I very much appreciate my colleague from Long Range Mountains. We often have quiet chats about the things we care about. We actually think more alike than differ on most things. However, I am very pleased to hear as well that the government is not going to affect the food fishery in Newfoundland. Hopefully that will apply across the country.

As I said, MPAs need to be clearly thought out. Therefore, if a benthic community needs to be protected, of course, those things do not move too much, so that makes sense. A specific spawning area that is critical and rare makes sense. Again, the terms and conditions of how they are set up is important. I know that her communities will participate in the development of any MPA.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It is my duty pursuant Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Bow River, International Trade; the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, Infrastructure; the hon. member for Regina—Lewvan, Foreign Affairs.

Resuming debate, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure and a privilege to rise in the

chamber and share a few thoughts on what are really important issues, and this is one of them.

I have had the opportunity to listen to the debates as we have been attempting to get the bill through the House of Commons for a good number of months now. In fact, it has been close to two years. Many of the objectives proposed in the legislation will have a positive impact on our oceans and surrounding areas and, in fact, on our entire planet. As such, I look forward to the bill receiving royal assent at some point in the not too distant future.

As I have listened to some of the debate today, I have found it interesting that members from different coastal regions have different interests and so forth.

Manitoba is not a land-locked province. The town of Churchill is in Manitoba. The previous speaker talked about Churchill Bay. I think of beluga whales. I think of Arctic char, which is a fabulous world-class fish. Beluga whales and Arctic char make up parts of that coastal region. I think of individuals from the coastline, such as the member for Long Range Mountains, who is such a strong and powerful advocate and represents over 200 fishing communities.

When we think of our oceans, we have to think about our heritage, our culture and the economy. We need to take into consideration many other things when we have legislation of this nature.

The House benefits when members of Parliament come to the table, whether it is by standing in the chamber or, more important, when they have the opportunity to have informal discussions. The member for Dauphin—Swan River—Neepeewa made reference to having had discussions with the member for Long Range Mountains. This provides a better sense and appreciation of not only how vast our country is, but how we can share our thoughts and ideas on what solutions might allow us to enhance our environment, to look at ways we can make the system much better.

It is important to recognize that Canadians, no matter where they live in our country, are all connected to our oceans in one way or another. Close to 75% of the planet is covered by ocean.

Canada has a responsibility, and I do not say that lightly. We have the Arctic Ocean in the north, the Pacific Ocean on the west coast and the Atlantic Ocean on the east coast. If we add up all of Canada's coastline following those three ocean bodies, we would find that Canada has the longest shoreline than any other country in the world.

With respect to protected waters, no country in the world has the potential to play a strong leadership role than Canada. We might be a country of close to 37 million people, but we have a great deal of clout when we look at the overall population of the world. There are certain areas in which we can demonstrate just how much clout we have, how much leadership we can bring to the table. This legislation is a part of the puzzle that would assist Canada going forward in demonstrating some of that leadership.

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●(1640)

I believe that in 2010, it was determined we should set some goals for 2020, as a world. We asked if we could protect 10% of our areas of responsibility, and Canada has the most. Could we hit the 10% mark with respect to marine protected areas? We are only a year away from 2020.

In the last federal election, the Liberal Party made a commitment to achieve 5% by 2017. The Liberals achieved that goal. My understanding is that we even went beyond it. Today we are almost at the 9% mark. We might even be at the 9% mark as of today. If not, we are really close to it. This government will hit the 10% mark sometime in 2020.

If we were to look at what we have been able to accomplish on that front in the last three years, we would see there are significant gains. Between 2010 to 2015, when Stephen Harper was the prime minister, the Conservatives barely achieved 1%. Before the writ is dropped in 2019, the Liberals will have brought the number up from 1% to 9% within four years.

We are providing the assurance that we are not stopping there. We are going to take the number to 10%. Collectively, we can all be fairly proud of that.

I talked about the importance of Canada's demonstrating leadership at the world table, especially given we have the longest coastline in the world.

I am encouraged by many of the comments I have heard recently with respect to the legislation. I am really encouraged by the degree to which the Prime Minister, cabinet and caucus have come together to recognize the importance of our oceans to our country and planet.

This is important to all our constituents. To understand it, a person does not have to be living in Newfoundland and Labrador, which is a beautiful area I must say, or British Columbia or Manitoba, which all have coastlines. A person can be in landlocked Alberta or Saskatchewan and still appreciate the importance of our oceans and recognize that what happens in the oceans impacts all of us.

I enjoy documentaries and watch them whenever I get the opportunity. One of the most fascinating documentaries I have seen is called *The Blue Planet*. It gives viewers an excellent sense of the many things that take place in our oceans and the impact they have on our environment. If not for shows and documentaries such as that one or sitting down with colleagues and other individuals with that first-hand experience, I would not have the same understanding or appreciation of things such as currents, which flow deep into the oceans, and the importance of them to the world's fish stocks.

●(1645)

Some members of Parliament have said that fish, whales or whatever animal do not know boundaries. It is a fair comment. That is why we not only need to see countries like Canada doing what we can, but we need to meet with other jurisdictions because we have a vested interest. One can take the macro look at it and say it is all about protecting our planet, or we can take a micro look at it and bring it home to areas such as my colleague's in the Long Range Mountains and those 200 communities that are very dependent on

the industry within that 200 miles of Canada and maybe even beyond that.

Canada is recognized for some of the best, if not the best, lobster in the world. I myself have had a few pieces of lobster. If we look at Atlantic salmon or Atlantic cod, we see these are very important industries that have a focus in Atlantic Canada. I am aware of it, in good part because of the advocacy done within our government caucus. The Atlantic caucus is a very healthy and vocal group of individuals. We know that the fishing industry as a whole is of the utmost importance because it assists in driving the economy, but more than just the economy, it is a part of our culture and heritage, as I pointed out at the beginning.

If we were to talk to many fishermen, we would find that it is a generational thing. The families have been doing this for generations. It is almost as if it is a part of their DNA. That industry has been very important to indigenous people. It goes far beyond the economics, even though the economics are really important.

The same principles I just finished talking about in Atlantic Canada can also be applied to the Pacific Ocean. We hear about the endangerment of killer whales along the B.C. coastline and concerns related to Pacific salmon. These are all genuine concerns and one of the reasons why the Government of Canada has taken a holistic approach to dealing with the protection of our oceans. It is not just legislation that we are bringing forward.

We have many members of cabinet and in our government caucus who work together to ensure that within the budget documents the money is flowing for causes that will have a positive outcome for our oceans. We have invested, literally, additional hundreds of millions dollars consistently through the last couple of budgets. That is why I was somewhat saddened when one member of the House stood and spoke for 14 or 15 hours on the budget—in essence, denying other members the opportunity to share their thoughts on the budget.

●(1650)

The opposition was very restrictive on that important budget. However, I suspect that if that debate had been allowed to occur, we would have heard members from Atlantic Canada, B.C., Manitoba and other regions talk about some of the financial programs and activities that this government is doing and putting into place to ensure that our fisheries not only survive today but, hopefully, grow into the future, and to look at ways to ensure that our industries continue to prosper. That has been important as a whole for this government from day one.

We talked about Canada's middle class and those aspiring to be a part of it. One of the ways we protect that thought and advance it forward in that area is to address our fishing industry. This is the type of rationale I would argue. It is why the government is not going to just settle for a piece of legislation but also take that more holistic approach and factor in the importance of a budget that complements legislation and vice versa. I am glad to be a part of a government that looks at it from that perspective.

Government Orders

•(1655)

I believe that, by having marine protected areas and establishing that up front in a timely fashion, we will better protect our fishing stocks and better ensure that we continue with the best lobsters in the world for generations to come. We do that by demonstrating leadership on the file. If members have listened, in particular to the parliamentary secretary for this legislation where he talks about that 1% versus 10%, they should really take note. For far too long, while I and my friend from Charlottetown, who has done an outstanding job, sat in the opposition in the third party, we wanted a government that would listen and take actions that would make a difference. After listening to Stephen Harper, from 2010 to 2015, move it from 0% to 1%, it is really quite gratifying to see how we have been able to take the issues that Canadians have brought forward to us as individual members of Parliament. We have taken the issues through our infrastructure, through our party and through government, and by working with Canadians, we have now achieved 9% in terms of the marine protected areas here in our shorelines.

That is a significant achievement. I emphasize that we are not going to stop there. We are not settling on that. We are committed to getting to that 10% by 2020.

However, it is more than just having those marine protected areas, and that is why I took the time to explain the issue of the importance of the national budget. Those individuals who are prepared to look at the national budget will find that not only are we bringing forward legislation and regulation but we are also supporting it by bringing in the financial resources that will make the difference, so that we will have a healthier industry and appreciate the heritage and the culture in that whole area.

•(1700)

Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in view of the parliamentary secretary's long career in public service, at both the provincial and federal levels, I would like to ask a question that is in alignment with what our government is doing with Canadian values right now. We went through a period under Stephen Harper when science was cut; it was not respected and scientists were muzzled. We have reinvested in science; we have reinvested in conservation; we have reinvested in the oceans protection plan. I would like my colleague to first speak to that, its alignment with Canadian values and where they are now.

Tied to that same theme, the fact is that Canada, as an international player in 2010, committed to these targets and in the last five years has made such remarkable progress. I would ask him to tie that in as well.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, if I were to summarize that point, I would say that science really and truly does matter. For the first time in a number of years, we have a government that has actually recognized the importance of science. When we are going to make decisions based on science, we need to allow scientists and others, like Statistics Canada, to become engaged so we can understand the numbers and the science before we make the decisions. If we do that, I suggest we have better public policy, better government policy. That is what cabinet and this government constantly looks at. Show us the science. We need to know why this is happening and how we can make a difference. If we do it right, the

decisions we make will reflect what Canadians really and truly want us to be doing as government.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member ended off talking about science, but in his speech, he also talked about the budget and how important it is to put one's money where one's mouth is, that when it comes to policy development, we have to put budgets behind our policy.

In November 2016, we launched the \$1.5-billion national oceans protection plan to improve marine safety and responsible shipping, protect our marine environment and offer new possibilities for indigenous and coastal communities. In the remarks of the hon. member across the way, he was talking about inland waterways, and in budget 2018, we invested \$1.3 billion over five years, looking at protecting 17% of our inland waters and land by 2020. We are trying to protect water, whether it is inland or coastal, providing budget room for that to happen and investing instead of cutting.

Could the member comment on the importance of investing rather than cutting our way to success?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, it is one of the reasons I said that, in this legislation, we need to look at how the government, overall, has been addressing our waterways. It is not only our oceans. Lake Winnipeg is a massive body of water that provides all sorts of opportunities. When we talk about the opportunity for commercial or recreational fishing, we are talking about tourism industries and about providing food for the world, and quite often we are talking about the cultural values and who we are. How can we not recognize the true value to Canadian society and the planet by just talking about it and not being prepared to invest in it?

My friend made reference to just over \$1 billion. There has been new money, hundreds of millions of dollars, that we have brought to the table in order to protect our oceans, to ensure there is more protection for different species and so forth. These are all important things to be doing, and as a government, we are committed to doing just that.

•(1705)

Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member talked about the bluing of the blue planet, and we are getting a good start here in Canada at the provincial level at this point in time. We are starting to see some changes. However, we are also looking at those changes because of some of the attitudes of the current government. Although Liberal members are discussing some of the changes, they are not actually looking at what is happening on the ground.

In northern Alberta we have the tailing ponds, and we are looking at how we have been able to manage those. We look at all those environmental aspects. When there was money in the oil and gas business, we were able to invest in all those types of new research programs, which was what we could sell around the planet. We also talked about the planet and what we were doing.

As we bring in oil and gas from other places in the world to replace what we have, and try to shut it down from a Canadian perspective, I wonder if the member perhaps understands why Canada is starting to be blue on its own.

Government Orders

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I want to be sensitive to the question. When we think of our oceans and waterways, we recognize that there are opportunities to develop an industry, even for landlocked provinces. When I talk about industry, I think of the great recreational Atlantic salmon industry in Atlantic Canada, for example. In other areas, it might be more of a commercial type of use.

If we take a look at it from a tourism or commercial aspect, we see there are differences. I like to think that Alberta has the opportunity for diversification. I am very much interested in science and how we might be able to apply science to certain industries. I do not claim to understand the ponding issue, but I do know it is a growing industry, particularly in the province of British Columbia. I have even heard thoughts on how we could do more commercial fishing in the province of Manitoba.

Regarding the link to oil, if we have demonstrated anything as a government in the last three years, it is that it is important to recognize that the economy and the environment need to work hand in hand.

For example, it is not okay for us to ignore environmental concerns in order to build endless pipelines. We have to be very sensitive to our environment. All in all, Canada has done an exceptionally good job in comparison to many countries in the world, but I am sure that we can always improve. We can always look at ways to do better.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased and honoured to rise today and speak to Bill C-55, a very important bill and one of particular significance to me, coming from Vancouver, British Columbia, where the coastline, the oceans and the marine species are so absolutely critical to our economy, culture, people, indigenous nations and, frankly, to our way of life. This bill really speaks to the need to look at our marine areas in a different way, and to start to treasure them and protect them for future generations.

I am pleased to say that our party will support Bill C-55, albeit with some reservations, which I will outline in my remarks.

I want to start by saying that I am disappointed that the government has once again used time allocation. In other words, the government has cut off and limited debate on this bill. This is the 71st time in this Parliament that the Liberals have used time allocation, which is one of the most undemocratic tools that a government can use. It cuts off debate and hinders parliamentarians who, after all, have been sent here to express our positions on behalf of our constituents. It shows a disrespect for Parliament and all Canadians, who elect us to come here to represent them and to ensure that their voices are heard and reflected in the debates in this House.

I sat in the last Parliament when the Conservatives used closure 100 times, and I am starting to see very little difference between Liberals and Conservatives in terms of their fundamental disrespect for the democratic traditions of this chamber.

Interestingly, I heard the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader refer to the budget and describe how one of the Conservatives, by speaking for 15 hours, denied other

members the right to speak, yet he does so himself, having risen in this House to introduce a motion to cut off debate. That denies all sorts of members in this House the right to speak. Canadians should be aware of that fundamental disrespect of their rights and democracy.

In British Columbia, as in other areas of the country in the north and on the Atlantic coast, on our coasts, watersheds and oceans, the sea life, the pre-eminent species that reside on the coasts—the orcas and dolphins and of course the iconic salmon, as well as the sea lions and eagles and all other species—are of absolutely profound importance to our entire ecosystem, and when we say “ecosystem”, we are not just talking about ecology. It is part of our economy as well.

I know the Liberals are fond of saying that we have to balance the environment and the economy. Actually, I think we need to go farther than that: We need to recognize that the environment provides the fundamental capital that makes all economic activity possible. When we do not place protection of the environment and our ecosystem first and foremost, we actually threaten our economy. That is what the government has done, repeatedly, through its policies over the last four years.

We use our oceans and our marine areas for recreation. We use enjoy nature there, and they are fundamentally part of the cultural and historic fabric of our indigenous nations. As I have said, they are part of our fundamental economy.

In Vancouver and in British Columbia, tourism and fishing and these kinds of economic activities depend on having a pristine and well-protected environmental system in our marine areas. It is absolutely critical. That is why we need sustainable policies. We need to balance economic activities to make sure that generations forever can enjoy, in a sustainable way, all the bounty of our marine areas.

I do not need to point out that these marine areas are precious and delicate and require extreme care and balance. In fact, we are simply stewards for all future generations of these areas.

● (1710)

There is an irony in the Liberal government patting itself on the back for protecting marine areas at the same time that it has bought the Trans Mountain Kinder Morgan pipeline, which will carry raw bitumen and triple the number of tankers through the Burrard Inlet, right into the marine areas that the government is trying to protect. This will threaten the southern orca population, and if there is ever any kind of spill, it will create an ecological disaster of unimaginable proportion, because bitumen sinks and there is no way to clean it up. As for the Liberals pretending to care about our marine environment, it is impossible to square that idea with their approval of a pipeline that presents probably the most disastrous threat to our marine environment on the west coast that we have seen in some time.

Government Orders

I want to pause for a moment and mention a recent situation that is of great concern to my constituency and the tens of thousands of Filipinos who live in my riding: the hazardous waste that originated in Canada that has been sent over these marine areas to developing nations, in this case to the Philippines.

In 2013 and 2014, a private Canadian company shipped 103 containers to the Philippines. They were labelled as plastics for recycling, even though they also contained waste, such as soiled diapers. These containers have been rotting in a port in the Philippines for years. The Filipino government has been asking Canada to take back this trash, which has been rotting at the port in Manila. Environmentally concerned people in the Philippines were failed by two governments, the Conservatives and now the Liberals, at least until recently, and the Filipino-Canadian population in my riding desperately wants Canada to take back its garbage, quit using developing countries as a dumping ground for our trash over the marine areas and compensate the Government of the Philippines for all its costs in having to deal with this environmental offence over the last number of years.

I will turn to Bill C-55.

This bill would provide some new legal tools to speed up the creation of marine protected areas, MPAs, but it falls short of Canada's environmental and international commitments to protect our marine biodiversity. The bill fails to set a minimum protection standard and targets for zoning for marine protected areas, and while the government recently announced new standards for marine protected areas, we are concerned that omitting them from Bill C-55, from the legislation itself, and instead relegating them to regulations opens them up to easy reversal under a future government. This process would give the minister far too much latitude to decide what activities are permissible in an MPA. The government's new standards would not be enshrined in law and would therefore be easier to undo under a future minister.

As we have heard, Canada has pledged to the international community to protect 5% of Canada's marine areas by 2017 and 10% by 2020 with the aim to halt the destruction of habitats and ecosystems and to protect against the erosion that has gone on for decades under successive Conservative and Liberal governments. In fact, Liberal and Conservative governments have both failed to take meaningful action since signing the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity. That is 25 years of a commitment that has really been ignored by successive Liberal and Conservative governments.

I think Canadians would be somewhat shocked to know that most marine protected areas today still allow extractive fishing activity, and one even allows for oil and gas exploration. Thankfully, the government recently announced that it would prohibit oil and gas activities, mining, dumping and bottom trawling in MPAs, and that is a good thing. However, it stopped short of creating so-called no-take areas, which have long been the recommendation of conservation groups.

I would also point out that Canada has yet to adopt the IUCN international marine protection standard, and 15 university scientists from St. John's to Victoria have written to the former minister of fisheries and oceans and the current Minister of Environment and Climate Change to ask for stiffer conservation measures in Canada's

12 marine conservation areas, as well as those being proposed in the future. Imagine if we allowed hunters into international parks to hunt. I think that would be absolutely shocking to most Canadians, and totally unacceptable. Why then would we allow it in marine protected areas? The very name implies a marine area that we are protecting. Would we not say that in this one area, there is to be no activity that would extract any marine species or life in that area?

• (1715)

Ninety per cent of Canada's marine areas are open to extractive fishing, so we are not talking about creating a huge burden on Canada's fishing industry. However, if we are going to protect an area for future generations, then we should protect it, and that means not allowing any kind of economic activity other than enjoyment and tourism and people coming to visit those areas and leaving a soft footprint when they are there.

The NDP moved a number of amendments to this legislation that we felt would have made the legislation stronger. We had five objectives. We wanted to enshrine minimum protection standards in the act. Unfortunately, that was rejected by the Liberal government. We wanted to maintain ecological integrity as the primary objective of an MPA. We wanted to enshrine co-governance with indigenous peoples as the governing principle of this act and establish the authority of indigenous guardians, who have such a long, millennial, actually, relationship with these areas under their stewardship. We wanted to require the establishment of significant no-take zones, as I just mentioned. Finally, we wanted to facilitate the implementation of networks of MPAs, which, of course, would facilitate the movement of species from one MPA to another.

Unfortunately, the Liberals were not interested in our amendments. They did pass some Green amendments and one from an independent member that touched on themes similar to ours. Unfortunately, those amendments were diluted versions of our own. We would certainly have been happier if we had received a robust adoption of the principles I just highlighted.

I want to point out some quotes from some environmental and marine experts in this country that show how important this legislation is. I want to quote from West Coast Environmental Law. Its representative said:

The law is currently very inconsistent. As you've heard and will probably continue to hear, people are astonished to learn that oil and gas exploration, undersea mining, and damaging fishing activities are all possible in the tiny fraction of the sea that we [currently] call marine protected areas. That's why an unprecedented 70,000 Canadians, members of the public, spoke out about one of the proposed new MPAs, Laurentian Channel, and said that we need to keep harmful activities out of these areas.

That is simply common sense. Again, I will give the government credit for announcing last week that its policy would be to prohibit those activities other than establishing no-take areas. That is a very important development. Again, I am curious as to why the government did not see fit to enshrine those standards in the legislation itself, where they would have been far more entrenched and more difficult for any future government to unwind.

Government Orders

We did see, in the previous government, that the Conservatives did massive damage to our navigable waters act and to ecological principles, not only on water but on land and in air as well.

I want to comment for a moment on how important it is that we are going to prohibit bottom trawling. I quote:

The scientific evidence clearly demonstrates that bottom trawling has significant damaging impacts to sea floor ecosystems, and that no-take fishing areas are a key component of effective MPAs. Research shows that MPAs that permit varying levels of fishing and other activities are less effective at achieving biodiversity than fully protected areas.

International best practices suggest MPA core no-take zones should encompass 75% of a given MPA. Canada is nowhere close to reaching that high bar....

Right now, the minister has the discretion to determine what activities are allowed in an MPA and how restrictive each zone in an MPA can be. So far, Canada's fisheries minister has implemented a no-take zone in only five MPAs [to date], and those areas are tiny when compared to the overall MPAs. Canada should follow international examples and make no-take zones the rule rather than the exception... [in] MPAs.

That was from our very excellent former fisheries critic, the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam, who has spent a lifetime in watershed development, river health and marine ecosystems.

● (1720)

I want to also take a moment to contrast this bill with the Canada National Parks Act. The Canada National Parks Act sets a high bar for maintaining ecological integrity in all national parks. However, marine protected areas lack the clear minimum protection standards that terrestrial parks benefit from.

The federal government recently announced that a national advisory panel would be established to provide the Ministry of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard with advice on minimum standards for future Oceans Act MPAs. This would still leave protection standards to the subjective judgment of the minister. Since fisheries ministers in the past have permitted seabed mining, oil and gas exploration and other industrial activities in MPAs, we do not have confidence in that discretion. Of course, that is based on empirical experience, not theoretical concerns. Therefore, the solution is to enshrine minimum protection standards in the legislation. The NDP would continue to urge the current government and future governments to take that very important step.

Our oceans are a critical part of our country. They are critical to our economy, our culture and our social relations. They are enjoyed by millions of Canadians from coast to coast. Therefore, in the same way we want to ensure that we continue to expand our protection for natural terrestrial parks, we need to do the same in marine areas. To do that, there can be no half measures. We should not be quibbling. We should be having world-class, cutting-edge, state-of-the-art, complete protection of marine biodiversity in all marine protected areas. Frankly, given that it is still such a small percentage of the vast oceans that many members in this House have already commented on, with Canada, I believe, having the largest coastline in the world, I think the case can strongly be made that in those few small areas we are protecting, we should protect them completely.

The New Democrats will be voting in support of this legislation, because it makes the designation of marine protected areas easier and faster, which is a good thing. We support the government's policy announcement last week that it will strengthen and tighten the kinds of damaging industrial and commercial activities that frankly gut the

purpose of marine protected areas. However, we will be pushing the government in every positive way we can to make sure that this legislation responds in a more positive way to the concerns that have been raised, because it is not quite there yet.

I want to conclude my remarks by talking about the indigenous nations in Canada. In the New Democrats' view, reconciliation should be part of all legislation. Additional designations are welcome tools, but it does not make sense, in our view, to exclude the explicit recognition of indigenous rights in the Oceans Act. Given the implications of MPAs on indigenous constitutional rights, we believe this omission is irresponsible, and frankly, inconsistent with the current government's stated objective of pursuing reconciliation. The federal government's commitment to implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and to working in a true nation-to-nation relationship with Canada's indigenous peoples is something we need to make a reality. Every time the government introduces legislation that does not make an explicit and strong reference to those indigenous rights, we see it as a missed opportunity and evidence that the government's commitment to reconciliation is more one of words than of action.

I will conclude with this. British Columbians are very proud of our west coast. New Democrats are very proud to be strong defenders of those coasts and all the species that live within them. That is why we are going to continue to fight hard against irresponsible pipeline decisions that threaten our coast. We are going to fight for strong environmental protections for all marine areas, for the expansion of those areas and for 100% protection of those marine protected areas so that all species, from the orca to the salmon to the human, who enjoy those areas can continue to enjoy them for millennia to come.

● (1725)

Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Vancouver Kingsway can always be relied upon to provide a thoughtful and thorough presentation, and this one was certainly no exception.

I appreciate that he challenged the government to be bolder to ensure that some of the measures we seek to put in place cannot be reversed by a future government and to consider some of the specific matters he raised.

I want to raise two specific points and ask him whether he agrees with them.

Government Orders

Without this legislation, there is no protection until there is full protection. This legislation would allow for an interim protection order that would effectively freeze the footprint. Would the member agree that this is an important tool, given all the considerations he outlined in his speech?

Second, he talked about what our standards should be and said that they should be more rigorous. Would he agree that in the approach taken by the government, the prohibited activities in any marine protected area should always be aligned with the conservation objectives?

• (1730)

Mr. Don Davies: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for those kind comments. I too also appreciate his thoughtful and responsible contributions to debate in the House.

I will take his second question first. The New Democratic caucus believes that ecological integrity should be the foremost priority in marine protected area management. I know that there are competing interests in this area, but we believe that the highest and most profoundly important value should be ecological integrity. That is why we take quite an uncompromising position when it comes to that. That is why, while I give the government a lot of credit for taking this step in this legislation, I think this one gap of not having no-take areas is a significant omission.

With respect to my colleague's first question, I would answer yes, I agree that the interim measure he talked about is important, and I am glad to see it in this legislation. It gives us some breathing time to freeze the status quo before we can designate more marine protected areas and achieve the objectives of this legislation.

Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the NDP member spoke about ecological integrity and how that is one of the mainstays as far as his party is concerned.

I have always had this question, which comes from two parts.

British Columbia and Alberta produce a lot of coal, and it goes through the same ports that we could perhaps be moving our oil through. There is coal that comes up from the U.S. that is then transported out of those same ports, because the eco-warriors that are on the west coast of the U.S. are a bit more determined to keep that product out. That is one concern. I am sure the member would like to maintain the great industry that coal producers have in both British Columbia and Alberta.

Second, it has always been confusing to me that we speak about the integrity of our waterways, when there are municipalities that dump their sewage straight into either rivers or oceans. We can speak a lot about how it is dealt with, but everyone is looking at this great integrity until it affects them and their communities.

Can the member see why there are a lot of people in landlocked provinces, such as Alberta, who look at this with a bit of a jaundiced eye when those are the two positions that are put to us.

Mr. Don Davies: Mr. Speaker, there is a lot to unpack in that question. I do not know if I could do justice to it in the minute or minute and a half that I have to answer it.

In my thinking, and the thinking of many people in my riding, climate change, the emergency we are facing, is the defining issue of

our time. This means we have been simply burning far too many fossil fuels too quickly and that has resulted in us altering our natural environment, to the point where we risk catastrophic and permanent climate change. In fact, worse than that, we risk triggering a loop that we cannot control. For instance, as the polar ice caps melt and methane is released, it creates more global warming, which leads to more melting and so on and so forth.

I point to The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's findings that by 2050, if we do not keep global warming to 2°C or less, we risk losing 99% of our coral reefs, melting polar caps and losing a million species. I am absolutely opposed to burning coal for energy. It is probably the dirtiest fossil fuel there is and our world right now simply should not be burning it.

Normally, economic activity is important and I respect the transition that is needed for workers in that industry. However, we have a larger, more profound responsibility, which is to ensure our planet is healthy for all future generations. That is what guides our policy-making on this side of the House.

• (1735)

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Whitby, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that my hon. colleague supports the legislation and has some reservations. In the case of the Philippines, I agree 100% that we can and should do more. The government should take heed of that situation.

When we look at the international perspective and the legislation with respect to Canada's leadership on oceans and ocean protection and when we look at the sustainable development goals and our agenda 2030, does the member not think this is a good first step? The Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard stated earlier that the government wanted to look at what could be done in the future to ensure the legislation would go forward and have a more robust effect. Does he not think this is a good first step in Canada's leadership on the international stage and the work we do to protect our oceans from coast to coast to coast to ensure we meet our sustainable development goals and our objectives in agenda 2030?

Mr. Don Davies: Mr. Speaker, this is positive legislation, and I congratulate the government for moving forward on this. It is a first step, but I would like to see a quicker step.

Canada did sign onto the Convention on Biological Diversity in 1992 and here we are talking about this 27 years later. I would like to have seen this go quicker. Of course the previous Conservative government was at 1% of protecting our marine areas. That was a terrible time in Canada's history with respect to advancing our international commitments, as the hon. member just commented.

Government Orders

We cannot just take one piece of this. I would like to see a comprehensive policy from the government in this area. For instance, my hon. colleague brought up the Philippines. Right now, Canada is refusing to support a ban on the dumping of hazardous waste in developing countries. A proposed amendment would strengthen an international treaty called the Basel Convention, which governs the global movement of hazardous waste. Canada, which has been a signatory since 1989, has been under fire recently for allegedly violating that treaty and, in fact, is currently refusing to support an amendment that would strengthen it.

To go back to the Philippines, Canadian businesses cannot be allowed to dump our trash in developing countries that are even less able to deal with recycling and toxicity. Those tankers are coming back here. Canada should take them back right away and we should compensate the Philippines for all of the costs in having to deal with our garbage. We should apologize to the Philippines for having allowed that to happen and ensure it does not happen again.

We all have an obligation as citizens of Canada, in fact all citizens of the world, to ensure we take care of our environment in a way that is sustainable and meets our Paris accord commitments so all future generations can inherit the same planet we all inherited when we were growing up.

Mr. Vance Badawey (Niagara Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to be here today to speak to Bill C-55, an act to amend the Oceans Act and the Canada Petroleum Resources Act, and the amendments sent to us by the other place.

Our government is in fact committed to increasing the proportion of marine and coastal areas that are protected to 10% by the year 2020. Over the past four years, we have worked with a great deal of people to increase our protected areas from just 1% under the former Conservative government to over 8% under the Liberal government.

Indeed, it is under the government and the Prime Minister that this great nation is showing leadership on the issue of marine protection. We are well on our way to achieving our target with sound science and transparent decision-making, once again, working with those within these communities.

We are actively engaging with our partners in both provinces and territories and with indigenous groups, marine industries and all Canadians to increase protections and meet our targets while supporting a health oceans economy. An important part of meeting those targets is Bill C-55.

As many members already know, the bill seeks to provide a new authority for the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard to designate an area for interim protection. A decision to either permanently designate the interim area or to repeal the interim order must be made within five years. This mechanism allows for interim protection to areas that are currently under consideration for permanent designation, as the current process takes an average of between seven and 10 years and, currently, in the lead-up to a final designation, there is no mechanism to allow us to protect this area.

While we support the reasons behind the amendments made by the other place, we cannot support the message received as the amendment would add changes that are already required under the

existing legislation and would make the interim process longer and more complex than the process for permanent designation.

That is why we have proposed an alternate amendment that captures the intent of the Senate's concerns, while also ensuring that the objective of Bill C-55, which is to provide faster protection, is in fact upheld.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Senate for its work, especially the sponsor, Senator Bovey. While she represents the beautiful province of Manitoba, I know she spent some years on the west coast and has continued to be a strong advocate for the protection and conservation of all of our oceans.

I also want to thank the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard for his leadership on this file. I know he was in Montreal just last month to announce new standards for marine protected areas that would prohibit oil and gas exploration. This announcement was indeed supported not just by Canadians across Canada but around the world.

● (1740)

Canada is taking real action when it comes to protecting our marine environment, but more must and will be done by those not only within government, but our partners throughout our great nation.

That is why we are here today, debating the merits of Bill C-55, a bill that has been received and has been given countless hours of robust debate. Five amendments to the bill, proposed by Conservative, Green and independent members, were adopted by the House on April 25, 2018. The bill has received support in one form or another by all parties in this chamber.

An important principle that acts as the basis of the bill that I would like to speak to and about is the precautionary principle.

Bill C-55 would require the ministries of Fisheries and Oceans, the Canadian Coast Guard and the Governor in Council to apply the precautionary principle when deciding whether to designate new marine protected areas. This would facilitate the decisions to designate a marine protected area. The principle recognizes that the absence of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing decisions where there is a risk of serious or irreversible harm.

Indeed, if information such as the recent report by the United Nations on the collapse of biodiversity has told us anything, it is that we cannot wait to take action to protect our environment. While many of the members opposite want to sit in their seats and wait for more species to go extinct and for weather conditions to worsen because they have no plan for the environment or our marine areas, Canadians can be absolutely certain that the members sitting on this side are listening and responding accordingly.

We are listening and we are taking action because we know we cannot simply wait for our fish stocks to collapse before that is enough evidence to do something about it. We know there are options now, right at this moment, options that we can move forward with and therefore do the right thing to support a healthy marine environment and the communities that depend on those environments.

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A good example of this, which has already been raised a few times but cannot be repeated enough, is the good work this government is doing with the Qikiqtani Inuit Association and the Government of Nunavut to explore the designation of a high Arctic basin for marine protection.

Last month, we announced the memorandum of understanding that outlines the commitment to co-operation that all three parties have signed onto in moving forward with this protection. Furthermore, budget 2019 outlines funds that will be available to support the development of a conservation economy in the High Arctic Basin, with support for critical marine infrastructure.

We know that Bill C-55 will facilitate this process by providing a mechanism that can be used to apply interim protection to the area until a final designation is in fact made. This is not only a good example of how government is taking action now, but is doing so the right way by engaging with the territorial government and respecting the Nunavut land claim agreement and working with rights holders, the QIA.

The members opposite want to say that this government is trying to take shortcuts with the bill, but I put the question for Canadians: Is a process that still takes an average of seven years, with the passage of this bill, to designate a permanent MPA taking a shortcut? Is debating the bill for almost two years in both chambers taking a shortcut? Is listening to the message received by the Senate and proposing an amendment that seeks to capture the intent of this change, while still respecting the objective of the bill, taking a shortcut?

• (1745)

I think that Canadians believe that the answer is no, no and no. I do not expect members opposite to agree with the government on this issue or with Canadians, because we know that those members have no plan for the environment. However, I want all Canadians to know that this Liberal government has taken leadership on this issue, and overall on the issue of the environment, and we will do whatever we can to get this bill passed and our marine areas protected.

As Canadians, we are all connected to our oceans, which are significant to our heritage, culture and economy, and are essential to all life on this great planet. In 2015, our government promised that 5% of Canada's marine and coastal areas would be protected by 2017, and we delivered. Over 8% of our oceans are now protected, which is up from less than 1% when we took office in 2015. Now our government is committed to reaching our international target of 10% by 2020, as I mentioned earlier. We will do this with sound science and transparent decision-making, working with our provinces and territories and communities that have a direct interest in the decision-making process.

One of the forms of protection is a marine protected area, MPA, under the Oceans Act, where unique species and their habitats are conserved and protected. We have examined how the Oceans Act could be updated to facilitate the designation process for MPAs without sacrificing science or the public's ability to provide their input, their thoughts and, most importantly, their interests in a process that considers the consequences of the decisions being made. The current process for a designated marine protected area is lengthy. These proposed amendments to the Oceans Act would shorten the

time required to put protection in place, while ensuring that shortcuts are not taken when it comes to these consultations.

This legislation would, among other things, ensure that marine protection can in fact be done and completed in a timely manner by allowing the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans to designate provisional protections to an interim MPA while the steps for a permanent MPA are in fact followed. The interim MPA would freeze the footprint of current activities in sensitive areas that are being considered for Oceans Act MPA designation. It would also allow for ongoing activities, those that have taken place in the last year, to continue.

We will continue engaging with our partners in the provinces and territories and with indigenous groups, marine industries and all Canadians. I cannot emphasize enough how inclusive this process is and will continue to be, to ensure the protection and meet the targets we proposed back in 2015, which we are now continuing to work toward.

Our government made a commitment to increase the proportion of Canada's marine and coastal areas to 10% by 2020, and we are going to meet that commitment, which we started in 2015. This proposed legislation is part of our plan to reach these targets. The proposed amendments would shorten the time required to put protection in place and allow interim protection for sensitive marine areas. Currently, there is no protection until there is full protection.

• (1750)

The Senate amendment is duplicative and requires an additional consultation period beyond what is already required in legislation. If accepted, the Senate amendment would make the order process for interim protection more complex and lengthy than the process for designating an amendment or permanent MPA. This would go against the objective of this bill, which is underpinned by the precautionary approach and seeks to create a mechanism that will allow for faster interim protection to marine and coastal areas.

However, we understand the concerns. We understand the concerns made by some members of the Senate, and that is why we have proposed an amendment that captures the intent of the message received by the Senate. Our proposal will ensure that the geographical location and all other relevant information, as well as information on all consultations undertaken, are published when an order for interim protection is made.

I come from a Great Lakes region, Niagara, and of course, with that we have just recently announced plans to look at protection of the Great Lakes, and there are reasons for that. I look at it under a triple-bottom-line lens. That triple bottom line lens consists of, in order of priority, economy, environment and social issues—the effects and consequences of decisions made on our waterways, whether they be the Great Lakes or our oceans.

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Some of the things I have learned throughout the past years in my former life as a mayor and now as an MP are the critical responsibilities that we have, how critical it is to work with our communities, how critical it is to work with our businesses and our residents in those areas, ensuring that economic, social and environmental considerations are taken before those decisions are made, and how important it is that their interests are placed at the forefront of those decisions.

This bill, Bill C-55, is no different with respect to the oceans and, of course, the areas that we have to preserve to ensure that future generations—not just five, 10 or 15 years down the road but 20, 30, 40 or 50 years down the road—are looked after when it comes to our environment and what is attached to our environment.

In closing, I would like to say this. Although we here in Parliament sit in four-year terms, it is important that the vision goes beyond those four years and looks at 20- to 50-year thoughts, priorities, responsibilities and, therefore, strategies. Bill C-55 does that. I look forward to Bill C-55 passing in this House. Therefore, the thoughts and, of course, responsibilities that we have for future generations will be taken as forthright, in front of mind, and the strategies attached to same will include the involvement and priorities of the people whom we are going to actually affect by this legislation, the communities and those along our waterfronts.

• (1755)

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, one of the things that concern me is the nature of this place. We deal with one bill at a time. When we are dealing with something like the oceans and potential environmental impacts or conflicts between different resource sectors—the fisheries, offshore oil development, the transport of oil or the hazardous waste through the oceans—we are not taking everything into consideration. I have heard over and over from the Liberals here that it is a first step. We hear that about every bill that they bring forward.

My question to the member is this. Right now off the coast of Newfoundland, there is consideration for experimental deepwater drilling that other countries have not been willing to pursue. Is the member confident that this legislation that we are bringing forward will also ensure that whatever other activity the government is reviewing is not going to impact on these marine protected areas that we set aside?

There was a lot of consternation, in the review of Bill C-69, that the offshore boards had a conflict of interest. One interest is to extract and gain revenue from the offshore resources, and the other is to consider the impacts. Can the member speak to that issue of whether he thinks it is important for us also to look at all of these pieces of legislation together, to make sure that one is not impacting the other?

Mr. Vance Badawey: Mr. Speaker, one of the things this government has done, unlike others in the past, is put in place a new ministry, the ministry of intergovernmental affairs. That ministry is there to ensure that when we have issues or projects being considered, cross-ministerial communication is going to happen. As the member will know, there are many issues we deal with that affect other bills, other ministries and future projects or current projects that might be under way. When these situations present themselves, we look forward to the minister of intergovernmental

affairs and his great staff facilitating that communication and discussion so that the decisions that are being made will be consistent with the ultimate priorities of this government.

• (1800)

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Whitby, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for his speech. He certainly is a great representative for his riding.

As the member knows, Canada represents a number of small islands in the Caribbean on a number of international multilateral bodies. As everyone knows, I am from Grenada. When we are talking about oceans and protecting our oceans, we all know that the Caribbean wants to be one of the first regions in the world to be climate resilient.

I wonder if the member can tell us how this piece of legislation would lend to Canada's credibility as a leader in the international community with respect to protecting our oceans, and more broadly, as a leader on climate change.

Mr. Vance Badawey: Mr. Speaker, that is a great point. The world does need more Canada. When we look at a lot of the issues and initiatives we have embarked upon, especially in the last three years, we have shown great leadership with respect to those very issues. Let us face it; we have oceans that extend past our boundaries. That said, the issues attached to those oceans cross jurisdictional lines. We look forward to protections for not only our oceans within this great nation. There is an expectation that through that leadership, they will go beyond our jurisdiction and be consistent not just in our area but also internationally.

Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to pick up on the theme raised by the member for Whitby. Canada recently co-hosted a conference in Nairobi, Kenya, on the sustainable blue economy. This is something that requires international co-operation and collaboration. It really is an opportunity for Canada to lead.

I know the member for Niagara Centre is a very active supporter of the Chamber of Marine Commerce. There is probably no better poster boy for the economy and the environment going hand in hand with respect to marine matters than the member for Niagara Centre. I wonder if he could speak a bit about his work with the marine chamber and its relationship to a blue economy and the health of our oceans, which are all part and parcel of what we are debating here today.

Mr. Vance Badawey: Mr. Speaker, that is a great point. Not only are we leaders internationally with respect to our responsibilities when it comes to the environment, our oceans and our great lakes, but we cannot do it alone. We have to be in this together. Our marine industry, being the obvious front-of-mind participant in action like this, has been very responsible. The Chamber of Marine Commerce and the companies it represents are equally important. Initiatives such as Green Marine and other initiatives have contributed to our overall ability to have these policies and bills, like Bill C-55, put in place here in the House and put into practice.

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Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I always find it rich when Liberals brag about their environmental record, especially since shortly after they took office they allowed the former mayor of Montreal, Denis Coderre, to dump millions of litres of raw sewage into the St. Lawrence, after our government had prevented him from doing that.

I have a specific question related to the Great Lakes water quality, a topic I am interested in. We did a study of it in the environment committee back when we were in government. Right now, there are some serious water quality issues in the Great Lakes, specifically the eutrophication of Lake Erie, which is spreading.

We have largely solved the problem of point source pollution through our waste-water treatment plants and so on. Could the hon. member comment on how he would deal with non-point source pollution, basically the runoff from cities and towns that is putting phosphorous into our lakes, especially the Great Lakes, at a fast rate?

• (1805)

Mr. Vance Badawey: Mr. Speaker, do I have an hour?

That is the whole point and strategy of many investments we are making as a government in partnership with municipal governments. Because of my former life as a mayor, I understand how much financial burden is being placed on property taxpayers, as well as water and waste water ratepayers. On a yearly basis, every annual budget sees increases, especially in capital fixed costs.

One of the main reasons we are bringing carbon pricing forward is that when we look at carbon-related costs currently caused by climate change, the financial burden ends up on the property taxpayer or the water and waste water ratepayer. By bringing in carbon pricing, that download, especially by provincial governments, such as the case right now in Ontario, will no longer exist. The money is going back to those very ratepayers and taxpayers, to allow municipalities to put the infrastructure in the ground, through contributions we are making at this level of government. This allows them to put bigger pipes in the ground to deal with a five-year storm that once was a 100-year storm and to ensure that we have combined sewer overflows and the investments to put in place the infrastructure that would eliminate sewer overflows, as well as stormwater that is not being treated, such as runoff, as the member mentioned.

This government is looking for mechanisms today, which are primarily financial, to offset the financial burden on the property taxpayer and the water and waste water ratepayer through our infrastructure programs and carbon pricing, to bring that money back to those very same taxpayers and ratepayers, and in fact to get that infrastructure in the ground to eliminate those challenges.

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today on behalf of the fine people of Red Deer—Lacombe, in central Alberta, to talk again about this legislation, one which the Senate sent back to the House because it saw the same flaws in it that the opposition did.

The bill was passed at third reading by the Liberal majority government in an expeditious way as an attempt to fulfill its political objectives, without giving due consideration to the impacts the bill

would have on the people of Canada, notwithstanding that it is about marine protected areas.

I do not think any reasonable Canadian would think that having marine protected areas is a bad idea. In fact, the previous Conservative government created many marine protected areas in fresh water and in our oceans. The current government has an ambitious plan to set aside 10% of our marine areas for protection by 2020.

The fisheries committee, of which I am a member, travelled across the country to talk to various stakeholders and groups about what that would actually look like. We heard loudly and clearly from aboriginal groups, particularly from those in coastal communities that rely on the ocean or the sea for their way of life, about their concern that marine protected areas would interfere with or infringe upon their lifestyles. The Inuit of the north want to have access to various estuaries for beluga harvesting or fishing. The coastal communities rely on shipping and marine traffic. The indigenous communities rely on salmon, halibut, clams and so on, not only for their personal use but also for the socio-economic interests that exist within their various bands.

In its wisdom, the Senate has basically found that Bill C-55 does not do a very good job of addressing the concerns of some of these communities. In fact, Senator Patterson, who is from the Nunavut territory, wanted to amend clause 5 of the bill to enhance consultation and co-operation measures. Even the government touts itself as one that wants to ensure the consultative process is done. However, the Senate, which is now dominated by members appointed by the Prime Minister, has sided with Senator Patterson, saying the bill needs to go back to have that clause reviewed.

Some people in my home province of Alberta may be asking why a guy from Alberta is so focused on fisheries, particularly on the west coast. They may wonder why a guy from central Alberta, who is also a farm boy, is always talking about fish and salmon. It just happens to be something I know a little bit about. I also understand that standing in between the economic prosperity of the people I represent in central Alberta and their future is the ability to ship energy products off Canada's Pacific coast.

Nobody back home in my riding actually believes that the current government has Alberta's best interests at heart. That is why traditionally, after the prime minister with the same last name as the current Prime Minister was elected, the Liberal brand, especially at the provincial level, is virtually a non-starter in Alberta. Why?

For people with a short memory or who have not learned their history very well, it is because people realized that brand and name just meant economic chaos. Whether through the National Energy Board program that was implemented some 40 years ago or the programs that are being implemented now, nobody back in Alberta believes that the marine protected area measures in Bill C-55 will not be used as a political sledgehammer to further restrict Alberta's ability to export its natural resource products off the coast, and this is why.

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•(1810)

First and foremost, the current government, even though it tries to say otherwise, does not like fossil fuels. The Prime Minister has been very clear, through slips of the tongue, that the oil sands need to be phased out and stopped. He said as much. He said in response to questions about the carbon tax that the increasing cost of energy and the increasing cost of fuel for Canadians is what we want. When I say “we want”, I am using the Prime Minister's words. It is what the Prime Minister thinks Canadians actually want.

Right now we have a situation in British Columbia in which the Premier of British Columbia is basically threatening to block the expansion of the Trans Mountain pipeline, yet at the same time threatening to sue the Government of Alberta if it chooses to shut off the existing Trans Mountain pipeline's delivery of oil. We find ourselves in this really bizarre world here in Canada, where nobody actually believes that anybody in the Liberal Party or the NDP wants to allow any more pipelines built to our west coast.

We have the carbon tax. We have had the regulatory changes. We have had the outright cancelling of the northern gateway pipeline by Enbridge and the changing of the regulatory process for energy east. The very first thing that the Liberal government published in November 2015 was changes that it made to the consultation process on pipelines, further delaying the Trans Mountain expansion and energy east and killing outright the northern gateway pipeline.

Everybody in the sector calls Bill C-69 the no-more-pipelines bill. This legislation is designed specifically and purposely to ensure that no more oil pipelines will be built in Canada, thereby trapping Alberta, Saskatchewan or all of Canada's energy in the North American marketplace. We sell that crude oil at a discount in the North American marketplace. Then it gets refined and shipped back to us at full price, and Canadians have to pick up the tab.

We have seen the proposed tanker ban legislation, Bill C-48, on the west coast. Interestingly enough, the government, which claims to care so much about the marine environment, did not put a tanker ban on the east coast to forbid tankers from Venezuela, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria and elsewhere from bringing energy to the eastern shores of Canada, even though eastern Canadians would much prefer to buy oil that was taken from the ground here in Canada and refined here in Canada for the use of all Canadians and for the economic benefit of everybody.

It would not be a stretch in any way, shape or form to believe that the current sitting Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, or any version thereof that the Liberal government has had sitting in that seat, would use Bill C-55.

I have no reason as an Albertan to believe anything other than that marine protected areas will be specifically designated and set up in areas not based on science or not based on where the marine protected area could do the most good for the preservation of species or the preservation of unique habitat or ecosystems, but instead in specifically designated areas to block the kinds of industrial activity that the government does not favour, notwithstanding that there is a tanker ban already in place through Bill C-48.

People back home need to understand that in the creation of a national park, there is normally a long and arduous process. A

consultative process takes place, as well as a gazetting process through the National Parks Act, usually in the form of a willing seller and willing buyer. When national parks are purchased or require land that is already privately held, going through that process would be a requirement. The annexation part did not work out too well for the previous prime minister of Liberal persuasion when he tried that in Atlantic Canada, so here we find ourselves using Crown land in the north, which is where most Crown land is. Anytime a new national park is created, it is created on Crown land, but oceans are owned by nobody. They are actually owned by Her Majesty the Queen. They are owned by the Crown in right of the people of Canada.

The minister, through Bill C-55 should it pass in its current form, will have the ability to designate a marine protected area wherever he or she sees fit. There is no legislative requirement at all for the minister to use best science. There is no legislative requirement at all for that process to be gazetted, not one.

•(1815)

This is the most powerful piece of legislation that I have seen that gives the minister the outright ability to take up to 10%—because the government is saying that is the target—of our oceans and close them down in full or part, however the minister sees fit. That means that he or she can designate a marine protected area that is completely closed from all activity, right from the sunlit zone at the top of the water, all the way through the pelagic zone to the littoral zone at the bottom, if there is enough sunlight there to create that, or even down into the benthos or the layer at the bottom of the ocean floor, and cease and desist all activity.

The minister could make any list of exemptions that he or she wants in order to accommodate whatever political agenda they have. They could deny fishing, trawling, tanker traffic or specific tanker traffic. They could simply say, just as Bill C-48 does, that ships will be allowed through as long as the ship does not contain products x, y or z. There is no ability in this legislation at all for any recourse whatsoever.

I would bet anybody with a crisp \$10 bill who wants to take me up on it—maybe this is dangerous because I am not a gambler—that marine protected areas in the first tranche, once this legislation comes to pass, will be set up at the Dixon Entrance and the Hecate Strait, outside of Prince Rupert, to make darn sure that, if Bill C-48 fails, not a single tanker will be allowed out of that area—the Prince Rupert-Kitimat area—carrying any type of crude oil or any of its byproducts or any of its refined products.

Anybody who does not think that is going to happen is dreaming. We will have no justification or rationale printed in any Gazette for why the minister is choosing to do this, because they are not obligated to under the legislation. That is why the Senate has coughed this bill back up and sent it back to this place. I do not expect the government to actually take any of these amendments seriously. I expect we will probably get time allocation. I know that the government has already sent a note back to the Senate on this piece of legislation.

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I actually do not expect the government to accept any of these recommendations. I do not expect the government to take any amendments on this legislation that would limit the heavy-handed unilateral ability of the minister to basically outline or delineate anywhere he or she sees fit to accomplish the Liberal political agenda. That is what I find most egregious and most frustrating with this piece of legislation.

The minister will have the ability, once Bill C-55 passes, to designate whether certain tanker traffic is allowed, or any products, or if any tanker traffic is allowed at all. The minister will be allowed to decide whether any commercial fishing would happen in that area. The minister would be allowed to determine whether any sport fishing or recreational fishing would be allowed to happen in that particular area, and set any terms and conditions for it. The minister already has that ability to regulate fisheries through the Fisheries Act, but this is something they are going to have the ability to do even further through the marine protected area legislation, which is what Bill C-55 is all about.

The government will also have the unilateral ability—and I am assuming this will get challenged almost immediately—to actually decide what the indigenous peoples of this country will be able to do in those marine protected areas. I do not expect the government to actually put too many restrictions on them, but it may. I would be curious to see how those actually stand up to a test.

It is very frustrating, because the talking points coming from the government will make it sound as though this is a great idea. Of course, Canadians, who think with their hearts—as many Canadians do, and it is okay to think with the heart from time to time—are going to say that 10% of our marine area is going to be protected and that is fantastic. However, here is the rub. There is no actual scientific requirement or any requirement in the legislation at all that is going to require the minister of fisheries and oceans to follow any rules or obligations in the establishment of a marine protected area.

I will give an example of what happens on the terrestrial side of the equation. Years ago, when I was taking my zoology degree at the University of Alberta, the numbers floated and bandied around back then—and that was almost 30 years ago—were 12.5%, 75% and 12.5%, and I mentioned this in my earlier speech. It was that 12.5% of the terrestrial land mass should be set aside for complete preservation or in a national park-like structure, with very little use, very little activity.

● (1820)

This land is designated in a preservation classification type of area. Of course, that also needs to be representative of the various biozones that we have, in order to get the approval of the United Nations and all the other agencies that watch these things. It could not all be, for example, in the Arctic. We would have to represent things like grasslands, which is why we have the creation of Grasslands National Park, which is still ongoing. We would have to represent all of that area in order to protect a representative sample of all the various ecosystems and habitats in the country.

It was decided a long time ago that 75% of the land mass would be classified as common use, areas where conservation management practices actually come into play to manage the environmental considerations that we have. Another 12.5% was set aside as

complete use, things that are paved over, under concrete, cities, roads, highways, industrial areas, things of that nature, where these kinds of human activities need to happen in order to benefit and improve the quality of life of all people, not only in Canada but around the world. It was 12.5%, 75% and 12.5%.

Now we see that shift on the terrestrial environment, moving forward, but here is the rub. Any time somebody wants to grow that 12.5% of the preserved land area, that person has to take that land from that particular area. We just saw how badly this backfired for Rachel Notley in Alberta, when she tried to take some of the land that is classified in the public land use zone, the 75% of conservation and well-managed land and terrestrial areas. To put that space in the preservation pot, a person has to take it from the 75%, which is everybody who lives and makes a living in small rural areas across our country. It is very seldom that anybody in an urban area has to pay a price or a consequence for the development of a preservation boundary inside his or her jurisdiction, very seldom.

The same thing is going to happen in these marine protected areas. It is not going to cost anything for people who do not venture out onto the ocean, because it is not going to impact their lives. However, all those who live in small, rural, coastal communities or make a living by going out onto the water will now have to contend with arbitrary delineations of marine protected areas and make sure they follow whatever rules and conditions the minister has made. The minister, according to this legislation, can make any rules he or she sees fit. It is limitless. It does not have to be gazetted and it does not need the approval of anybody, other than a ministerial order. It does not even need the approval of the Governor in Council. It does not even need the approval of his or her cabinet colleagues.

The minister can simply sign a ministerial order and declare an area as a marine protected area. That is unwieldy power, especially when we are talking about 10% of the surface area on down, right through the water column to the bottom of the sea, the ocean, the lake, the river or whatever it happens to be. That is under the care and control of just one decision-maker in this country. That is a lot of power. It is power that our friends in the Senate have said should be reconsidered, and that is why they sent this piece of legislation back here.

I truly hope that this House takes a serious look at this legislation. I know the government is running out of time in its legislative agenda, but I sure hope that common sense will prevail, that the right thing will be done and that these amendments from the Senate will be given due consideration and every opportunity to be re-examined and studied, and not only by this chamber. I would love to see this bill go back to the committee so it can look at some of the work the Senate committee did, so that we, as the elected representatives of the people of Canada, have a better understanding as to exactly what the impacts of the bill would be.

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• (1825)

Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is dead wrong. This piece of legislation would give the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard the power to freeze the footprint, so all of the activities going on in an area the day before he makes the order are allowed to continue the day after. For the member to say that the minister can, with a wave of a pen for some political motive, wipe out all activity anywhere he wants to draw a circle is dead wrong. When he says there is no requirement for gazetting, he is dead wrong. Once an interim order is put in place, the Canada Gazette process kicks in.

None of what the member said is true, and it is absolutely offensive that it is allowed to occur in this place. I would urge the member to read the legislation.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Mr. Speaker, I did read the legislation. There was one reference when it came to the gazetting, and it had nothing to do with the establishment of the marine protected areas. Maybe the parliamentary secretary ought to go back and discuss this with the minister and talk to some of his cabinet colleagues. It is exactly how the legislation currently reads.

The member did mention the order that the minister could sign. He basically confirmed through his comments that the minister had the ability to issue an order delineating a marine protected area wherever he or she saw fit. That is the beginning of the process and the minister has, through the legislation, the ability to set out whatever terms and conditions he or she sees fit in order to curb, curtail, allow or disallow any activity that he or she sees fit.

I will reiterate. I look forward to seeing the marine protected areas delineated in the Hecate Strait and in the Dixon Entrance. I very much look forward to making the member recant his words when I see the terms and conditions on those marine protected areas that will not allow tankers through if they have any crude oil on them.

Ms. Gudie Hutchings (Long Range Mountains, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague across the way and I share some beliefs in the outdoors, and I appreciate his comments.

However, Canada has over 243,000 kilometres of coastline. Our government in the last four years has gone from protecting just under 1% to over 9%. I wonder why, in the previous years when his party formed government, the Conservatives did not see this as an area of concern.

Canada is a world leader in conservation and environment. I wonder what his comment is on why the Conservative government did nothing during the 10 years prior.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Mr. Speaker, the previous government had the national conservation plan, otherwise known as the NCP, with \$250 million over a number of years to establish a lot of protected areas throughout Canada without using this ham-fisted approach that the current government is using through this proposed legislative process. Included in the protected areas were the Musquash Estuary in New Brunswick, the Bowie Seamount off the coast of British Columbia and the Tarium Niriyutait in the Beaufort Sea. These are just a handful of the ones that were done. There was also the one by Thunder Bay and Lake Superior.

My hon. colleague was not here during any of the time that Stephen Harper was the prime minister of Canada. I encourage her to check her facts before she gets up on her feet again.

• (1830)

Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was very interested in the speech by my colleague for Red Deer—Lacombe, especially when he talked about the effect of marine protected areas on Alberta. One would think there would not be a connection there, but my colleague very eloquently made that.

We talk about the marine protected areas, we talk about the tanker ban, we talk about the no pipeline Bill C-69 and, of course, the potentially new Fisheries Act, Bill C-68. It is just a litany of daggers aimed at the energy industry in Canada.

I know the member comes from an energy-producing area of Alberta. Could he talk about the effect of these pieces of legislation on the energy economy in his area and in Alberta?

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Mr. Speaker, my only hope is that the members opposite, through their collective wisdom, would know as much about the ecology and science as my friend for Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa has forgotten over the years. However, I digress.

The member's point is very well made. There have been over \$100 billion in capital flight in projects. There has basically been nothing on the books in Alberta now for the better part of four years. The combined Notley arrangement with the current Prime Minister, that friendship they had, resulted in the promise that if we did all of these environmental things, such as the carbon tax and so on, we would get all kinds of projects.

The current government inherited three tidewater pipeline applications, which is three more than Stephen Harper inherited from the previous government by the way. We saw one of them cancelled outright. We saw one that had regulatory reforms put on it that were so onerous that the company not only withdrew its application for getting oil to the east coast, but it is actually changing the name of its company as a result. Of course, the Trans Mountain expansion pipeline was fumbled so bad that now every taxpayer in Canada is a shareholder of what used to be a private equity investment, creating tens of thousands of jobs across the country. I have no confidence in the government whatsoever that it will actually get it built.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us think about the wording of “lack of confidence”. On this issue before us, Canadians have a right to be concerned about the Stephen Harper era, and they should be. Canadians and people around the world are concerned about our coastlines, and Canada has the largest coastline in the world. When the idea was to bring marine protected areas up 10%, how did Stephen Harper and his majority measure up? They barely reached 5% in five years.

Government Orders

Since 2015, we have brought it up from 1% to 9%. I would suggest to the member that if anyone has his facts wrong or is misinformed or is not listening to what Canadians expect of government, it is the official opposition, which is still run by individuals like Stephen Harper today. Would the member recognize that the expectations that Canadians have today far exceed what Stephen Harper and Doug Ford have done?

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Mr. Speaker, I grew up on a farm. I fixed tractors, fences, automobiles and all manner of things on the farm, but to this day I am unable to fix stupid.

The Deputy Speaker: Order. I would ask the hon. member for Red Deer—Lacombe to refrain from those kinds of characterizations of other hon. members. I would ask him to consider withdrawing his remark.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Mr. Speaker, I apologize unreservedly for the comment. My anger and frustration on behalf of the people that I represent got the better of me. This is not something that I normally have to do in this chamber. Thank you for calling me to order.

• (1835)

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Whitby, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's apology. The member for Long Range Mountains is a valued member of the government and certainly a learned and proud member of her community. Her comments in terms of pushing the discourse around this important subject are critically important.

My question is about this piece of legislation and the leadership that the government has taken around protecting our marine environment. I am wondering what the member would say to his constituents who are avidly and fiercely concerned about our environment, in particular our waterways, when we see what is happening with orcas and marine diversity. What would he say to his constituents, who are happy about this piece of legislation being brought forward and happy to see Canada increasing those limits to protect more of our environment?

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Mr. Speaker, my colleague would know that the southern resident killer whale occupies a broad range of habitat. Sometimes it is off the coast of Vancouver Island and sometimes it is off the coast of northern California. These cetaceans specifically target chinook salmon as their primary source of prey, but they have demonstrated that they will take other salmon species and anything else when the situation arises.

The problem with salmon is the salmon that are currently around Vancouver Island are likely out of the Columbia River, while some will be produced out of some of the local rivers as well. The issue is one of fisheries management ensuring that there are enough fish in the ocean not only for human consumption but for all of the wildlife that rely on it. A marine protected area is not required to achieve this goal. It requires appropriate fisheries management and fisheries enhancement and salmonid enhancement programming to ensure that there are enough fish not only for people but for wildlife.

A marine protected area will do nothing for the killer whales because they will move where the food is, and a marine protected area is just a delineated area on a map. I am sure the whales will not be checking where the line on the map is.

The Deputy Speaker: Before we resume debate and the hon. member for Miramichi—Grand Lakes, I will let him know there are about nine minutes remaining in the time for Government Orders this afternoon. We will get started, and I will give him the indication in the usual fashion.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Miramichi—Grand Lake.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pat Finnigan (Miramichi—Grand Lake, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, nearly two years after it was first introduced, I have the honour to speak to Bill C-55, an act to amend the Oceans Act and the Canada Petroleum Resources Act, a bill that has the support of Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

Before I get to the collaborative motion we are debating today, in response to the message received from the other place a little over a week ago, I would like to correct some inaccuracies that have come out in members' comments on this motion.

First, the member for Sherbrooke said that we have protected just 1.5% of our marine areas to date, that we missed our 2017 target and that, according to him, we are on track to miss our target of 10% in 2020. With all due respect, the member's figures are completely wrong. Perhaps he was talking about the former Conservative government's record. I assure the House that those figures do not apply to this government, and I would like to clarify the facts.

To date, under the direction of the current Liberal government, the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard and our Prime Minister, we have protected 8.27% of our marine and coastal areas, compared to only 1% under the previous Conservative government. In fact, before reaching 8.27%, we announced in October 2017 that we had reached the objective of 5%.

With respect to the environment and the protection of marine biodiversity, our government is implementing the measures Canadians want and expect. In spite of what the member for Sherbrooke said last week, we have effectively reached our objectives and we are on track to reach our 10% objective in 2020.

The member for Sherbrooke also stated that the current government's standards for marine protected areas were not very high. I would like to remind the House that last month, at the Nature Champions Summit in Montreal, the government and the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard showed great leadership by announcing new standards for marine protected areas in order to strengthen conservation and the protection of important marine habitats.

The announcement means that marine protected areas will operate a bit like national parks and ensure a high level of protection of the environment by banning four industrial activities in these zones, namely oil and gas activities, mining, discharging, and bottom trawling. This approach is consistent with the recommendations of the National Advisory Panel on Marine Protected Area Standards.

Government Orders

In fact, Oceana, the main marine protection agency, said that this announcement of standards for marine protected areas is a great step forward and will help ensure appropriate protection for Canada's most important marine areas; that marine protected areas meeting these standards will help protect fragile habitats that provide nursery, spawning and feeding areas for marine wildlife from harmful practices such as oil and gas activities and bottom-contact gear; that it is also a critical step toward rebuilding abundance and restoring our oceans to health, which will benefit coastal communities for generations to come.

The day the announcement was made, Megan Leslie, former NDP member, tweeted the "announcement by the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans on new standards for marine protection: no oil and gas, no mining, no bottom trawling." She said she was at a bit of a loss for words. The tweet ended with emojis of applause, trophies, and celebration.

The government's achievements in marine environmental protection really do deserve to be celebrated and applauded. The government is committed to protecting the environment, and that is just what this motion and bill are meant to do.

Now that I have corrected certain inaccurate statements made during last week's debate, I would like to talk about this motion on the Senate amendment.

The message we received from the other place just over a week ago contains one duplicative amendment. If adopted, it would make the interim protection process more complex and costly than the process of designating a permanent marine protected area.

● (1840)

That would go against the purpose of the bill, which is to provide protection to our marine areas more quickly while ensuring that exhaustive consultations continue. However, the government is also listening. We understand the concerns of the honourable senators in the other place, and we agree that the provincial and territorial governments, as well as the communities that will be most affected by an interim or permanent order concerning a marine protected area, should always be consulted and be part of the process.

That is why we proposed an amendment to the Senate amendment that takes the concerns that have been raised into consideration. First, the amendment requires the minister, when making an interim protection order, to publish a report indicating the geographic location and any other relevant information, including social, cultural and economic information.

The amendment goes even further. As we have always said regarding the duplicative Senate amendment on consultations, since consultations are already explicitly required and covered by sections 29 to 33 of the Oceans Act, the minister would also be required to publish information on past consultations.

The government has listened, and we know we can move forward in the right way with this bill and the proposed amendment.

The purpose of this bill is simply to provide another tool to protect marine environments by creating a mechanism that will enable the minister to freeze the footprint of activities currently under way in an

area until a definitive designation is revoked or until it receives a permanent marine protected area designation.

On average, it takes between seven and 10 years to establish a marine protected area. All this bill would do is temporarily protect an area until permanent designation can be obtained, which is something Canadians support. Considering the important aspects of marine environments that need protecting and the fact that it takes between seven and 10 years to establish a marine protected area, if we want to ensure long-term protection for an area, we need to adopt this bill. This common-sense measure establishes certain protection standards until such time as an area is designated.

I would add that this bill has been before both houses for nearly two years now. The House committee alone met nine times to discuss it and heard from 36 witnesses representing a broad range of important interest groups.

Earlier I talked about last month's announcement by the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard about new standards for marine protected areas and the support we have received on this issue not only here at home but around the world. Clearly, there is now tremendous support for protecting our oceans, so what are we waiting for? Let's adopt this bill and protect our oceans for our children and grandchildren.

I live near the coast, and we are already seeing major changes happening very fast. Over the past four or five years, the Gulf of St. Lawrence has warmed up faster than any other marine environment on the planet. We must act now to save species and the environment.

● (1845)

[*English*]

The Deputy Speaker: It being 6:45 p.m., pursuant to an order made earlier today, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the consideration of the Senate amendments to the bill now before the House.

The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

● (1910)

[*Translation*]

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

*Adjournment Proceedings**(Division No. 1316)***YEAS**

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Amos	Anandasangaree
Arseneault	Aubin
Ayoub	Badawey
Bagnell	Baylis
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Benson
Bittle	Boissonnault
Bossio	Boutin-Sweet
Breton	Brosseau
Caesar-Chavannes	Cannings
Caron	Carr
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)	Casey (Charlottetown)
Chagger	Champagne
Chen	Choquette
Cormier	Cuzner
Dabrusin	Damoff
Davies	DeCoursey
Dhillon	Drouin
Dubé	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)	Dusseault
Duvall	Dzerowicz
Easter	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Ellis
Erskine-Smith	Eyking
Eyolfson	Fergus
Fillmore	Finnigan
Fisher	Fonseca
Fortier	Fragiskatos
Fraser (West Nova)	Fraser (Central Nova)
Freeland	Fry
Fuhr	Garneau
Garrison	Gerretsen
Goldsmith-Jones	Goodale
Gould	Graham
Hajdu	Hardcastle
Hardie	Hébert
Hehr	Hogg
Housefather	Hussen
Hutchings	Iacono
Johns	Jones
Jordan	Jowhari
Julian	Khalid
Khera	Kwan
Lambropoulos	Lametti
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)	Lebouthillier
Lefebvre	Leslie
Levitt	Lockhart
Long	Longfield
Ludwig	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney	Masse (Windsor West)
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)	
May (Cambridge)	
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	McCrimmon
McDonald	McGuinty
McKay	McKenna
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendès	Mendicino
Mihychuk	Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs)
Soeurs)	
Monsef	Moore
Morrissey	Murray
Nantel	Nassif
Ng	O'Connell
Oliphant	Oliver
O'Regan	Ouellette
Paradis	Peschisolido
Peterson	Petitpas Taylor
Philpott	Picard
Quach	Qualtrough
Ramsey	Ratansi
Rioux	Rodriguez
Rogers	Romanado
Rota	Rudd
Ruimy	Rusnak

Sahota	Saini
Sajjan	Samson
Sangha	Sansoucy
Sarai	Scarpaleggia
Schiefke	Schulte
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simms	Sohi
Sorbara	Spengemann
Stetski	Tabbara
Tan	Trudel
Vandal	Vaughan
Virani	Weir
Whalen	Wilson-Raybould
Yip	Young
Zahid — 185	

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif	Albas
Albrecht	Alleslev
Allison	Anderson
Arnold	Barlow
Barrett	Benzen
Bergen	Berthold
Bezan	Block
Boucher	Brassard
Calkins	Carrie
Chong	Clarke
Cooper	Davidson
Deltell	Diotte
Doherty	Dreessen
Egliniski	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Finley
Gallant	Généreux
Gill	Gladu
Godin	Gourde
Harder	Hoback
Jeneroux	Kelly
Kent	Kitchen
Kniec	Lake
Liepert	Lloyd
Lobb	Lukiwski
MacKenzie	Maguire
Marciel	Martel
McColeman	McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)	Motz
Nater	Nicholson
Nuttall	Paul-Hus
Pauzé	Plamondon
Rayes	Reid
Rempel	Richards
Saroya	Schmale
Shields	Shipley
Sopuck	Sorenson
Strahl	Stubbs
Sweet	Thériault
Tilson	Trost
Van Kesteren	Wagantall
Warkentin	Waugh
Webber	Wong
Yurdiga	Zimmer — 86

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.**ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS**

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

Adjournment Proceedings

[English]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am thankful for the opportunity to speak tonight about the situation with trade. My riding has a lot of agriculture products. The issue with a number of countries and the government's ability to work with trade is really a problem in my part of the country.

There is the issue with Italy and durum. A tremendous amount of durum is grown in my riding and farmers cannot trade our durum with Italy. It is the same with Vietnam.

There is also the issue with Saudi Arabia and barley. There is phenomenal barley in our part of the world and now we cannot trade our barley with Saudi Arabia.

Then there was the infamous trip to India. Now we have all these lentils that we are unable to trade with India because of the tariffs.

Last, there is China. What a scandal this is. First, it stopped canola imports with a couple of organizations revoking licences. However, it was not just the licences. China said that it was about crops. It has nothing to do with science; it is all political. Other companies stopped importing meal and canola oil. Then there are other things such as pork, which is not being unloaded. The boats are just sitting in the harbour.

The government has said that it will help with the canola situation by letting farmers borrow more money. There is a lot of canola sitting in bins in my riding. The canola has not moved this year. My riding has produced a lot more canola and the government has said that it will loan farmers more money, which will not solve the issue. Where are farmers going to put all the canola? All they are getting are more bins. The longer it sits there, the more volume there is and the price will drop. Eventually that canola will begin to be worthless.

Forty per cent of Canada's canola goes to China, and farmers are being told to diversify. They have diversified in many different countries, but the list that keeps nailing their crops and agriculture products is huge and it keeps creating problems in the agricultural sector. The challenges with trade are significant. They need to be resolved.

Farmers have had to make difficult decisions on what to plant. Those who are still left are wondering what they are going to do with their crops as they see the challenges with international trade. It is a real problem. This also leads back into the industries that support the agriculture sectors. I am talking about the machinery dealerships and the banks. Now that more credit has been extended, the banks are seeing more volume in loans.

International trade is a real problem. The Liberal government has messed up the agriculture sector significantly, and things are not being resolved.

• (1915)

Ms. Kamal Khara (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague from Bow River for raising this important issue.

Canada's agri-food industry contributes over \$114 billion to our gross domestic product and over \$64 billion to our balance of trade.

That is why the issue of trade restrictions by China on Canadian agri-food products is a top priority for Canada. Canada's priority is to regain full market access to China for our canola seed and to maintain markets for all our world-class agri-food exports there. We are pushing on all fronts, using every available channel on the ground, both in China and here in Canada, working closely with industry and the provinces.

On May 7, in Geneva, Canada's ambassador to the World Trade Organization formally raised the issue with our counterparts at the WTO General Council. Our ambassador told the council that co-operation between WTO members and a willingness to engage on issues are extremely important.

Canada has been working hard to resolve this issue with China. We have been, and remain, open to working constructively with our Chinese counterparts. We have repeatedly asked China for the scientific evidence that supports its findings, but unfortunately, China has not been forthcoming to date in providing this information. We are asking to have this issue resolved based on our shared overall commitment to the WTO.

Here at home, we are working hard to help Canadian grain producers with cash flow pressures as seeding gets under way. The agricultural industry asked us to expand the advance payments program and to help producers manage cash flow, and we have delivered.

We have changed the loan limits for the advance payments program for the 2019 program year. Advances of up to \$1 million will be available on all commodities. The first \$100,000 will remain interest free for all commodities except canola; canola advances will be eligible for loans of up to \$500,000 interest free. These measures were welcomed by the industry.

Members do not have to listen to me. "Timely action to help producers deal with unprecedented uncertainty is good news," said Jim Everson, president of the Canola Council of Canada.

In addition, federal and provincial governments agreed to extend the AgriStability enrolment deadline by two months, without penalty, from April 30 to July 2, 2019. The measures will give producers the breathing room they need to manage their cash flow and help them manage the impacts of market disruptions in key export markets. At the same time, the industry is urging us to continue to diversify our trade in global markets to give our growers access to more markets for their crops and to reduce the risk of market closures.

Adjournment Proceedings

As we know, the minister is meeting with her counterparts to discuss the importance of rules-based trade, market access for all Canadian agri-food products and opportunities resulting from the CPTPP and CETA.

We are listening to our farmers. We are listening to Canadians. We are delivering, and we are with our farmers every step of the way.

Mr. Martin Shields: Mr. Speaker, I speak with farmers. They actually live in my riding, and they are not happy with their organization. They are writing letters to their organization and they are calling me. They are very upset. They do not need any more debt. They need action. We need an ambassador in China. This is not about science; it is about a person in custody in Vancouver. It is not about science, and we all know it is not about science. We should quit talking about science. We need a political solution to this.

We need money to be taken away from building pipelines in Asia and brought back to build pipelines here. This is what we need. We need things done politically. It is not about science, and the farmers know that.

• (1920)

Ms. Kamal Khera: Mr. Speaker, we understand that strong collaboration and ongoing dialogue between industry and government is vitally important to resolve this issue. This is why we have set up a working group that includes key industry and government representatives. The group is meeting weekly and will ensure a coordinated and collaborative approach toward resolving this market access issue.

We know that maintaining markets for our high-quality Canadian canola means more money in the pockets of our farmers and more jobs, and that is exactly what we are doing. We stand by our farmers. We stand by Canadians. Thanks to us, we have diversified trade with two-thirds of the global economy. Canada is the only country that has agreements with every other G7 country. We signed CETA, we signed CPTPP and we signed NAFTA. We have delivered for Canadians. That is exactly what Canadians expected us to do, and that is exactly what we are doing.

[Translation]

INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on March 15, young people took to the streets of Saint-Hyacinthe to alert the government to the climate emergency. In Montreal, 150,000 people marched. Around the world, millions of people, primarily young people, took part in the climate march. I was in Montreal that Friday, and I want to congratulate everyone who took part in the movement, and those who continue to do so, on their engagement.

Conversely, I have nothing to congratulate this government on, except perhaps its incredible investment in greenwashing rather than effective ecological measures. Giving millions of dollars to support the Keystone XL project and purchasing the Trans Mountain pipeline, for example, both point to the fact that the government is all talk and no action when it comes to preserving the environment.

The situation is critical now. We need greener and more sustainable infrastructure. The Liberals make lofty promises but are doing absolutely nothing about this. Speaking of promises, after

three years of inaction, the Liberals say they are completely focused on infrastructure. It was about time. However, this is an election year. Is that a coincidence? What a shame.

From now on, we need to design and build all our infrastructure based on sustainable development criteria, and that includes the environmental, economic and social cost as much as it includes the cost of maintenance, restoration or partial replacement as needed.

There are local initiatives, such as roller-compacted concrete, or RCC, produced by Carrières de St-Dominique, a company in my riding. I invite the minister to come meet Jacques Sylvestre Sr., the president of the Carrières de St-Dominique board of directors, Jean Dubreuil, the R&D director, and David Jodoin, project manager. This is a perfect example of sustainable innovation.

Infrastructure developed with RCC is an example of an innovative process that everyone should be on board with, including the federal government. It needs to support such ideas. As I have already said, sustainable development must be a criterion in the awarding of federal contracts. We must stop seeing infrastructure as an expense and start seeing it as a real investment. I should add that the Parliamentary Budget Officer agreed. Infrastructure that is more environmentally friendly, more social and longer lasting will offset the cost of the investment.

As critic for infrastructure and communities, I am calling on this government to review its infrastructure policy. We must plan for the future. Young people in Saint-Hyacinthe and Montreal are worried about the future. It is not difficult to see why, when you look at the government's inaction on the environment. My youth committee has made the environment a priority, as have thousands of young people across the country. However, the committee is worried by this government's inaction, the purchase of a polluting, leaky pipeline, and the plastics that are polluting our oceans, lakes and rivers.

The NDP already tabled a motion to do away with single-use plastics by 2022. We want more investments in the creation of greener jobs and large-scale building renovations. We need to be bold because we are leaving an enormous economic and environmental debt for future generations.

My question is simple. When will the government start walking the talk and finally make the transition to a green economy?

• (1925)

Mr. Marco Mendicino (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would first like to thank my colleague for her question and for the excellent work she does in her riding.

*Adjournment Proceedings**[English]*

In 2016, the Government of Canada introduced a \$180 billion plan to renew the country's infrastructure for the 21st century. Three and a half years later, we can say with confidence that Canadians across the country are benefiting from this plan. To date, more than 48,000 infrastructure projects have been approved, and nearly all are under way or completed.

Our investments in public transit have resulted in the purchase of more than 3,600 new buses across the country, which are providing commuters with more than 100,000 additional seats, and more than 4,900 existing buses have been repaired. For example, the delivery of 12 newer, more accessible buses in Saint John, New Brunswick, has helped to boost ridership by 4% to more than 151,000 riders, including those with mobility challenges.

In the greater Toronto area, the purchase of 60 battery-powered electric buses is providing more Toronto-area commuters with a quieter, smoother ride. These new buses will also reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 240 tonnes and cut carbon dioxide emissions by more than 14,000 tons over their 12-year lifespans. I know that goes right to the heart of my hon. colleague's question.

These investments are resulting in faster, more efficient public transit services that enable Canadians to spend less time commuting and more time with their families. These investments are also providing cleaner, more sustainable alternatives to driving. We have electric, hybrid and natural gas buses and vehicles, which have the potential to further reduce the carbon footprint and, by extension, pollution.

Our investments in public transit infrastructure have also resulted in the upgrade or construction of nearly 15,000 bus stops and bus shelters that improve the travel experience for transit users. In addition, we have invested in the construction of 200 new transit stations and the upgrade of more than 230 existing transit stations.

[Translation]

What is more, construction on the Réseau express métropolitain in Montreal is moving along nicely. This light rail project involves putting down 67 kilometres of track to help make it easier for people to get around the city. It should create 34,000 direct and indirect jobs in the construction, manufacturing and technology industries.

[English]

All of the examples demonstrate that we have made good progress on our infrastructure, because we are not only expanding transit but, simultaneously, reducing our carbon footprint, reducing pollution, making commuters have a more efficient travel time and, by extension, a cleaner and more resilient economy.

[Translation]

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy: Mr. Speaker, I did a tour of the municipal councils in my riding. Every time I meet with them, they say they are disappointed. When they look at the Canada-Quebec agreement on the plan to invest \$180 billion over 10 years, they see that a lot of that money will be spent only in years nine and 10. That is not what they need. They need investments in infrastructure now.

They also need the government to think about the smaller municipalities that feel forgotten when they see the Canada-Quebec

agreement. Five billion dollars of the \$7.5 billion is going to the nine biggest cities in Quebec, and the smaller municipalities are feeling left out.

What is more, as the Parliamentary Budget Officer said in his reports on phase 1 of the Liberals' plan, less than half the money was earmarked for that phase. I am not saying spent, but earmarked. The municipalities need investments now. The municipalities need the government to be there for them now.

Mr. Marco Mendicino: Mr. Speaker, once again, I thank my colleague for her question.

This government has entered into an historic \$7.5-billion agreement with the province of Quebec. The outcome is more transit services and a greener and more sustainable economy.

● (1930)

[English]

With all of these investments, we are adding to infrastructure in my hon. colleague's riding. Under that plan, we will continue to work with the province. We will continue to work with her community to ensure that we are building the infrastructure that her constituents require, so that we can have a resilient economy and an infrastructure that reflects a 21st century economy, and we will continue to strive forward for that progress.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, CCF): Mr. Speaker, near the end of January, I was proud to be the only member of the House to rise to question the Government of Canada's decision to recognize Juan Guaidó standing up in front of a crowd and unilaterally declaring himself to be the President of Venezuela. That is the question that prompts this evening's adjournment debate.

I do not pretend to be an expert on Venezuelan politics, but I do have a clear idea about what Canada's role in the world should be, and I think the best contribution Canada can make, as an honest broker, is as a country that is trusted to mediate when these kinds of disputes come up.

It is certainly legitimate to question the current Maduro government of Venezuela. It is one thing to propose that there should be new elections in that country, but it is quite another to simply recognize an opposition politician's declaration that he is the new president of the country. I would suggest in hindsight that it really has not worked out all that well.

It has now been about three and a half months, and we see that Mr. Guaidó has not clearly established himself as a new government in Venezuela. There have not been new elections in that country. Mr. Guaidó is now appealing to the Venezuelan military and now even directly to the American military to intervene in his favour. It seems that concerns about a coup or armed conflict are really starting to materialize.

I do not have a lengthy speech, but I really hope that the parliamentary secretary can provide the House with a bit of an update on what the government's plan is now.

Adjournment Proceedings

It has been months since the Canadian government agreed to recognize Mr. Guaidó, and it does not seem as though the goals of that policy have been achieved. The only real consequence of the Government of Canada jumping the gun in that fashion is that it is now very difficult for our country to play any kind of constructive role, to participate as an honest broker or to be seen as any kind of mediator in Venezuela.

I am hoping that the parliamentary secretary can give us an update and a bit of an explanation of what the Government of Canada's plan is for Venezuela going forward.

Mr. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Regina—Lewvan for his question regarding Venezuela and Canada's work, which is ongoing and multilaterally done with the Lima Group.

Venezuelans continue to take to the streets, demonstrating their desire for a return to democracy even in the face of a violent crackdown. Canada commends their courage, and without any apology we continue to call on the Maduro regime to step aside now and allow for a peaceful end to the crisis, in line with the Venezuelan constitution. It is time for Venezuela, in line with its own laws, to return to democracy.

On January 23, Canada, along with several members of the international community, took the significant step of recognizing Juan Guaidó as the interim president of Venezuela and supporting his commitment to lead Venezuela towards free and fair presidential elections. We did that because we believe so strongly in democracy and in the democratic right of Venezuelans to choose their own government. Since that day, interim President Guaidó and Venezuelans have taken to the streets and demonstrated their support for the return of democracy in Venezuela, showing their courage and conviction in seeking a peaceful resolution to this crisis.

The response of the regime to those demonstrations has been an increase in the repression of peaceful demonstrators and in the persecution of political opponents. At the same time, the suffering of the Venezuelan people has continued to grow, with a series of nationwide power outages in recent weeks severely impacting the access of Venezuelans to necessities, including food, water and fuel.

Inflation now stands at 1.5 million percent on an annual basis, and more than 3.5 million Venezuelans have been forced to leave their country since 2015. The UNHCR now estimates that there could be as many as five million by the end of the year if the Maduro regime is not ended.

In response to this deepening crisis in Venezuela, Canada has taken a strong leadership role in the international community in support of international efforts to achieve a peaceful democratic transition guided by Venezuela's own constitution and without the use of force. Canada, led by our Minister of Foreign Affairs, has been among the most active and committed members of the Lima Group of countries committed to achieving these goals peacefully and multilaterally.

On February 4, Canada hosted the 10th ministerial meeting of the Lima Group here in Ottawa, and since that time, Canada has also played a leading role in the Lima Group's outreach, both to like-

minded states as well as to international supporters of the Maduro regime, in order to secure a peaceful resolution of the crisis. There has been no lessening of our ability to be an honest broker. We are continuing in that role and continuing to do it with strong leadership and with a peaceful resolve towards democracy in Venezuela.

Canada and its Lima Group partners have repeatedly called upon the regime to allow the entry of international humanitarian assistance to stop this crisis. We have provided an additional \$53 million for humanitarian, stabilization and development support, which brings our contribution to a world leader on this issue. We will focus on the basic needs of those most affected, those being migrants and refugees who have fled to neighbouring countries.

We have continued to take these strong measures. We will continue to work multilaterally, and we will continue to support the Venezuelan people towards freedom and democracy.

● (1935)

Mr. Erin Weir: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the parliament secretary and congratulate him on his relatively recent appointment as a parliamentary secretary. I believe this might be his very first adjournment debate, and so I would like to welcome him to the late show.

I believe the presentation that he provided might have been compelling back in January when the Government of Canada first decided to recognize Juan Guaidó as president of Venezuela. However, I do not think it addresses how things have unfolded since then. This idea of Mr. Guaidó as an interim president who is going to hold new elections, I think, conflicts with the fact that three and half months have gone by. How long is this interim presidency going to last, and at what point is it going to actually translate into elections?

I really have to ask whether the parliamentary secretary would at least acknowledge that things have not unfolded as his government would have hoped.

Mr. Robert Oliphant: Mr. Speaker, if there is one thing that the member from the CCF knows, it is that good things take time to accomplish. It is very much this government's resolve, its steady leadership and its standing in solidarity with the people of Venezuela that we will continue, and I invite the member to stand in solidarity with them as well. We commend them for their courage and reiterate our own unwavering commitment to the universal principles of democracy, rule of law and human rights.

We are building a consensus. Some 23 countries have endorsed the Ottawa declaration for Venezuela, and Canada is actively engaged in outreach to international partners across the political spectrum. Canada and our partners in the international community, including the Lima Group, must be resolute in our efforts to support Guaidó and the legitimate authorities in Venezuela, as well as to assist the people of Venezuela, both in their home country and in host states that are welcoming refugees.

At the same time, we must be prepared to support Venezuela's return to democracy and development to an eventual transition, in order to ensure that peace and prosperity are sustainably restored.

Adjournment Proceedings

•(1940)

The Deputy Speaker: The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands

adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:40 p.m.)

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