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Chair

Mr. Leon Benoit

Standing Committee on Natural Resources

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• (1530)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC)): Good afternoon, everyone.

We're here today pursuant to Standing Order 81(4) to study the main estimates for 2013-14, votes 1, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, and 30 under Natural Resources, referred to committee on Monday, February 25, 2013.

Today, we have as witnesses to discuss these main estimates the Minister of Natural Resources, Minister Oliver, for the first hour, and for the second roughly 45 minutes, until the bells start, we will have from the Department of Natural Resources, Serge Dupont, deputy minister.

I welcome you both at the table now, but the first hour is with the minister.

I want to thank you, Minister, for making yourself available, as you always do. I look forward to your comments, if you'd like to make some comments on the main estimates, and then we'll get right to members' comments and questions.

Minister, the floor is yours.

Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Natural Resources): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Good afternoon, everyone. I appreciate the opportunity to meet with the committee.

[Translation]

Mr. Chair, members of the committee, we all know how important Canada's natural resources have been to our economy over the past century. And you are aware of the unprecedented opportunities for growth in natural resource sectors.

[English]

Our government remains squarely focused on the economy and jobs, and we are committed to implementing Canada's economic action plan. We're keeping taxes low, eliminating red tape, reducing the regulatory burden, and promoting free trade and innovation.

Our approach to fiscal and economic management has not gone unnoticed. Canada's credit rating is a solid AAA for the fifth straight year. The World Economic Forum ranked Canadian banks the soundest in the world. Our economic performance also speaks for itself. We are the only G-7 country to have recouped all of the jobs lost during the last recession and added 950,000 net new jobs since

July 2009. Real GDP is now significantly higher than pre-recession levels.

Both the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the International Monetary Fund have named Canada as being among the leaders in economic growth in the industrialized world over the next two years.

Mr. Chair, there is clear evidence that our approach is working. Canada's economic fundamentals are sound and we are keeping our fiscal house in order.

[Translation]

We recognize that in uncertain global economic times, the best contribution a government can make is to help create the right environment for jobs and economic growth. And that's why our new federal budget, Economic Action Plan 2013, builds on the foundation of Action Plan 2012, with a clear focus on jobs, growth and long-term economic prosperity.

[English]

For the Natural Resources portfolio, economic action plan 2013 will support responsible resource development and competitive, innovative natural resource sectors. New and renewed commitments include: \$92 million over two years to support forestry innovation and market development; \$325 million over eight years to Sustainable Development Technology Canada, to continue support for the development and demonstration of new clean technologies that create efficiencies for business and contribute to sustainable economic development; and \$141 million over two years to ensure a secure supply of medical isotopes, and maintain safe and reliable operations at AECL's Chalk River labs.

Economic action plan 2013 contains measures to connect Canadians to available jobs, to help manufacturers and businesses succeed in the global economy, to develop new infrastructure, invest in world-class research and innovation, and support families and communities. Economic action plan 2013 is anchored in a commitment to eliminate the deficit and return to balanced budgets by 2015-16.

Indeed, many Canadians know that our government is strongly committed to prudent fiscal management. This commitment to fiscal responsibility is reflected in Natural Resources Canada's budget. Through our main estimates, Natural Resources Canada's 2013-14 funding will show total budgetary authorizations of \$2.77 billion. Of this amount, \$1.45 billion requires voted approval by Parliament.

You will note that we are increasing funding, as compared to the 2012-13 main estimates, in several priority areas, including \$5.6 million to strengthen pipeline safety and awareness, as well as to allow for increasing annual inspections by 50% and doubling the number of annual audits, and \$9.9 million to advance medical isotope production technologies.

• (1535)

[Translation]

For decades, Canada's natural resource sectors have played a vital role in our nation's history and in our economy. Natural resources account for about 15% of our gross domestic product and more than 50% of our exports. When you include the supply chain that provides goods and services to the resource sectors, natural resources account for nearly 20% of Canada's GDP—almost a fifth of our economic activity.

In 2011, the forestry, energy and mining sectors employed nearly 800,000 people. With indirect employment, that total increases to 1.6 million jobs—with even greater contributions in the future. There has never been a better time to do business in our natural resources sector and our government is ensuring that the sector is well equipped to benefit from these opportunities.

Over the next 10 years, as many as 600 major resource projects, worth more than \$650 billion, are underway or planned. That means the creation of hundreds of thousands of new jobs. Few countries in the world are generating natural resource projects of this scale or at this pace—creating a truly once-in-a-generation opportunity for Canadians.

[English]

That's why our government is moving ahead with our plan for responsible resource development, a plan that will allow us to develop our resources, bring them to market, and bolster investment and job creation, all the while protecting Canada's environment.

Our wealth of energy resources, both in oil and natural gas, means our country is poised to reap the benefits of this natural legacy in new and emerging markets. The International Energy Agency now predicts that the United States will become the world's largest oil producer by 2020. It will be close to energy sufficiency by 2035. This means that Canadian oil exports to the United States will be competing for a declining portion of U.S. imported oil.

This trend underscores the fact that our government is doing the right thing today by helping to diversify Canada's energy markets in the Asia-Pacific and other emerging markets. Making the most of these opportunities is key to Canada's long-term economic prosperity.

I have spent a good deal of time travelling to other countries where there are opportunities for increased investments and trade to let the world know that Canada is open for business.

I understand that you are beginning a new study this Thursday and have decided to focus on three areas of diversification: export market diversification, product diversification, and diversification of energy supply sources. I am very interested in this study and I look forward to your final report on this important issue.

[Translation]

Mr. Chair, members of the committee, there is no question that Canada's natural resources will be the catalyst for a new era of jobs, growth and prosperity for Canadians. The potential for growth has never been greater than it is right now. And our government is determined to harness that advantage today to create the long-term prosperity of tomorrow.

[English]

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before the committee.

I am pleased to answer any questions you may have.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Minister, for your comments on the natural resource sector in Canada and the importance of that, for the picture you painted of government spending in the area of natural resources, for giving some reasons behind that spending, and for referring to the main estimates.

We'll start now with the first seven-minute round of questions and comments, starting with Mr. Allen, followed by Mr. Julian, and finally Mr. Hsu.

Go ahead, please, Mr. Allen, for up to seven minutes.

• (1540)

Mr. Mike Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair and Minister.

Mr. Dupont, thank you for being here this afternoon with us to go through some of the estimates.

I'm going to focus mainly on pipelines and probably have a little bit of a discussion on the west-east pipeline as well. I will focus my questions there.

Minister, you have done a fair amount of travelling. I know you have been to Saint John. You've been to the Irving refinery in Saint John. A significant portion of the proposed east-west pipeline that would be built through New Brunswick would actually go through my riding of Tobique—Mactaquac.

With regard to some of the things you've learned on export markets, can you talk about the position on the west-east pipeline, specifically the benefits of not only having more oil in the east refined at the Irving refinery, but maybe more specifically on the ability to get our product to deep water and the benefits of that?

Hon. Joe Oliver: Thank you for the question.

As I mentioned in my remarks, we have a big challenge, an overarching challenge. Right now we're selling our oil to one customer, the United States. Ninety per cent of our exports of oil go there and 100% of our gas. We are as an economy losing some \$50 million a day because of the reduced price in Cushing, Oklahoma in the U.S. Midwest because of a pipeline bottleneck, and so we're talking roughly \$20 billion a year, but that amount varies. That is the first problem.

The second problem is that we are confronting an issue of pipeline capacity that is starting to hit our economy. Before the end of the decade this will become very serious because if we don't move the oil out, it will be stranded. Over the intermediate and longer term, because of the immense amounts of shale gas and shale oil that the United States has discovered, they're going to be relying less and less on Canadian imports, and we absolutely must find new markets. Fortunately, those markets are there in the Asia-Pacific area, and 92% of the economic growth over the next 25 years is going to come from non-OECD countries. Energy demand is going to grow by about 36% by 2035, so the market will be there, and there is tremendous complementarity. We have a need to diversify our markets. The Asia-Pacific areas have an intense need to diversify their services and supply, and so we must build the infrastructure, the pipelines, to get the resources to tidewater.

Moving from west to east is one of the ways of doing it. These are not alternatives; they're not mutually exclusive. We have the resources to move in all directions. The advantage of that particular movement—and it can be through the TransCanada Mainline, which is looking at a conversion from gas to oil or the Enbridge Line 9, which is talking about a reversal from east-west to west-east—would be a lower cost Canadian crude coming to the refineries: the Ultramar refinery in Lévis, Quebec, the Suncor refinery in Montreal, and potentially the Irving refinery in Saint John, which is the largest refinery in Canada. They will then have—

Mr. Mike Allen: Minister, could I ask my next question? We're running out of time.

Hon. Joe Oliver: I'm sorry. I got carried away.

I just want to say we're talking about lower cost Canadian crude to replace higher cost foreign crude.

Mr. Mike Allen: What I'd like to do is now ask you specifically on that. When you look at the estimates and the NEB, what provisions are in the main estimates? Obviously for some people, when you talk about building 1,400 kilometres of new pipeline and you talk of these reversals, there's concern on the environmental side. Can you talk to the main estimates from the NEB and what expenditures in there will ensure that the pipelines that are built will adhere to a strict safety regime? Specifically with the reduction in the NEB estimates, they will be doing the project reviews, and how do you see that impacting the NEB?

• (1545)

Hon. Joe Oliver: Right. Look, the National Energy Board is a strong, independent regulator that ensures pipeline safety. They subject pipeline development proposals to an extensive scientific review that ensures pipelines are safe and protect the environment and the public.

Between the years 2000 and 2011, federally regulated pipelines had a safety record of 99.9996% of the crude oil and petroleum products that were transported. This is a very impressive record and we must continue to take steps to further improve this record.

As you know, our government has taken action to prevent pipeline accidents and improve our ability to respond to any incidents that do occur. Through our responsive resource development plan, we increased the number of inspections of federally regulated pipelines by 50% and doubled the number of annual audits. There are also

new fines for companies that break Canada's rigorous environmental protections. The main estimates for 2013-14 allocate \$5.6 million for pipeline safety and awareness.

Mr. Mike Allen: That \$5.6 million you're talking about is temporary funding for heightened public awareness of pipeline safety.

When you say "heightened public awareness of pipeline safety", what is your impression of what that means? Is there any concern of the NEB being able to fulfill their mandate as a regulator on this?

The Chair: Minister, I'll need a very short response. Mr. Allen's time is up.

Hon. Joe Oliver: The National Energy Board has adequate funding. They have the number of professional personnel to do the inspections and to carry out their independent, objective, scientific regulatory reviews. It's a highly respected organization that has adequate resources to fulfill its task.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Allen.

We go now to Mr. Julian for up to seven minutes.

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Minister, for being here today.

I'm looking at the main estimates. The government has increased, by millions of dollars, an advertising campaign coming through Natural Resources, but where have they slashed? Well, the government has slashed \$162 million from the clean energy fund. Over \$60 million has been slashed from ecoENERGY for biofuels. They've slashed millions of dollars from the ecoENERGY renewable power initiative and have slashed millions of dollars from the ecoENERGY innovation initiative. I could go on and on, Minister Oliver.

When we look at all of the slashes in funding that went to renewable energy in the context of your own remarks, Mr. Minister, where you said that the impacts of climate change are exaggerated and cited some fictional scientists saying it wasn't so urgent, it tells a story to the Canadian public. Now that you've had a few days to reflect, I wonder if you could tell us, do you still feel that the impacts that are dramatic, the 2° rise in global temperatures are exaggerated and that we don't have to worry about it, that Canadians aren't concerned about it? Or do you now understand that a 2° rise has severe repercussions internationally and do you retract your remarks?

Hon. Joe Oliver: Well, as I've said many times and as I said during the interview with *La Presse*, this is an urgent matter. Climate change is a pressing problem that our government has been pursuing with quick, decisive action. I was very clear on that. I was very clear repeatedly on my belief in climate science and—

Mr. Peter Julian: All of these cuts show the contrary.

Hon. Joe Oliver: Can I finish? I'm sorry, what shows the contrary?

Mr. Peter Julian: All of the cuts in the main estimates that I've just spoken to: green energy, renewable energy—

Hon. Joe Oliver: We're shifting ground here.

Mr. Peter Julian: They show the contrary.

Hon. Joe Oliver: Well, not really.... We're proud of the over \$10 billion our government has invested in clean energy and a cleaner environment, and Canada's investment in energy research and development per unit of GDP has outpaced that of the United States over the past decade. In fact, the International Energy Agency reports that Canada's investment per unit of GDP was more than double that of the United States, and we continue to support this by expanding the eligibility of—

Mr. Peter Julian: Minister Oliver—

Hon. Joe Oliver: No, just a second—

The Chair: Mr. Julian, order. Mr. Julian, please let the minister answer. You did ask the question and it was a fairly detailed question. He is responding directly to the question, so would you just allow the minister time to give an answer, please.

• (1550)

Hon. Joe Oliver: One of the things I want to say is that we are expanding the eligibility for accelerated capital cost allowance for clean energy generation equipment. We've also committed \$325 million to sustainable development technology. The clean energy fund has made important investments that will advance emerging technologies and inform energy policies going forward. We're supporting, as an example—

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Minister, I do have other questions.

Hon. Joe Oliver: —17 small-scale renewables that will result in the leverage of \$251 million.

If you don't want to hear the answer, I guess that's up to you.

Mr. Peter Julian: Well, no, the estimates tell the answer.

Hon. Joe Oliver: I thought this wasn't just question period; I thought it was also answer period.

Mr. Peter Julian: The estimates tell the contrary. The estimates tell the Canadian public that this government does not feel that climate change is an important issue and problem that they have to deal with, and your own comments underscore that.

I asked you, do you retract those comments? We have not heard a retraction from you. We have not heard an apology from you. There are Canadians who are livid that you would minimize the impacts of global climate change and minimize the impacts of a 2° rise in temperature, and then cite some fictional scientist, and you're only able to cite one, who is very clearly a climate change denier with no credibility whatsoever.

Hon. Joe Oliver: I never cited the person you're talking about; that's simply false.

Mr. Peter Julian: The press account tells the contrary.

Hon. Joe Oliver: I never cited that person.

Mr. Peter Julian: My question to you, and I'll ask you again is, do you retract those comments? Do you understand now that there are severe repercussions for a 2° global rise in temperature?

Hon. Joe Oliver: I have said repeatedly that I consider this to be an important issue. Science is complex. The science of climatology is complex. Everybody is talking about that. I referred during my interview, in the press, to the British Met Office. I referred to a James Hansen, who has recently left NASA. I referred to the IPCC, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. I agree with the consensus that climate change is urgent, and I said that clearly in my interview. It's there.

Mr. Peter Julian: You are retracting your comment, then.

Hon. Joe Oliver: I don't have to retract anything. I am confirming what I said.

Mr. Peter Julian: That's news, if you are. That's news.

The Chair: Mr. Julian, please let the minister finish his answer. He's dealing directly with the question you asked.

Hon. Joe Oliver: What I referred to is what I already said. I don't have to retract it; I'm reiterating.

Mr. Peter Julian: Minister, if that is the case, I'm glad if what we're hearing now is a confession that you've converted and you understand—

Hon. Joe Oliver: It's not a confession—

Mr. Peter Julian: —about climate change.

Hon. Joe Oliver: It's a reiteration of what I said.

Mr. Peter Julian: If you're retracting your remarks, that's wonderful. Will you then reverse these devastating cuts in green energy programs that are throughout the main estimates? Will you now act appropriately and responsibly to address the massive cuts? You found money for government advertising. You can then invest in a responsible way to deal with the challenge of climate change and invest in green energy. Are you prepared to do that?

Hon. Joe Oliver: The government has committed significant amounts of money. I went through some of them: the SDTC, \$325 million. I talked about the clean energy fund. We've committed up to \$1.5 billion to encourage domestic production of renewable fuels to meet the demand mandated by Environment Canada's regulations. All our agreements will be honoured to the end date, and they should result in total program investment of over \$1 billion by 2017.

Mr. Peter Julian: Will you address the cuts? That was my question.

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

I appreciate the work that you're trying to do here, but Mr. Julian should have the courtesy of allowing the minister to answer the question. This is ridiculous.

Mr. Peter Julian: He's not answering the question.

Mr. David Anderson: If he wanted to take his whole time to do some sort of lecture or whatever, he could have done that, I guess, but if he's going to ask a question, he should let the minister answer it. The minister is in the middle of answering it once again, and I wish he'd just let him answer the question.

The Chair: I want to make a comment—

Mr. Peter Julian: I want to raise a point of order.

The Chair: No, there's a point of order on the floor right now, and I want to make this comment in response to it.

Mr. Julian, when you ask a question, and particularly when it's a specific question with many parts, it's reasonable that you would leave time for the minister to actually answer, whether you like the answer or not.

This is directed not only at you; I want to direct it at future questioners. When you ask a question, the minister should be to given a reasonable amount of time to respond. If he has responded to the question and it then seems as though there is some stalling going on, at that time I'll allow an interjection, but that wasn't happening at all. There was a direct response to the question happening.

• (1555)

Mr. Peter Julian: I have a point of order.

I asked whether he would retract the cuts, and he has not answered that question for the record. I've asked him three times.

The Chair: It's a point of debate, and your time is up, Mr. Julian.

Minister, you can continue with a short answer.

Hon. Joe Oliver: We're not changing what is in the budget.

In 2011 the government announced \$195 million for five years to continue momentum in improving energy efficiency. The ecoENERGY Innovation initiative will invest almost \$370 million over five years for clean energy demonstration. Really, the list goes on. We've invested a lot in this sector, because we consider it to be important.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Julian and Minister.

Mr. Hsu, you have up to seven minutes. Go ahead, please.

Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Minister, thank you for coming today.

I was looking in the news recently and noticed that Alberta Premier Redford returned a few days ago from her fourth trip to Washington, D.C. to plead the case for the Keystone XL pipeline. As you know, President Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry will be making a decision as to whether to approve that pipeline. It's a very important pipeline for the economy of Canada, as you've said, and this decision hangs in the balance. Why else would the Premier of Alberta make four trips to Washington? Why else would Canadian officials be going to the United States so often?

What I see in the main estimates in front of me today, it seems to me, undercuts the efforts of the Premier of Alberta for the people of Alberta. I'm looking at the list of program cuts that has been mentioned by my colleague, Mr. Julian: the ecoENERGY retrofit program for homes, cut; the ecoENERGY technology initiative, cut.

I've marked these in yellow, and my page is covered with yellow.

There's the clean energy fund, the ecoENERGY for biofuels program, Sustainable Development Technology Canada's NextGen biofuel fund. We have the ecoENERGY for renewable power initiative, the program of energy research and development, and the ecoENERGY innovation Initiative.

My question to you is this. With this long list of things, isn't it embarrassing for the Premier of Alberta, when she goes to Washington, to try to deal with the fact, as you say, Minister, that Canada is losing tens of millions of dollars a day in revenue because President Obama does not have the social licence to approve Keystone XL, because we haven't done enough about climate change? We have all these cuts in the main estimates, right here, embarrassing and undercutting the efforts of the Alberta premier.

How do you respond to that?

Hon. Joe Oliver: Well, first of all, it's a bit of a stretch to suggest that the President of the United States doesn't have the social licence because of Canada. In fact, a strong majority of Americans are in favour of Keystone XL. The governor of every state through which it would go is in favour, a majority of the senators, and a majority of the House.

But that is not to say we do not have a responsibility, which we fully accept, to do what is appropriate in terms of addressing this very serious issue. We have talked, when we've gone down to the United States, and I was recently in Chicago and Houston and am going to be in New York and Washington next week again, about how our objectives are aligned with those of the United States in terms of reducing our greenhouse gas emissions by 17% from 2005 by 2020, and we're halfway there. We've talked about how our fuel standards for automobiles and trucks are identical to those of the U.S. and how, in some respects, we're ahead of the world. So we're doing a lot.

I can go through some of these issues. What we're doing is financing initiatives that work, that are efficient, that are effective, but also, we're looking at ways to be protective of the taxpayers' hard-earned dollars, and when they're less effective or when they have completed their mission, then we decide accordingly.

• (1600)

Mr. Ted Hsu: Okay. Let's look at it from the point of view of the President of the United States. I see a line here in the main estimates on page 239 where our spending on energy-efficient practices and lower carbon energy sources is being cut by about \$140 million. That is not in line with United States policy.

That undercuts your argument to the United States for why they should approve the Keystone XL pipeline. This is clear evidence that Canada is not doing as much to deal with climate change, that Canada's policy is not as aggressive as the policy that President Obama outlined in his state of the union address this year. What about that line in the main estimates, Minister?

Hon. Joe Oliver: First, as I mentioned earlier, we have been spending more per capita than the U.S.

Funding is declining, and I can give you the specifics. There was a \$60-million item for ecoENERGY for biofuels, which is designed to provide a declining incentive rate, and that is related to the take-up we were experiencing. There was an amount in statutory authorities for the sustainable development and something for the other programs.

As I said, we're proud of the \$10 billion. We've committed up to \$1.5 billion for domestic production of renewable fuels to meet the demand of Environment Canada's regulations. In 2011 the government announced \$195 million over five years—

Mr. Ted Hsu: Okay. We're talking about cuts now, right?

Hon. Joe Oliver: Yes, but I'm talking about ongoing programs that indicate the continued commitment in significant dollars of the government to the clean energy sector, and we'll continue to support it.

Mr. Ted Hsu: Okay.

On one last line in the main estimates, Minister, on climate change adaptation initiatives, I see that 2011-12 expenditures are about twice as much as what the main estimates are for this coming year. I'm wondering if that reflects our decrease in concern for the effects of climate change. Why has that been cut in half, climate change adaptation initiatives? Are we less worried? Are you less worried, Minister?

Hon. Joe Oliver: No, that has nothing to do with it at all. Perhaps I could get a detailed answer here.

The Chair: Mr. Dupont, go ahead, please.

Mr. Serge Dupont (Deputy Minister, Department of Natural Resources): Mr. Chair, with regard to climate change adaptation, there is an envelope of \$35 million over five years for Natural Resources Canada. This was a new program instituted as of budget 2011 and some of the changes from year to year simply reflect the profile of the funding.

Some years, depending on where you are in the project, you're spending less, and in other years you're spending more. We're now moving to another phase of the program, but there's going to be a fluctuating profile over the years and we can certainly provide the committee with the overall profile.

It's not a structural declining trend; it's just variation from year to year in the profile.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Hsu.

We go now to the five-minute round and the first three people on the five-minute round, Mr. Trost, Mr. Calkins, and Mr. Nicholls.

Mr. Trost, go ahead, please, for up to five minutes.

Mr. Brad Trost (Saskatoon—Humboldt, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I was sitting here looking through some of the notes. I was thinking that I've been on the natural resources committee through five or six ministers, going back to when John Efford from Newfoundland was here.

We're not usually the most exciting or glamorous committee, but one issue over the years has made us a bit high profile and that was when Chalk River had a little problem with the medical isotopes reactor and the history with the MAPLEs and so forth. So I was very interested in the notes, and in your presentation that you noted there's another \$9.9 million, \$10 million coming involved with medical isotopes.

Could you explain what that \$10 million is for? Then, in as much detail as you feel comfortable—and more is generally better in this circumstance—could you explain what the government is continuing to do, where it's at, involving medical isotopes?

Thank you, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Joe Oliver: Thank you.

Our government continues to work domestically and internationally to promote a more secure supply of medical isotopes. The isotope technology acceleration program, ITAP, is investing \$25 million over four years to further advance the development of cyclotron and linear accelerator technologies for the domestic production of the most widely used medical isotope, technetium-99m, meeting a clear health public policy need. That would be the production of non-highly enriched uranium, so it also has the advantage of meeting our non-proliferation obligations.

We're investing in three projects that are being led by innovative Canadian organizations which have made great strides in transforming the way medical isotopes are produced in Canada and that met the best, rigorous criteria set under a fair, competitive process.

The projects that include this process and that were signed under ITAP are at the University of Alberta, with \$7 million for their cyclotron; at TRIUMF, in British Columbia, with \$7 million for their cyclotron; and at the Prairie Isotope Production Enterprise, which has about \$7.5 million for a linear accelerator in Manitoba. These investments reinforce Canada's leadership in medical isotopes. They support high-quality jobs at home, and they grow business opportunities for domestic and international markets.

• (1605)

Mr. Brad Trost: Following up on that in a slightly different vein, at Chalk River, the NRU reactor there has had to have a certain degree of repairs. Do you have an idea of what the cost is, of how much the government has invested in that? That's my first question. I'll follow up after you've answered that one.

Hon. Joe Oliver: I don't yet have the direct number for that. I don't know whether... I want to be accurate.

Mr. Brad Trost: Yes, there's no problem with that. I'm sure the other members of the committee will be fine—

Hon. Joe Oliver: We'll supply that number to the committee.

Mr. Brad Trost: As a follow-up question to that one, where are we going in terms of production of medical isotopes after 2016 when the NRU's licence does expire? From what you've said, we have three very good projects moving forward, but what's the plan after 2016? On just the three projects, NRU combined, how are we going to deal with the needs at that point?

Hon. Joe Oliver: These projects are basically pilot projects. In other words, there's a high degree of comfort in the technology, but we want to make sure they can produce at a commercial level to provide sufficient amounts.

We believe they will, and that Canada will be in a position, therefore, to supply a good portion. This means there could be some imports as well. We signalled that by 2016 we will not be in a position, and we're certainly not making a commitment, to supply medical isotopes to the rest of the world.

Mr. Brad Trost: So our emphasis will be—

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Trost. Your time is up.

Mr. Calkins, you have up to five minutes, please.

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Wetaskiwin, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

Thank you, Minister, for being here today.

Minister, as an extension of some of the pipeline questions that my colleague Mr. Allen was asking, as an Alberta MP I do have some concerns, obviously, with some of the discussion that has gone on, with some of the misinformation campaigns that have been used to try to stop the Northern Gateway pipeline. At the end of the pipeline, though, Minister, if we're going to diversify the energy sector for the Canadian economy and for the Alberta economy, which is good for the entire nation, we need to be able to get the international market price. We're not going to do that without tankers, because the pipeline can only get us to the edge of the sea.

About a month ago, Minister, you made an announcement on the government's initiatives insofar as tanker safety is concerned. I'm wondering if you could let us know what's involved, and at a detailed level if possible, with regard to the government's intentions on that and what the relevance might be as far as spending plans and priorities go.

• (1610)

Hon. Joe Oliver: This is a very important initiative. Our country depends on the safe shipment of goods overseas. I am pleased that our current safety system has served Canada well for many decades, however, it's essential that we're able to meet the needs of the future as well. For that reason the government recently announced, as you implied, a world-class tanker safety system. This three-part plan includes new measures, legislation, and the creation of an expert panel.

Building on the previous budget our government recently tabled the Safeguarding Canada's Seas and Skies Act, which is amending the Canada Shipping Act, 2001. The proposed amendments will strengthen the current requirements for pollution prevention and response at oil handling facilities, and increase Transport Canada's oversight and enforcement capacity by equipping marine safety inspectors with tools to enforce compliance. It will introduce new offences in contraventions of the act, and extend penalties relating to pollution. It will enhance the response to oil spills incidents by removing legal barriers that can otherwise block agents of Canadian response organizations from participating in cleanup operations.

The government also announced the creation of a tanker safety expert panel to review Canada's current marine response spill system and proposed further measures to strengthen it.

I'll go through the final things very quickly. There are eight new measures to strengthen the tanker safety system. They include increasing the number of inspections to make sure all foreign tankers are inspected on their first visit, annually thereafter; systematic surveillance by the aerial surveillance program; establishing the Canadian Coast Guard incident command system; reviewing existing pilotage and tug export requirements; designating more ports for traffic control measures, starting with Kitimat; and conducting scientific research on non-conventional products such as diluted bitumen to understand how the substances behave. The Canadian Coast Guard will ensure an improved system of aids to navigation. Last, the coast guard will develop options for enhancing Canada's navigation system. These measures will ensure that Canada has a world-class tanker safety system.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Thanks, Minister.

Could you elaborate a little more on this expert panel, when it's going to be composed, what it's going to look like, and what it's going to be responsible for, and enlighten this committee as to what we can expect from that panel?

Hon. Joe Oliver: The tanker safety expert panel will review the current marine oil spill response system and propose further measures to strengthen it. With all the measures I've introduced, it is critically important that to have a world-class regime we look at the best standards in the world. That will include everything related to this area to make sure we have adequate capacity in the areas of jurisdiction. There has not been a major tanker spill off the west coast, period. However, in the very unlikely event that might happen, we have to have a very robust system to make sure the response is immediate and comprehensive and is based on polluter pay.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Calkins, your time is up.

We go next to Mr. Nicholls, followed by Mr. Harris, and then Monsieur Gravelle.

Mr. Nicholls, you have up to five minutes.

Mr. Jamie Nicholls (Vaudreuil-Soulanges, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Minister, I'd like to address the NEB's dealings with the Line 9 reversal project. I know you were in Montreal on Friday.

On the 25th and 27th of October, 2011, NEB inspectors inspected pumping stations on the line. From what they found in 2011, currently the Westover and Terrebonne pump stations are non-compliant. Both stations' emergency shutdown systems are non-compliant. In May 2012 Enbridge made an assurance of voluntary compliance to come into compliance. It was supposed to do a corrective action plan by October 2012. Enbridge asked for an extension. It was given until April 15 of this year to come up with a corrective action plan.

Right now we have two major pumping stations that are not compliant. They don't have the emergency shutdown systems they are supposed to. Of the 125 pump stations, 117 are currently non-compliant. This has been the case since 2011. Has Enbridge submitted its corrective action plan for this non-compliance?

•(1615)

Mr. David Anderson: Mr. Chair, on a point of order, it might be interesting for another day, but his question has nothing to do with the estimates at all. If he can frame it—

Mr. Jamie Nicholls: It does have something to do with the estimates. Another member—

The Chair: Order, please. Allow the member to make his point of order.

When the chair is speaking to that, I'd appreciate it, too, if members would allow me as chair to say what I want to say without being interrupted.

Go ahead, Mr. Anderson.

Mr. David Anderson: My point is that if he frames it in terms of the estimates that we're here to discuss today, I'm sure the minister can handle that. The member is asking specifics about something that is far removed from the subject that we're talking about today.

I would just encourage him to get back on the topic that we're here for.

The Chair: Yes.

As you know, when we do have a minister before committee, it is tradition that wide-ranging questions are allowed, but members should know that the minister can't come prepared for absolutely every issue in detail. If you stick to the main estimates, you're more likely to get a detailed answer.

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Chair, on a point of order, the minister referenced Line 9 in his initial notes, and he also referenced the issue around pipeline safety, so these are very clearly tied into the main estimates that we're discussing today.

I'm not sure what Mr. Anderson's point was, but very clearly there is a link. The minister addressed that in his opening remarks.

The Chair: I think Mr. Anderson's point was that if you stick to the main estimates, the minister certainly will be prepared to give detailed answers. If you go off onto issues that aren't directly related, you're not going to find as detailed an answer ready.

Go ahead, Mr. Nicholls. As I've indicated, we allow wide-ranging questions when the minister is here. Go ahead, please.

Mr. Jamie Nicholls: I believe pipeline safety, Line 9, and the strength of the National Energy Board were addressed. Therefore, I see it as relevant to the estimates, and I ask the question again, has Enbridge submitted this corrective action plan that's been expected for two years now?

Hon. Joe Oliver: Look, the problem with the question is that it's not within my field of responsibility. This is something to ask—

Mr. Jamie Nicholls: Pipeline safety is not within your responsibility, Minister?

Hon. Joe Oliver: No, no, just a moment.

We're talking about what is under the jurisdiction of the independent regulator, and this is under the regulator's jurisdiction. We do not interfere with their responsibilities. We can find out whether they have submitted a plan or not, but that's a question that is more properly addressed to the National Energy Board itself.

Mr. Jamie Nicholls: Well, is the government concerned that for over two years Enbridge has been in violation of the Canadian Standards Association's Z662-11, which regulates pipeline safety in this country?

Hon. Joe Oliver: We're very comfortable with the competence and integrity, and dedication and independence of the National Energy Board.

Mr. Jamie Nicholls: Do you commit today, here in committee, to make this corrective action plan, once it's submitted by Enbridge, public?

Hon. Joe Oliver: That is up to the National Energy Board.

Mr. Jamie Nicholls: Well, I find it rich, Minister, due to changes in legislation in the omnibus budget bills last year...that actually the independence of the National Energy Board was called into question. I believe decisions can now be overruled by cabinet, decisions taken by the National Energy Board. So this doublespeak of saying it's arm's length, it's independent, and yet cabinet can overrule it, I find that very rich.

I know that the government is committed to a two-year timeline for project reviews—

Hon. Joe Oliver: We do not get in—

Mr. Jamie Nicholls: Mr. Chair, I find it rich—

Hon. Joe Oliver: No, no, you've made a statement.

Mr. Jamie Nicholls: —that an MP who defends freedom of speech in the House—

The Chair: Order, please.

Mr. Jamie Nicholls: —will take away my freedom of speech.

The Chair: Order, please, Mr. Nicholls.

You had made a comment, and the minister had indicated that he wanted to respond to it. Allow the minister to respond and then carry on with another question, Mr. Nicholls, if you would like.

Go ahead, please, Minister Oliver.

Hon. Joe Oliver: The government does not interfere with the operations of the National Energy Board. That's all I wanted to say.

Mr. Jamie Nicholls: Well, you've put a two-year timeline for project reviews. How about a two-year timeline for compliance on safety issues? We've been waiting for Enbridge to come into compliance for two years now. What about a timeline for compliance, Minister?

• (1620)

Hon. Joe Oliver: Those are different issues. The National Energy Board has its responsibility for safety in respect to projects under its jurisdiction. Just as we don't interfere with the courts, we do not interfere with the National Energy Board in matters of this kind.

Mr. Jamie Nicholls: Okay, but you've tightened the process of public consultation for the public. People now have to submit -page documents to participate in the public process, the public review, by the NEB.

Can you let us know what recourse Canadians, people in my riding, will have to share their views with the panel if they're not selected by the NEB to testify?

Hon. Joe Oliver: The rules clearly state that any person who is directly affected by a proposed project must be heard, people who have relevant expertise may be heard by the panel, and the panel makes that determination. People in the first category have, I think it's about three pages to fill out. It's a very, very short form for them. That's a fact. I've looked at it. Those people who are directly impacted will be heard.

Mr. Jamie Nicholls: Well, I can tell you—

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Nicholls. Your time is up.

We'll go to Mr. Harris for up to five minutes, please, sir.

Mr. Richard Harris (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The House leader of the NDP has been acting as a champion of decorum in the House. I hope he's watching his TV monitor today. Maybe someday he'll drop in and see how some of his members display their decorum in the committees.

Mr. Minister, I promise you that I'll be respectful in my questions, as we all should.

I want to thank you for coming to what is widely known as the forest capital of the world, Prince George, in the interior of B.C. I know that when you were there, you talked to the best of the best of lumber sawmill operators, and you got a pretty darned good idea that we put to use leading-edge technology for processing our wood fibre in central B.C. That's because of the government's support of technology in forest products, in expanding the use of wood fibre and in providing the funding for the research and the innovation required to get that technology to market.

Speaking of markets, I do know that you're aware of the dramatic increase we've made in our offshore shipments to markets other than the continental U.S., in an attempt to make sure we don't get all our eggs in one basket ever again. You've seen the increases in China and the potential in India and other countries that will be big consumers of our wood.

Mr. Minister, the budget committed \$92 million over two years to support this forest technology and innovation and also market development. I wonder if you could just give us a little indication of your understanding of the importance of these two crucial components to the health and expansion of the forest industry, and the economic benefits to it and ultimately to jobs and the economy of Canada.

Hon. Joe Oliver: Thank you for your question.

Canada's forest sector is a very important driver in rural areas, and our government remains committed to supporting forest-based communities as they adapt to transforming the forest sector. We're going to continue to make significant investments in support of the forest industry and sustainable resource management. We're seeing the results of these investments right across Canada, as you mentioned.

I was in Prince George where I attended the annual Council of Forest Industries convention. While I was there, I announced investments in two important programs that will assist the transformation of the forest industry through innovation and market expansion. Let me very briefly explain those two programs and why they're so important.

Investment in forest industry transformation supports Canada's forest sector in becoming more economically competitive and environmentally sustainable, and doing that through targeted investments and innovative technologies. Included in the announcement was funding for five unique projects across western Canada, each representing a Canadian first, or in some cases a world-first application of new technology. These new, really exciting projects will showcase Canada's leadership in pioneering new products and new expertise for the benefit of our country's forestry sector and for the communities that depend on it.

The expanding market opportunities program was designed to help create the thriving sector by growing international markets, promoting Canadian forest products as an environmentally responsible choice, expanding wood use in North American non-residential and mid-rise construction, and demonstrating that Canada is a world leader in sustainable forest management and a preferred source of sustainable forest products. So the funding will make Canadian forest products even more attractive and viable in the global marketplace.

We recognize the challenges facing the forestry sector. We've taken action through the economic action plan, and we've taken unprecedented investments to renew the forestry sector, so the \$92 million over two years is part of that. I'm proud our government continues to support the jobs of hard-working Canadians in rural Canada.

•(1625)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Harris.

Finally, with the Minister, we go to Mr. Gravelle for up to five minutes, please.

Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Like Mr. Harris, I am hoping that Canadians are watching television to see the non-answers that we're getting from you, Minister.

I have a very specific question for you and I want you to translate this advice to Canadians on how to participate in public consultation on Line 9. I'm going to quote from a government document:

Before you continue with this form, refer to the Board's Guidance Document on Section 55.2 and Participation in a Facilities Hearing attached to the Hearing Order OH-002-2013 as Appendix VI, and again as Appendix III of Procedural Update No. 1 for OH-002-2013.

Can you translate that for me?

Hon. Joe Oliver: That was not what we wrote. That was what—

Mr. Claude Gravelle: This comes from a government document.

Hon. Joe Oliver: The point is that one can fill out the form. It's multiple choice in most parts. If one is a person directly affected, you don't need to make reference. You just fill out the form—

Mr. Claude Gravelle: It's a 10-page—

Hon. Joe Oliver: Just a moment.

The Chair: Let him answer, please.

Hon. Joe Oliver: It's 10 pages, but they're not all relevant,

Mr. Claude Gravelle: What? If it's not relevant, why is it there?

Hon. Joe Oliver: It's not relevant to that particular applicant. It's relevant to people who want to provide expertise. Different sections are relevant to different parts. That's why it's there.

The point is, let's say the farmer says this pipeline goes through his farm. That's it. Nothing more need be said. They provide their name and their phone number and address, and that does it because that suggests the person is directly affected.

Mr. Claude Gravelle: Can you tell me what OH-002-2013 is?

The Chair: Mr. Gravelle, could I just ask you to say what department or what government agency that document is from?

Mr. Claude Gravelle: It's a government document.

The Chair: From which...?

Mr. Claude Gravelle: From Natural Resources.

The Chair: I appreciate your providing that information.

Mr. Claude Gravelle: Okay—

Mr. David Anderson: Mr. Chair, on a point of order, if Mr. Gravelle doesn't know what the document is, what is he doing asking other people if they have any clue what it is?

Mr. Claude Gravelle: That's my point exactly. How can an ordinary Canadian—

Mr. David Anderson: Mr. Gravelle—

Mr. Claude Gravelle: How can ordinary Canadians—

The Chair: No, no. Order.

An hon. member: Point of order, Mr. Chair—

The Chair: Mr. Gravelle—

Mr. Claude Gravelle: —answer the question if nobody knows what it is?

An hon. member: Point of order.

The Chair: Mr. Gravelle, order, please. Mr. Anderson was speaking. He had a point of order.

Mr. David Anderson: He brings in part of the information and then starts asking riddles about it. The minister has clearly answered the question.

If he's asking a question about people's participation in the NEB hearings, the minister just answered that. If that's what he wanted to hear, he got the answer. He can certainly move on to his next question, but for him to bring part of a document in here and then expect everyone here to be familiar with it is ridiculous.

An hon. member: Point of order, Mr. Chair.

•(1630)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Anderson.

On a point of order, Mr. Nicholls.

Mr. Jamie Nicholls: Mr. Chair, I find it very rich. You are an MP in the House who is defending freedom of speech for MPs in the House, and yet time after time it appears that you're trying to shut down our side from asking our questions. I find it very disturbing. I'm wondering, is it only anti-choice Conservative MPs who you want to have freedom of speech or is it—

The Chair: Mr. Nicholls, you're certainly not on topic here, and you know that simply isn't the case. I'm trying to make this committee.... A committee is only going to function properly if the witnesses are treated with respect and if they're allowed to give a reasonable answer to the question. If they're given a detailed multi-part question, you can expect that it's going to take a while for an answer. So let's have this committee function as it has been—very well, in the past—and when you ask a question, allow the minister to answer. In this case, he's the witness for the next couple of minutes still, and after that we'll suspend and get on to the next group of witnesses.

Mr. Gravelle, go ahead, please.

Mr. Claude Gravelle: So, Minister, can you tell me what appendix III is?

Voices: Oh, oh!

Hon. Joe Oliver: That's a ridiculous question and you know it.

Mr. Claude Gravelle: This is probably—

Hon. Joe Oliver: That's an NEB document and—

Mr. Claude Gravelle: It's a ridiculous question to ask Canadians.

Hon. Joe Oliver: —I haven't memorized every document.

Mr. Claude Gravelle: Okay. I'm going to read from an article in *The Globe and Mail* if you're not going to answer any questions.

The Conservative government—

Hon. Joe Oliver: I'll answer any reasonable questions—

Mr. Claude Gravelle: I have the floor.

It says: The Conservative government has created a new rule requiring those who simply wish to write letters to the National Energy Board to obtain the board's approval in advance.

...it's hard to accept that members of the general public who feel they have something to say need to prove their bona fides before sending in a letter. The board is being asked to use its time to read 10-page application forms full of detailed information, which may include curriculum vitae and references. This seems less like streamlining than a form of silencing.

...The application form for letter-writers and potential interveners (who were, quite properly, screened in the past) became available on April 5, and the deadline for getting the applications in is April 19.

The Chair: Mr. Gravelle—

Mr. Claude Gravelle: Are my five minutes up?

The Chair: Mr. Gravelle, on the article you're referring to or reading from, I can't see how it relates to the main estimates. Could you maybe explain that so that's clear? Then you can continue.

Mr. Claude Gravelle: That's what I'm trying to get the minister to do, to explain this.

The Chair: You have a few seconds for an answer if you'd like to get to it so the minister can give an answer.

Mr. Claude Gravelle: Well, I don't think he can answer it, regardless of how much time he has.

Voices: Oh, oh!

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Chair, on a point of order, I'm a little disturbed by the attempt to try to silence opposition MPs on these important questions. We have the main estimates. The minister referenced pipeline safety and public consultations on Line 9 in his initial statement.

Obviously, if you felt those weren't appropriate issues, then you would have at that time requested the minister not to deal with them. We can't have a one-sided debate whereby the minister brings issues to the floor at this committee and then you decide that an opposition point of view, which is also the public point of view, I might add, is something that has to be disregarded. That is simply inequitable, and it's not becoming of a parliamentarian.

The Chair: It's nothing at all related to what's actually happening here, Mr. Julian—simply not true.

Your time is up, Mr. Gravelle.

Mr. Anderson on a point of order, go ahead.

Mr. David Anderson: It's just an observation. Our committee has worked well in the past and I hope it continues to work well in the future, but I don't think the NDP have to panic just yet. They haven't lost their support to a new leader of any new party yet. Hopefully—

The Chair: Mr. Anderson, that's debate.

Thank you very much, Minister, for coming today.

On a point of order, Mr. Harris.

Mr. Richard Harris: Mr. Chair, just to answer Mr. Julian, unfortunately they don't seem to understand how a committee operates. The chair will run the meeting in accordance with protocol and rules set up in the standing orders. One of the rules is that if a member of the committee wants the floor, he or she should put their hand up seeking permission to speak. Interrupting speakers or other members of Parliament or witnesses is not part of the protocol.

I sincerely hope that perhaps the NDP under the guidance of the champion of protocol, the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley, might want to have a little session and invite these two or three members who have been quite rude and obnoxious today to maybe learn a little about protocol.

• (1635)

The Chair: Mr. Harris, you've made your point and you were making a valid point of order at the start of that.

The minister's time is up.

Mr. Minister, do you have some final comments?

Hon. Joe Oliver: Very quickly and gathering together in response to several questions about what we're doing on the green side, on energy innovation it's \$286 million over five years. On energy efficiency it's \$195 million over five years. On biofuel there will be a \$1 billion take-up. On renewable power, \$1.5 billion ongoing has been allocated. On STDC, as I mentioned, there will be \$325 million over eight years, and we've already spent \$10 billion. We're very committed to this sector and we will continue to be.

The Chair: Thank you again, Mr. Minister, for coming today. We appreciate that you make yourself available whenever the committee asks you to come. We appreciate the extra time you have given today.

We will now suspend the meeting and come back with departmental officials for a little under three-quarters of an hour. The meeting is suspended.

• (1635) _____ (Pause) _____

• (1635)

The Chair: We will reconvene our meeting with witnesses from the Department of Natural Resources. We have deputy minister Serge Dupont who will be here for this second three-quarters of an hour until the bells start ringing.

We have Kami Ramcharan, assistant deputy minister and chief financial officer, corporate management and services sector. Thank you for being here.

We have Anil Arora, assistant deputy minister, science and policy integration. Thank you very much for being here, sir.

I understand you don't have any opening comments you'd like to make, so we'll go directly to comments and questions from members, starting with a seven-minute round.

Mr. Anderson, go ahead, please, for up to seven minutes.

Mr. David Anderson: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to talk a little bit later about innovation and new products and technologies, but before doing that, at committee over the last few months we've heard a lot about involving our aboriginal communities. I want to talk about some of the specific places that Natural Resources is connecting with the aboriginal communities and how we're inviting their participation and working with them in order that they will be able to enjoy the benefits of natural resources that so many other communities have had.

We had a number of discussions—and Mr. Gravelle is still here—about the Ring of Fire and the potential in that area for aboriginal communities to be fully engaged in the whole process of developing the natural resources. I'm wondering if you would take a few minutes to touch on where we are working with aboriginal communities and how we're bringing them in and working with them in terms of natural resources.

• (1640)

Mr. Serge Dupont: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It is indeed an important and to some extent historic kind of opportunity to further the relationship with the aboriginal communities around resource development. At Natural Resources Canada

we interact and try to make contributions to that relationship in different ways, in particular through the major project management office, which brings together all of the major regulatory departments in Ottawa.

We try to coordinate our action there, in particular as regards the proper consultation process that has to take place where resource development occurs, obviously ensuring that the crown fulfills its constitutional duty to consult, ensuring as well that there is guidance to industry in engaging with aboriginal communities in moving forward projects, working with provinces as well to better align our processes.

More recently, and perhaps in a more focused kind of manner, you are aware that the government appointed a special representative in Mr. Doug Eyford in western Canada to engage with aboriginal communities on the question of west coast energy infrastructure. It is an effort that has to take place across Canada, whether for the Ring of Fire or for western energy infrastructure. That development must take place in consultation with aboriginal Canadians, and those opportunities must be seized to improve their economic and social conditions.

Mr. David Anderson: When we're talking about 600 projects and \$650 billion over the next 10 years, I'm wondering what role Natural Resources plays in job creation.

Do you see yourselves as having a role in that area?

Mr. Serge Dupont: We have roles in many facets of this. For example, the work we do as regards the regulatory process and ensuring the regulatory process is run in a coordinated manner among all the different federal partners through the MPMO, major project management office, is important.

We are fundamentally a science-based department as well. Whether it's in forestry, energy or mining, we ensure that we bring forward knowledge, and with it the skills that will allow our industry to continue to compete. Also, we ensure we are responsive to various initiatives, including the science and other programs. Those industries are more and more sensitive to the environmental dimension that is important to Canadians as well as to our brand globally.

Mr. David Anderson: We're talking about investment. On page 239, I think it talks about increasing investment and innovation for new products by \$30 million.

I'm wondering whether you could talk about the highlights of what you see being those areas of innovation. I'm interested in forest products innovation and some of the things that are happening there. I've been able to tour one of those labs.

What are the highlights of where you see the innovation funding going? In particular, if you want to talk about forestry, I think that would be of interest.

Mr. Serge Dupont: If you wish to have further details on forestry, we have someone here who could speak more to some of the details.

There's really two aspects of innovation in the forestry sector. One is developing the markets, and I think the minister spoke a bit about that, but innovation from a technology standpoint also needs to develop new higher value-added products, new ways of ensuring that Canada not only sells two-by-fours but that we're able to develop new products like cross-laminated timber. We're also looking into next generation type of products that use wood fibre, to essentially develop the substitutes for plastics and other materials with high resistance and excellent properties.

It's really thinking about making operations more efficient, through process improvements in some cases, developing new products to tap into new markets, and geographically finding those markets so we can sell the products.

It's really working on all of the above.

Mr. David Anderson: This may be more to Mr. Arora.

In terms of the innovation in the science area, what really attracts your attention?

Mr. Anil Arora (Assistant Deputy Minister, Science and Policy Integration, Department of Natural Resources): Specifically on the forest side?

Mr. David Anderson: No, outside of that as well. We heard a little bit about forestry.

What do you find is going to be fascinating in the next year?

•(1645)

Mr. Anil Arora: I think Mr. Dupont has spoken a bit about the forest products and some of the value add and innovation that's going into creating those value-added products, beyond selling timber and two-by-fours.

On the mining side, there are some really exciting possibilities. We have a major initiative called the green mining initiative. We're working with industry to see how mining can be done in a more responsible way to reduce the use of water, reduce the footprint of mining itself, for example, how you reduce the amount of waste rock that is produced or how you decrease the amount of energy or ventilation demand. That initiative of the government, \$8 million, is leveraging six-fold with industry investment and trying to actually implement those kinds of initiatives and that science in mining.

On the energy side, there has been tremendous work, ranging from new sources of energy, clean sources of energy, to even looking at renewables. We have made significant progress on a number of those fronts, both domestically as well as in partnership internationally.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Anderson.

We now go to the New Democratic Party. Ms. Liu will be followed by Mr. Nicholls, if there's time.

Please go ahead, Ms. Liu.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Laurin Liu (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to thank our witness for coming here to be with us this afternoon.

Mr. Dupont, I would like to ask you a question about Gently-1.

We know that the Quebec Minister of Natural Resources, Martine Ouellet, said that she was concerned about the decision made by Atomic Energy of Canada Limited to postpone the dismantling of Gently-1 from 40 to 90 years.

Considering that the Government of Quebec has renounced the use of nuclear energy and will begin to dismantle Gently-2, would it be possible for the federal government to coordinate the dismantling of these two nuclear facilities?

[*English*]

The Chair: Monsieur Dupont, please respond.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Serge Dupont: I believe so.

Atomic Energy of Canada should initiate discussions on this matter. Atomic Energy of Canada manages the Nuclear Legacy Liabilities Program on our behalf. Atomic Energy of Canada and Hydro Quebec need to discuss matters to ensure that the reactors are disabled in a harmonious and cost-effective manner and that operations are well-coordinated. These discussions therefore need to take place. Clearly, Atomic Energy of Canada's timetable will also, I believe, be flexible on this matter.

Ms. Laurin Liu: Thank you.

I wanted to underscore the need to take quick action.

Given that the same expertise is required to dismantle both reactors, and that for the past 35 years, we have been paying for Gently-1, which was in operation for only 183 days, do you feel that there is some urgency here?

Mr. Serge Dupont: I am not a physicist, but we do have some around the table.

We must remember that the dismantling of a nuclear reactor does not take place overnight, even if it is urgent. This is a long process. We also need to have a long-term plan for the disposal of these assets and equipment and we have to provide for long-term security. We need a multi-year, serious plan. This process is long and quite costly. There is undoubtedly a feeling of urgency, but I think that first and foremost, there is a very strong feeling of responsibility.

Ms. Laurin Liu: As you related to us briefly, extending the dormancy phase will entail additional costs with respect to the decommissioning and management of nuclear waste. What do you estimate the cost of this postponement will be with respect to the liabilities?

Mr. Serge Dupont: Pardon me, I did not hear your question very well.

Ms. Laurin Liu: Given the timetable that you have implemented, how much will the additional costs amount to for the decommissioning and management of waste?

Mr. Serge Dupont: The entire program, which includes waste currently located in Chalk River, Ontario, waste near the Bruce nuclear reactor in Ontario and at Gently-1, as well as other equipment located in various regions of Canada, such as in Whiteshell, Manitoba, is a waste management program that will be recorded as a liability for the Government of Canada.

Atomic Energy of Canada recently announced that this liability, which is standing at \$2.4 billion, will be increased to reflect the fact that, in particular, there will be a need to carry over further the indirect costs on the direct costs of waste management. Internationally, this has proven to be costly and lengthy.

Moreover, nuclear fuel is the responsibility of corporations that manage nuclear reactors. It must necessarily be included in the long-term management cost in electricity rates.

• (1650)

Ms. Laurin Liu: Thank you.

Let's now take a look at reductions in the public service, particularly in the area of science. We know that these cutbacks are going to hurt and that the total budget of the department has been reduced by more than \$2 billion compared to the budget in 2010-2011. Which Department of Natural Resources sectors have been the hardest hit over the past three years?

Mr. Serge Dupont: Thank you for your question.

You cited some very significant figures with respect to spending cuts. Many of these expenditures are in fact transfers, meaning contributions and grants to other sectors. That is not necessarily reflected in the operating costs of the department and has no bearing on our ability to contribute to science.

However, as part of the deficit reduction exercise in the 2012 Economic Action Plan, we had to reduce our envelope by 10%. That measure unavoidably led to staff reduction. We went through the exercise and made the subsequent calculations. In answer to your question, we did not cut back in the scientific sector any more than we did in other sectors.

Ms. Laurin Liu: Could you tell me the total number of positions eliminated as well as the number of scientific positions eliminated?

Mr. Serge Dupont: As part of the Deficit Reduction Action Plan, we had to cut 160 positions.

In our department, approximately 40% of our staff have a scientific mission and duties. The ratio is more or less the same for our deficit reduction exercise. We did not target scientific positions more than any others. We did not spare them either. Indeed, this would be less the 40% because we made significant reductions, particularly in our internal administrative duties.

Ms. Laurin Liu: One hundred and sixty positions, that is a lot.

The main estimates call for a \$22 million decrease for the Geo-mapping for Energy and Minerals program. This committee did a great deal of work on a report containing recommendations intended for the federal government. The sector concerned also made recommendations.

Why did the federal government not consider these recommendations?

[English]

The Chair: Could we have a very short response, please, Monsieur Dupont.

[Translation]

Mr. Serge Dupont: Mr. Chair, I will give a brief answer.

The main estimates before you contain what was announced and what has been achieved to date. I think that the department and the government fully acknowledge the value of this program. As far as this matter is concerned, I would say that you should stay tuned. I am very confident that there will still be activity in this field within Natural Resources Canada.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Liu.

[English]

Monsieur Hsu, you have up to seven minutes. I assume you want to ask questions.

[Translation]

Mr. Ted Hsu: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Could you clarify the nature of the expenditures under the heading "Capital Expenditures" of the main estimates?

Mr. Serge Dupont: Yes, absolutely.

There has been a significant increase, which we, moreover, have said is good news. This money will be used to renew the receiving infrastructure for our satellite signals. These investments will be made in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. There are two receiving antennas; one is located in Inuvik and the other in Gatineau. These investments will enable us to acquire a modern infrastructure to receive signals, particularly from our RADARSAT constellation, once it is in operation.

• (1655)

Mr. Ted Hsu: All right.

Nevertheless, there is a discrepancy of \$3 million. The document refers to \$15.7 million as opposed to \$18.7 million.

Mr. Serge Dupont: Mr. Chair, I would like to know what page this information is on.

Mr. Ted Hsu: On page 238. In French, this would be page 307.

Mr. Serge Dupont: I have the English version in front of me. So that would be on page 238.

Mr. Ted Hsu: On page 307, mention was made of a \$15.7 million increase for renewing relay stations. However, there is an \$18.7 million increase for the capital expenditures. So there is a \$3 million discrepancy.

Mr. Serge Dupont: Yes, and there is another \$3 million amount for capital expenditures. Could that be related to our Hamilton laboratory?

A voice: I believe so.

Mr. Serge Dupont: There are also some capital expenditures for the new metallurgy laboratory in Hamilton. A few years ago it was transferred from Ottawa to Hamilton and we are still installing equipment there. We wanted to ensure that we had up-to-date equipment for the metallurgy sector.

[English]

Mr. Ted Hsu: Merci.

Under the budget for the National Energy Board, I'm wondering why a quasi-judicial regulatory tribunal is getting \$5.6 million for heightened public awareness, for influencing public opinion. It sounds like advertising to me, to put it gently.

Can you clarify that?

The Chair: Monsieur Dupont, go ahead.

Mr. Serge Dupont: Mr. Chair, this is within the attributions and responsibilities of the National Energy Board, but I do want to take the opportunity to clarify the question because I asked the same question when I was reviewing the documents.

The way to characterize it is it's not properly reflecting what's going on. The \$5.6 million is really around \$5 million, which is really going to actual operations and safety. It's inspections. It's actual work on the ground. About \$600,000 of that amount is explaining this to Canadians, in enhancing their website, and responding to various kinds of inquiries, but the bulk of it...

I was asked the question the last time I was here, and certainly my understanding was the bulk of this was going to actual safety operations, so there's a bit of a misnomer there in the documents before you. I'd be happy to confirm or better still to have the NEB confirm that for you in writing because that's the explanation they have given me.

Mr. Ted Hsu: Okay. Maybe I'll do that at some point.

Feel free to not answer this question because this is something the minister just said, but I didn't have time to ask him.

He said we have a 99.9996% safety record, so four parts out of a million of unsafely transported oil and gas, I guess.

If you just throw that number out there, it doesn't mean anything. Could you give a precise definition of that percentage? Feel free to say no, because this is something you didn't bring up.

To me it's meaningless. Is there a definition of that somewhere?

Mr. Serge Dupont: Mr. Chair, witnesses would be delighted if every question had as a preamble that you can answer or not.

I do not know exactly, but I would imagine it is really taking the volume of crude that is transported through pipelines over time, and looking at whatever might have happened in terms of spills, and then relating it back to that total volume. That said, I think it's a valid question that I would rather answer more scientifically and with better evidence. I'm happy to undertake to get an answer for you.

Mr. Ted Hsu: Okay. I think it needs to be defined because if four parts out of a million of radiation produced in a reactor escaped, that might not be as acceptable as four barrels out of every million barrels of oil getting spilled.

I understand there is a small cut to the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission. We have a budget deficit to deal with. Can you tell me exactly where the cuts are going to be made?

• (1700)

Mr. Serge Dupont: Again it would be better to ask the president of the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission. First, I am aware that adjustments to them over the last little while have been made under the deficit reduction action plan. It's a small contribution which

really is in the back office, and really does not have any kind of safety implication.

Second has been ensuring their participant funding program actually reflects their needs. That is a program whereby funding is provided to certain groups that want to participate in certain hearings, and to ensure that funding is aligned to needs and to expressed interests.

Those are the two areas I'm aware of, but everything having to do with actual safety there, certainly there has been no downward adjustment to those resources.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Hsu.

We go now to the five-minute round. First on the five-minute round we have Mr. Allen, followed by Mr. Trost. Would the NDP please notify the clerk as to who is going to ask your questions or make your comments for five minutes.

Mr. Allen, go ahead for up to five minutes, please.

Mr. Mike Allen: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to ask the witnesses about the section in the estimates on responsible natural resource management where it goes from \$234 million to \$318 million; there's an additional \$80 million there. I have a two-part question on that.

What are some of the key components of that \$80 million, in other words what am I getting for that? The other side of it is it seems to me we have.... How is that spending aligned with agencies like the NEB who obviously have a role to play in responsible natural resource development from a regulatory standpoint and those types of things?

Can you please tell me what I'm getting for the \$80 million, differentiate between the agencies, and what Natural Resources Canada is going to be doing with that \$80 million?

Mr. Serge Dupont: I would be glad to, Mr. Chair.

In some cases you have the titles and then you have the specific measures, so let me just try to tell you a bit about the specific measures there underneath it.

From the \$84 million, \$54.8 million of that is the Port Hope area initiative. That is not related to what we typically call the responsible resource development initiative, which is about new projects. This is actually about undertaking the cleanup in Port Hope, which has been promised now for a number of years, and which has been going through a regulatory process. We're now actually starting the work of building the waste management facilities and undertaking the real implementation of that multi-year effort.

Similarly, \$34.5 million represents the higher amount this year that will be expended under the nuclear legacy liability program that we just discussed in regard to some of the nuclear obligations of Canada. So under that specific heading, Mr. Chair, the majority of it really has to do with this charging obligation relating to environmental remediation.

Mr. Mike Allen: Okay. So basically it has nothing to do with any linkages with anything to do with the NEB. Their regulatory process is their regulatory process and, as the minister indicated, they're funded for that.

Mr. Serge Dupont: They are. For example, these are the estimates for Natural Resources Canada. The NEB estimates would reflect the increase of \$5.6 million that we just talked about.

Mr. Mike Allen: In the estimates there's an interesting sentence, and perhaps you can explain it to me. It says, "In addition, annual savings of \$5 million beginning in 2012-2013 will be achieved through the International Assistance Envelope horizontal review."

What does that mean?

Mr. Serge Dupont: What it means is that under the deficit reduction action plan all of the individual departments had to come forward with their efficiency savings. As I indicated, we came forward with the 10% for Natural Resources Canada.

Additionally, there was a horizontal exercise across the Government of Canada having to do with the international envelope, so funding of different kinds going to international initiatives. Of that, Natural Resources Canada contributed an amount of \$5 million, which essentially is going to happen as we sunset the African forest initiative that we were running. It is the contribution by Natural Resources Canada to reduce spending in the international assistance envelope.

Is that clear?

• (1705)

Mr. Mike Allen: It's a little more clear.

I want to pick up on a little bit of what Ms. Liu was initially commenting on about the DRAP and the reductions that you had. It says, "Internal corporate services will be reduced and NRCan's organizational structure and operations will be streamlined." There are 159 positions cut.

What is the department doing to ensure, going forward, that you actually are able to sustain those savings in the organization? What kind of metrics do you have in place to ensure that the savings will continue to accrue in the department?

Mr. Serge Dupont: That's a good question, Mr. Chair.

Number one, in terms of the savings continuing to accrue, these are ongoing adjustments to our resources. Those moneys are gone. They're not coming back.

What may happen in the future is the Minister of Finance looks at various proposals and may think at some point that we have an idea to generate value for Canadians, and decide to allocate new resources to Natural Resources Canada, but absent that, we have to live within our means. That means delivering on our commitments, and it means as well ensuring that we fulfill all of our internal responsibilities and we fulfill all of our reporting requirements. We do have to organize our business accordingly, and that means taking different initiatives. It means taking our libraries, which used to be on paper, and basically phasing them out and going to electronic libraries. It means reducing travel. It means reorganizing. It means merging various groups together to cut some overhead. We don't

have a choice. This is an ongoing conversation among us to ensure that we live within those means.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Allen.

Mr. Trost, for five minutes.

Mr. Brad Trost: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to focus my questions on AECL. Its emphasis has changed somewhat over the years in terms of how the federal government relates to it. I hope I'm not covering any territory that anyone else has covered.

Looking through these basic numbers, we have 2011-12, the \$537 million, main estimates of \$103 million, and estimates to date of \$345 million. Then, for 2013-14, we have the exact same \$102 million in the main estimates going forward.

Could you break this down in a fair bit of detail, or in as much detail as three minutes will allow? I think to a lot of people it seems strange: you have estimates of \$101 million, and then you have expenditures of \$500 million or \$300 million. Could you just break that down in terms of why there are the discrepancies, why going forward we're estimating again \$102 million in 2013-14?

I would like you to break down all the constituent elements one more time for us, if possible.

Mr. Serge Dupont: I appreciate the question, Mr. Chair.

The \$102 million is basically the base funding that has been there for a number of years for Chalk River Laboratories. It kind of funds the infrastructure. I mean, it's basically Canada's biggest lab, with roughly 3,000 people working there.

Basically there are three functions. I have the exact breakdown of the costs, but.... There is waste management in the sense that they do have to manage what is there historically, from post-war. There is, at this time, still production of medical isotopes. There is research being conducted on a National Research Universal reactor. There are services provided to CANDU owners and to the CANDU supply chain, basically science and technology services. That's kind of the gamut of services now.

The \$102 million at this time, which is the money reflected in the main estimates, does not fulfill fully those obligations. That is why in successive budgets over the past number of years there have been announcements of additional support for Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd.

Now, some years back, that additional support covered not only laboratories but also the commercial part, which was trying to sell the reactors, basically unsuccessfully. That part is no longer receiving additional moneys in the budget. It is receiving in these main estimates, through what is statutory funding, \$109 million. It is not going to SNC-Lavalin...or part of it is, indirectly, but essentially it is discharging our final responsibilities vis-à-vis the commercial part, which includes different commitments that we still need, including warranties for the work at reactors and so forth. That amount, which is \$109 million now, is basically going down to zero, because we are phasing out totally our support for the commercial reactor side of it.

The \$102 million has been supplemented this year by \$141 million over two years in the budget. It will be reflected in the supplementary estimates for you. That is intended basically to allow Chalk River Laboratories to do the functions I stated earlier and to meet the regulatory requirements of the CNSC in so doing, ensuring that it's done safely and with proper protection for the environment.

So it's been a bit...over the last number of years, with part of it in the main estimates, part of it coming in supplementary estimates, because of the budget process. We don't have, fortunately, at this time—I guess we still kind of cross our fingers—bad surprises mid-year, like repairing the NRU, that require even further supplementary estimates to come before this committee.

• (1710)

Mr. Brad Trost: When can we expect, with the commercial liabilities that we're winding down, that in the estimates the expenses will be substantively gone? What is the last year we really anticipate having major costs based on that, looking forward?

The Chair: Could I have a very short answer, please.

Mr. Serge Dupont: Yes.

The amount that was in the legislation for the divestiture of the commercial part was funding over five years, but it is basically declining rapidly. The \$109 million is no longer. I mean, you're not going to see those numbers in future years. It's coming down. Within five years it's zero.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Trost.

Before we go to Mr. Julian, who will be our final questioner, I want to remind members that the meeting isn't over when—okay, it will be Monsieur Gravelle, I guess.

The meeting isn't over when Monsieur Gravelle asks his final question. We will need a couple of minutes after that to go through the votes on the main estimates. It should take just a couple of minutes.

Go ahead, Monsieur Gravelle.

Mr. Claude Gravelle: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, witnesses, for being here.

The last time you were here we talked a little bit about the Ring of Fire, and you mentioned it again today. Since that time a minister for the Ring of Fire has been appointed. We also understand there's a 15-department secretariat to coordinate the Ring of Fire. Can you supply

us, please, with a list of those 15 departments that are involved in the Ring of Fire?

Also, since you appeared here last, the government took three expert witnesses to court to try to prevent them from testifying. Of course, the court ruled in favour of the witnesses. So mining companies still aren't getting good leadership for the Ring of Fire.

We really want to support this project. We want it to go forward, because it's going to create a lot of jobs. When we heard testimony in the committee when we studied the Ring of Fire, the first nations that came to testify were quite explicit that they really support the Ring of Fire and they want to work with the government and the companies. The companies said, "Tell us what the rules are and we will follow the rules", but we're not getting this kind of leadership.

Would you agree that we need a better approach to the Ring of Fire?

Mr. Serge Dupont: You mentioned there is a minister who has responsibility for this. I'm not in the best position to judge what is happening on the ground there. You're quite right that there is broad support and opportunity. There is an effort.

Regarding the 15 departments, we could certainly get the list for you. I couldn't list them off the top, although you'd have your departments of transport and infrastructure, aboriginal affairs, and so forth, and they'd try to bring that together. We participate as well in some of the efforts. Through the major projects management office, we try to ensure that the regulatory process is moved along appropriately. We are aware that some parties would have preferred the panel process. The Minister of the Environment has decided that it will be moving through the standard kind of environmental assessments. It will still require the contribution of the best possible science.

I could not speak to the issue of the witnesses, or any of the legal issues around that. To be honest with you, I'm not familiar with those developments. I can only answer that the government, I think, and certainly officials, recognize it's really important to ensure that conditions are in place for those projects to succeed.

• (1715)

Mr. Claude Gravelle: Thank you.

I want to talk a little bit on infrastructure. Is the federal government going to support an industrial road or a road that will give access to all the communities involved in the Ring of Fire?

Mr. Serge Dupont: Again, that question would be much better addressed to Minister Clement, or perhaps the department of transport and infrastructure. That would not be within my domain of responsibility or that of Natural Resources Canada or, indeed, that of Minister Oliver.

Mr. Claude Gravelle: Okay.

There's a story today in the *Financial Post* that indicates that the Ring of Fire's in jeopardy because of a lack of leadership. They're not getting the leadership from the Ontario government, or obviously, from this federal government either. What's the plan for the Ring of Fire going ahead?

Mr. Serge Dupont: One of the critical dimensions in all of these projects is commodity prices and market signals. Those will have the dominant impact on whether things move forward or not. At the end of the day, it's going to be private investment that will be instrumental in making this happen or not. Governments are collaborating at the highest levels, for example, between Ottawa—the Government of Canada—and Ontario. I'm sure there is a common willingness to create the best conditions. At the end of the day, though, it's going to be really critical for the companies themselves to come forward on the basis of their plans to invest which will be influenced by commodity prices and other market signals.

Mr. Claude Gravelle: I have one brief question.

To your knowledge, has the federal government been asked to participate in the infrastructure for the Ring of Fire?

Mr. Serge Dupont: I'm sure the question of infrastructure would have come up in the discussions between the two levels of government. That's not my specific domain of responsibility so I would rather let others answer questions on specific infrastructure plans in the Ring of Fire and in other parts of Canada.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Gravelle.

Thank you very much to the witnesses from the Department of Natural Resources, Serge Dupont, Anil Arora, and Kami Ramcharan, for being here today. Some good information was exchanged today on the main estimates. Just leave the table as you wish; we're going to go directly to the votes.

I will ask the questions in the order that they're normally asked on the main estimates for 2013–14.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Department

Vote 1—Operating expenditures.....\$787,602,384

Vote 5—Capital expenditures.....\$25,535,435

Vote 10—Grants and contributions.....\$638,924,120

Atomic Energy of Canada Limited

Vote 15—Capital expenditures.....\$102,143,000

Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission

Vote 20—Program expenditures.....\$34,976,638

National Energy Board

Vote 25—Program expenditures.....\$55,241,279

Northern Pipeline Agency

Vote 30—Program expenditures.....\$3,003,000

(Votes 1, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, and 30 agreed to on division)

The Chair: Shall I report the votes under Natural Resources, less the amounts voted in interim supply, to the House?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: On division.

The Chair: Thank you all very much. I will do that at the earliest opportunity. Thank you all for your participation in the meeting today. The bells are going for the votes.

The meeting is adjourned.

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