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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, May 27, 2015

—

Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, May 27, 2015

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

• (1405)

[*English*]

The Speaker: It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem led by the hon. member for Bourassa.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

ECONOMIC ACTION PLAN 2015 ACT, NO. 1

Mr. Brent Rathgeber (Edmonton—St. Albert, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, omnibus budget bills are undemocratic and unfair, contain wedge issues and make a member of Parliament's job impossible to complete. On Monday night, the House was forced to cast a single ye or nay vote on Bill C-59, the government's latest omnibus budget bill. The bill is 157 pages long, divided into three parts, and part 3 is further divided into 20 divisions. This allows for a wide range of disparate topics to be covered, some supportable, many not.

I support most of the tax credits and actual budgetary items. However, I strongly oppose retroactively amending the access act to allow for the premature destruction of records. I supported ending the long gun registry, but to retroactively change the law dealing with the records while the abolition bill was being debated is a dangerous, undemocratic precedent.

In any functioning parliamentary system, this omnibus bill would be divided and there would be separate votes on each part and on every division within each part. It is simply impossible to cast a single ye or nay on an entire disparate package.

If the government will not respect Parliament enough to allow us to do our jobs, then the Speaker must intervene to defend parliamentary privilege. That is how a functioning parliamentary democracy would proceed.

TELUS DAYS OF GIVING

Mrs. Stella Ambler (Mississauga South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are incredibly generous. I would like to thank all Canadians today for their volunteer efforts and give a special shout-out to one company that takes a leadership role in promoting volunteerism in its workforce.

Each year through Telus' Annual Days of Giving, employees give of their hearts and hands to make a meaningful and lasting difference in the communities where they live, work and serve. Since Telus began its Days of Giving in 2006, it has mobilized more than 94,000 Canadian team members, retirees, family and friends to volunteer at over 3,000 activities. They have volunteered more than six million hours in total.

Telus' team is making a meaningful social impact in communities across Canada. To celebrate its 10th anniversary of giving back, Telus has created opportunities for us all to give back in a meaningful way. To all my colleagues who participated today, they should take pride in knowing that the school backpacks they filled will find a home with so many youth who would otherwise start the year at a disadvantage.

Please inspire others to join in and help Telus as it tries to complete one million acts of good through its Telus Days of Giving.

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[*Translation*]

LAVAL—LES ÎLES

Mr. François Pilon (Laval—Les Îles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today I would like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow citizens and organizations in my riding, Laval—Les Îles, for their support and for placing their trust in me to represent them here over the past four years.

I would like to say to community organizations, their employees and their volunteers that their determination, compassion and involvement have truly inspired me and pushed me to work even harder to help my fellow citizens achieve a better life day after day.

I would like to thank my fellow citizens for their support. No matter who they are, I want them to know that I intend to keep fighting every day to build a better Canada for all of them. That is the promise I made four years ago, and I plan to keep it for the next four years.

Statements by Members

However, this time, I will be keeping that promise as part of a New Democratic government that will work for Canadians and their interests. I will be part of a government that truly represents them, a government that will give them a voice.

We will be back here on October 20, together and ready to change the world.

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[English]

MENNONITE RELIEF SALE

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to invite colleagues and all Canadians to visit New Hamburg in my riding of Kitchener—Conestoga this weekend for the annual Mennonite relief sale and quilt auction. The relief sale was started in 1967 to raise funds to provide relief from hunger, poverty and natural disaster. All merchandise and services are donated, which means all funds raised on sale days are donated directly to Mennonite Central Committee, a service and development agency of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church in North America.

Started in 1920 in response to hunger in Ukraine, the Mennonite Central Committee strives for peace, justice and dignity for all. Many people contribute to the success of the sale: donors of goods and services, supporting church congregations, auctioneers, venue coordinators and thousands of dedicated volunteers, as well as visitors from a wide geographic area. Since 1967, over \$14 million has been raised.

I thank all hard-working volunteers and coordinators for the great work that they do.

* * *

MAX YALDEN

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I pay tribute today to a champion of Canada's linguistic duality and a tireless advocate for human rights, Max Yalden.

As a career diplomat, he served in Moscow, Paris and as ambassador in Brussels. From 1977 to 1984, he was Canada's commissioner of official languages and made every effort to help the French language flourish within the federal government and across Canada. He also urged Quebec to do more to protect its anglophone communities.

Max Yalden then led the Canadian Human Rights Commission from 1987 to 1996, holding governments and departments to account for discriminatory attitudes. He tackled gender wage gaps, discrimination in hiring, biases against sexual orientation, online hate speech and Canada's treatment of aboriginal people. He followed that domestic role with eight years as a member of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. He was made an Officer of the Order of Canada in 1988 and a Companion of the Order in 1999.

Max Yalden passed away earlier this year at the age of 84. He will be forever remembered as a great Canadian for his numerous achievements, and his spirited defence of human rights.

[Translation]

TOBIQUE—MACTAQUAC

Mr. Mike Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this Parliament will adjourn in a few weeks' time. I would like to thank all the residents of Tobique—Mactaquac for their trust and support over the past nine years.

[English]

Being an MP is not possible without the support of families, staff and great volunteers. I thank my wife, Jennifer, brothers Dale and Paul and their spouses, Lorraine and Gail for their support and their willingness to always keep me grounded. I cannot thank my favourite mother- and father-in-law, Carlene and John enough for all the meals they have prepared and the number of times they have mowed the lawn in order for me to attend events.

I appreciate the tremendous work of my volunteers and campaign team to get me across the finish line in three elections, and to my riding and Hill staff for their efforts to do the good constituent work that is such a large factor of our success.

While my federal political career may be winding down, I appreciate the tremendous honour I have been given as 1 of just 4,200 people who have been elected to this place since Confederation. While I may be exiting the House of Commons, there are many friendships and good memories that I will take with me. No matter what, that is something I will carry with me forever.

* * *

● (1410)

[Translation]

HOUSING

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, for over four years now, my colleague from Berthier—Maskinongé and I have been leading the fight to get the federal government to provide financial help to pyrrhotite victims. I have to say, however, that every time we speak, we run up against a government that refuses to listen, claiming that these are just half-truths. Meanwhile, the other opposition parties, which are well known for their insensitivity toward victims, remain silent.

Next Saturday, the entire population will take to the streets for a big solidarity march to demonstrate, loudly and clearly, their frustration with a government that refuses to act and that remains completely insensitive to their misfortune. On behalf of the Coalition d'aide aux victimes de la pyrrhotite, I invite everyone to take to the streets and come and join us in this demonstration of solidarity.

Statements by Members

To offer a glimmer of hope, I would remind my fellow Canadians that since the beginning of this fight, only one leader, the member for Outremont, has acknowledged that the federal government should be part of the solution. The day is not far off when the federal government will answer the call, because come October, we will form a responsive government that listens to its people, an NDP government.

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[English]

TELUS DAYS OF GIVING

Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West—Glanbrook, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and celebrate the 10th anniversary of an event that bring me back to my first days as a member of Parliament, the Telus Days of Giving.

We who sit in this House are privileged to be included in an incredible variety of charitable events in our ridings and here in Ottawa. Today, I want to applaud Telus for 10 years of focusing on community-based volunteerism that continues to make a difference for Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

Since 2006 over 94,000 Canadians have donated more than six million hours of their time to make a difference in their communities through the Days of Giving campaign.

Today on Parliament Hill, my colleagues and I demonstrated yet again how a small group of people in the matter of a couple of hours, can make a substantial difference in the lives of young Canadians. By packing school kits for children across Canada, we took part in ensuring that kids who start their school year without the necessary school supplies will now have what they need to learn and succeed.

Today I proudly congratulate Telus and call on others to use the hashtag #actsofgood to challenge their colleagues and constituents to do the same.

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TURKS AND CAICOS FRIENDSHIP MISSION

Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today, I would like to welcome the delegation from the Turks and Caicos Islands, engaged here in Ottawa on a mission of friendship.

When Canada and the Turks and Caicos first engaged, nearly 150 years ago, wooden windmills pumped sea water to expansive evaporation pans for harvesting the ocean's salt. Canadian fishermen purchased large quantities of this salt for their offshore fleet of fishing boats, which needed this salt for fish preservation.

Today the economic interests are far different. Canada, by establishing economic and transshipping regional offices in the Turks and Caicos to better serve the Caribbean Rim of countries, would also greatly benefit the Islands by diversifying their tourist economy.

This friendship mission by the Premier's office of the Turks and Caicos Islands visiting here today bodes well for greater social and economic engagement, mutually beneficial to both of our countries. We all become hopeful that our two countries will become much more meaningfully engaged as a result.

I wish them Godspeed in their deliberations.

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[Translation]

SAINT-HYACINTHE—BAGOT

Ms. Marie-Claude Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today for my last member's statement.

Having chosen not to seek re-election, I want to personally thank each and every person that I served with during my mandate. I want to thank my extraordinary team who is always there for me through thick and thin, and my House colleagues, whose work is not without its challenges. I also want to thank the House of Commons staff because, after all, what would we do without them?

Obviously I am thankful to the people of Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot. For the past four years, I have worked for them and especially with them. They allowed me to work on a host of issues, each more interesting than the next. It was an honour to represent them. Thank you for believing in me.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the extraordinary support of my husband, my family, my parents and my friends. They stayed by my side throughout this incredible journey and I will be forever grateful for that. Thank you for contributing to my role as the member of Parliament for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot during these four wonderful years.

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● (1415)

[English]

CANADIAN ARMED FORCES

Mr. Pierre Lemieux (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we know all too well the dangers posed by terrorism in an uncertain world. Two hundred and twenty members of the Canadian Armed Forces are working with law enforcement agencies and ten partner nations on an international explosive ordnance disposal exercise at CFB Esquimalt and in the greater Victoria, B.C. region.

Exercise ARDENT DEFENDER is held annually and brings together the Canadian Armed Forces alongside allies and partners to share best practices on this ever-evolving threat.

Having served in our Canadian Armed Forces myself, and on behalf of the people of my riding of Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, I want to thank our brave men and women in uniform for their constant vigilance at home and abroad.

*Statements by Members***VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, violence against women is a fundamental barrier to reaching equality. We all know the statistics. We know that one in three women will experience sexual assault in her lifetime, and we know that few will report it. We know that 70% of women's shelters say that a lack of government support is their greatest challenge. We know that indigenous women and girls are four and a half times more likely to be murdered than non-indigenous women and girls. We know that these numbers only tell part of the story.

All of us here in this House know women who have experienced violence, who are survivors, and we know women who are looking for change. That is why we need Motion No. 444, a national action plan to end violence against women.

I hope that every parliamentarian recognizes that it is within his or her power right now, today in fact, to make a difference and to give women hope for a safer future.

Let us not turn our backs on Canadian women. Today, let us make history, or "her story", and make a difference. It is time.

* * *

LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Parm Gill (Brampton—Springdale, CPC): Mr. Speaker, benefiting all families is not what is fair. Do members know who said that? It was the leader of the Liberal Party over there. He has said that he would take away the family tax cut and the universal child care benefit and scrap income splitting for families. This is all just so he can bring in his high-tax schemes and take money out of the pockets of hard-working middle-class families.

On this side of the House, we stand for the Canadian middle class and not against it.

* * *

RAIL SAFETY

Ms. Chrystia Freeland (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in my riding of Toronto Centre, rail safety is an issue of immense community concern. The government has proposed changes to the current rail safety system, but they do not go nearly far enough.

A new proposed speed limit remains higher than self-imposed limits set by CN and CP in urban areas. The timeline to replace and upgrade aging DOT-111 tank cars would leave unsafe cars on the tracks for far too long.

[*Translation*]

The Conservatives' piecemeal approach to rail safety is frustrating our communities and putting them at risk. In my riding, two rail lines used for transporting crude oil run through residential areas. Residents and community organizations are worried and want better safety rules, but Transport Canada's Rail Safety Directorate lacks staff, funding and training.

[*English*]

We must do much more to improve rail safety in our communities.

LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our Prime Minister and this government have put forward a plan to help middle-class families by continuing to put more money back in their pockets. We are enhancing the universal child care benefit and are creating the child tax cut to help all families with children.

I think it is also important to point out that we have gone even further to help all Canadians make ends meet. In fact, federal taxes are at their lowest level in 50 years

It is disappointing to hear the Liberal leader take the opposite approach. His plan is to reverse these savings and to instead bring in a family tax hike. That is what he said. He made his point of view perfectly clear when he said that benefiting all families "is not what is fair". That is what he said.

Our government believes it is fair to help all families, and indeed, all Canadians, and we will continue to do just that.

* * *

● (1420)

[*Translation*]

ETHICS

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is mind-boggling how the Conservative government insists on surrounding itself with people who bypass and abuse the system.

Mike Duffy is on trial for fraud, corruption and breach of trust. Brazeau is accused of inappropriate spending in the Senate. Dean Del Mastro, former parliamentary secretary to the Prime Minister, has been found guilty of violating the Canada Elections Act. Peter Penashue, another former Conservative minister, also violated the Canada Elections Act, and let us not forget the robocalls scandal and the in-and-out scandal, which prompted a visit from the RCMP.

Now, a former candidate and employee has also pleaded guilty to fraud and breach of trust. Is he also going to be appointed to the Senate?

This government, which promised to be accountable and transparent and to bring change to Ottawa, has been a total failure. It scores a big fat zero.

However, there is hope. In less than six months, voters will have the opportunity to elect a government that will bring real change, a government that will be open and transparent, an NDP government.

*Oral Questions**[English]***LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA**

Ms. Joyce Bateman (Winnipeg South Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the prime minister is not an entry level job, and time and time again the leader of the Liberal Party has proven that he just is not up to the task. He wants to take away all of our middle-class benefits and replace them with a high-tax, high-debt plan that will kill jobs and hurt families.

Budgets do not balance themselves, and benefiting all families is what is fair. The Canadian middle class knows that they can trust this government to deliver for them.

ORAL QUESTIONS*[Translation]***ETHICS**

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister said in the House that Mike Duffy was a resident of Prince Edward Island because Mr. Duffy himself signed a declaration to that effect before he was appointed to the Senate.

Does Mike Duffy's written declaration still exist? Did it ever exist?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, the courts are looking into Mike Duffy's actions. The government is assisting the RCMP and the Crown in this trial. I cannot comment on this matter in the House of Commons.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Mike Duffy's actions are indeed before the courts, where he has to answer for them. Here in the House, the Prime Minister is normally the one who has to answer. He can answer us now or during debate.

[English]

The audit report on the Duffy affair was modified seven times by the Prime Minister's staff. Five separate drafts were concocted. Now they are trying to block the full details from becoming public. They are doctoring the report. Now they are trying to cover up their cover-up.

When will the Prime Minister order the full Duffy audit released?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, the government has provided all information at its disposal to the RCMP and to the crown. We continue to assist them in their case. This case involves just the actions of Mr. Duffy, and we will let the courts make its decisions.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, of course the courts are looking at the actions of Mr. Duffy, but Canadians are looking at this House to find out about the actions of their Prime Minister. Again, it is up to the Prime Minister. He can answer now, or he can answer during the debates.

Before it was tampered with, the Senate report on Duffy's expenses said clearly that claiming P.E.I was contrary to the plain meaning of the word "primary". No wonder they changed it. It was

actually the Prime Minister's Office that provided Mike Duffy with the primary residence loophole that he is now trying to use as cover.

Was that the essence of the PMO's backroom deal with Mike Duffy to begin with?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are obviously watching the case that involves the actions of Mr. Duffy that are before the court.

In terms of this House, Canadians are watching how we look after public funds ourselves. Canadians are wondering why the leader of the NDP continues to justify taking nearly \$3 million in parliamentary funds and using it completely inappropriately for partisan purposes and not being willing to pay it back and not being willing to apologize or reverse course. Those are the answers Canadians want.

* * *

● (1425)

PENSIONS

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Peter Pena, Saulie Zajdel, Michael Sona, Dean Del Mastro, all Conservatives, all convicted, Mr. Speaker. That is what happens when they go to a real court.

The Prime Minister's record on pensions is clear. He has blocked every effort by the provinces to increase CPP. He even rejected our calls for real action. If he is re-elected, the Prime Minister says he is going to raise the OAS age from 65 to 67, taking \$14,000 out of the pockets of every senior. Instead of a deathbed conversion, how about simply bringing the retirement age back to 65 right now?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is the government that brought in the largest increase in the guaranteed income supplement in a quarter century. This is the government that brought in and expanded tax-free savings accounts for Canadian seniors. This is the government that introduced income-splitting for pensions in this country. We have taken action to benefit all Canadian seniors. All Canadian seniors are better off. Yes, we will provide them with more options.

What we will not do is what the NDP and the Liberals want to do, which is tax Canadian seniors and tax Canadian workers. That is not what they are looking for.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, let us see what has been said before about the Prime Minister's idea of a voluntary new CPP. I quote:

...some sort of voluntary new CPP method...would not work and...the CPP would be unable to administer it.

Who said that? It was Jim Flaherty, the then finance minister.

*Oral Questions**[Translation]*

Given that 60% of our youth are going to be poorer than we are today, rather than study half measures on the eve of an election, why does the government not change the budget today so that people can retire with dignity at 65 instead of 67?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this government increased the guaranteed income supplement for seniors. It is the largest increase in a quarter century. We created the tax-free savings account and introduced income splitting for pensions. These measures benefit all seniors.

We completely reject the Liberals' and NDP's proposals to increase taxes for seniors and workers.

Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for 10 years the Prime Minister has blocked the pension file and refused to cooperate with his provincial partners.

Yesterday, after a decade of inaction and without consulting his provincial counterparts, the Prime Minister suddenly announced that he wants to open this file.

With the election only a few months away, does the Prime Minister really think that Canadians are going to believe him?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have been very clear about this government's approach to pension plans for a long time: we are in favour of voluntary options for Canadians.

The Liberal Party's position is to increase Canadians' taxes. Canadians do not accept that option and will not accept that option.

[English]

Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians know the Prime Minister's record on the Canada pension plan. In the nineties he said to scrap the CPP and just leave Canadians on their own. A few years later, he called for the Canada pension plan breakup, so why should Canadians believe him now when he suddenly says he wants to expand the CPP?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there are numerous falsehoods in that question, but what is correct is that our government favours allowing a range of options for people so they can save. In fact, not only can they save, but they can actually reduce their taxes by saving.

What the Liberal Party wants to do is to force Canadians to save by taxing them, by taking their money away. Canadians do not accept that option and will not accept that option.

Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Liberals, experts, and the provinces have all called for strengthening Canadians' retirement security and the CPP, but for 10 years the Prime Minister has stood in the way. He repeatedly said that he saw no desire for CPP expansion. He repeatedly said it did not need to be improved. He even said that it would hurt the economy, so why should Canadians believe him now when he says he pretends to care about our seniors?

• (1430)

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always like the Liberal Party to be quoting so-called

imaginary experts instead of asking real Canadians what they want and what they do not want.

I note today that the Liberal leader says that unlike us he will show leadership on this. Yes, he will show leadership on raising taxes. We will show leadership on cutting taxes.

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, let us talk about real Canadians. The Conservatives have spent 10 years eroding the retirement security of Canadians. Seven in ten workers have no workplace pensions, and less than a quarter of them can afford to contribute to RRSPs each year. To make matters worse, the Conservatives plan to raise the age of retirement will cost Canadian seniors up to \$30,000 each. With such a record of failing seniors, does the minister really expect anyone to believe them now on CPP?

Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Minister of State (Finance), CPC): Mr. Speaker, let us be clear. The Liberals and the New Democratic Party do not want to give Canadians a choice. They want to force Canadians to pay higher taxes, higher job-killing payroll taxes. By contrast, our government believes that Canadians want to pay lower taxes, and they want the freedom to make their own financial decisions. That is why we are open to giving Canadians the option to voluntarily contribute to the Canada pension plan.

What we will not do is reach into the pockets of Canadians with a mandatory payroll tax and take money out of their pockets.

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, rather than rhetoric, Canadians need real action on retirement security.

The Conservatives are blatantly pretending that they will do something about the looming retirement security crisis, but the fact is, after promising to work with the provinces to boost CPP for all Canadians, the Conservatives have spent years blocking any progress in spite of overwhelming demand for change.

After a decade of Conservative rule, Canadians are less secure than ever. Why will the minister not support a real boost to CPP benefits so that all Canadians can retire in dignity?

Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Minister of State (Finance), CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians want real action in lowering taxes. What we have brought, and what is consistent with our Conservative government's efforts is to encourage Canadians to voluntarily save more of their money. We will consult on allowing a voluntary contribution to the Canada savings plan.

Again, our government understands that Canadians want low taxes, and they want the freedom to make the financial decisions that would help them with a secure, dignified retirement.

We will not reach into and take money out of their pockets. We are the government that will keep money in their pockets.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Ms. Isabelle Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are no strangers to the Conservatives' poor track record: they are blocking the expansion of the Canada and Quebec pension plans and forcing Canadians to work an additional two years before they can retire. Furthermore, every senior will lose out on more than \$13,000 because of the Conservatives.

The Conservatives have had 10 years to help Canadians better prepare for retirement.

Is a study really their last-minute magic solution?

[English]

Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Minister of State (Finance), CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me quote Susanna Cluff-Clyburne from the Canadian Chamber of Commerce:

Yesterday's announcement by the federal government that it intends to allow Canadians to voluntarily make additional contributions to the Canada Pension Plan... promises good news for Canadians and their employers.

By contrast, the NDP and the Liberals would impose a job-killing, mandatory increase to the payroll tax. They would take money out of the pockets of hard-working Canadians.

Canadians know they are better off with this Conservative government.

* * *

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP): Actually, Mr. Speaker, what Canadians deserve is better retirement security, and they will get that, plus a better government, in October.

We have had a proud tradition of newcomers coming to Canada and building stable, prosperous communities here, but Conservatives have attacked that legacy: huge family reunification backlogs, new barriers for immigrants to become citizens, cuts to settlement services. It is no wonder that Canada has fallen from the top five countries in settling new immigrants.

When will Conservatives stop using new Canadians as a backdrop for their photo ops and start actually helping immigrant families achieve success in Canada?

• (1435)

Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is not surprising to see that member and that party dumping on the changes we have made to the immigration system because they voted against them all. They voted against the reform of our asylum system. They voted against measures to reduce backlogs. They voted against measures to protect the value of Canadian citizenship.

We on this side are proud to have made the largest number of newcomers Canadian citizens last year, in Canadian history, and to be accepting the largest number of new immigrants to this country in decades.

That is action. We are taking it.

[Translation]

Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe (Pierrefonds—Dollard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, of course we voted against the Conservatives' measures. Today, for the first time in seven years, Canada's score dropped in an international ranking on the integration of immigrants. This is a direct consequence of the Conservatives' bad policies.

Just 26% of immigrants who arrived in 2008 became citizens, and the figures for family reunification were just as discouraging. Canada is no longer the model it used to be.

When will the Conservatives restore Canada's former status when it comes to integrating immigrants?

Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is pathetic to hear a New Democrat claim the Liberals' immigration policy was a model. They left a legacy of backlogs, abuses and dashed hopes for immigrants who wanted to come to this country.

Despite all of that, this year we are proud to be welcoming 280,000 new immigrants, and we are proud to have welcomed 260 new citizens last year. Those are the biggest numbers in Canadian history.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-51 is so flawed that even the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe found it necessary to publish a legal study demonstrating that this bill violates the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Moreover, we learned yesterday that Canadian telecommunications service providers have already been sharing vast quantities of personal information with the authorities with no oversight. That is simply unacceptable.

Will the Conservatives finally listen to reason and scrap their dangerous bill?

Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let us remember that on October 20 and 22, right here in this country, we were victims of terrorist acts. That is a reality that the New Democrats are refusing to see or accept. That is why we are implementing responsible measures and working with our partners in France, the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Australia to combat the terrorist threat.

When will the New Democrats join us and find ways to fight terrorism?

[English]

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP): Mr. Speaker, let us be clear. The same government that is forcing successful law enforcement programs like Project Condor to shut down, and the same government that is taking resources away from financial and organized crime investigations, is refusing to protect Canadians' personal information from unprecedented online surveillance.

Oral Questions

Instead, it is pushing Bill C-51, a bill so flawed that our allies in the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe think that it violates the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

When will the minister stop pushing this bad bill and focus on real measures to keep Canadians safe?

Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the real question is when will the NDP get serious about the terrorist threat that Canada is facing, along with our allies, such as Great Britain, France, New Zealand, Australia, and our fellow Americans?

That is why we put measures in place, welcomed as of Monday by Commissioner Paulson, that will make it easier for the police to track terrorists and keep Canadians safe.

* * *

NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Northwest Territories, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General has shown that the nutrition north criteria are not fair or accessible. They are not even based on current needs.

Forty-six isolated fly-in northern communities are out in the cold, without access to nutritious and affordable food. Will the government commit today to working with all northerners to develop a sustainable solution to food insecurity?

The minister can start by including these 46 communities in the nutrition north program.

• (1440)

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I cannot help but add that if they were able to impose this carbon tax, it would be even colder. The cost of food would go up, and the cost of hunting everything in the north would go up.

We have accepted the recommendations of the Auditor General, and we are currently examining eligibility criteria. We are collecting data from the communities in the north, and we will review the eligibility criteria.

* * *

[Translation]

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Romeo Saganash (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is so sad when someone starts to become more and more incompetent in a particular job.

There is yet another failed Conservative program. The first nations market housing fund was created eight years ago but has produced less than 1% of the 25,000 homes it was supposed to produce by 2018.

Is that the Conservatives' response to the housing crisis in aboriginal communities—an ineffective program that has done little more than finance one more bureaucracy?

[English]

Hon. Candice Bergen (Minister of State (Social Development), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the purpose of that program is to increase private home ownership for first nations people on reserve. We want to see first nations individuals being able to have the pride, the security, and the financial stability that come with owning their own home.

We always review programs to ensure that they meet the goals required, but we think it is important that first nations individuals can own their own home on reserve. That is why we created this fund.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the minister should know that the government cynically promised to build 25,000 homes in this \$300 million market fund. Now, seven years later, they have built 99.

The government's own estimates confirm a housing crisis on reserve, with severe shortages of 20,000 to 35,000 new units and 5,200 replacement units.

Building sufficient and safe housing on reserve builds local economies and creates jobs. The government has failed miserably.

Where are the 25,000 homes that the government promised?

Hon. Candice Bergen (Minister of State (Social Development), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member does not understand what the program is designed to do. It is to encourage and to enable individuals to choose to build their own home and own it on reserve.

It is no surprise coming from the opposition, which voted against and does not believe that women should have their own property rights on reserve. It seems that it does not agree that aboriginal individuals should have their own homes on reserve.

We believe that they should. That is why we created this program. We always review our programs to ensure that they are meeting the goals that we set out.

* * *

[Translation]

PENSIONS

Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Finance had a deathbed conversion, suggesting the possibility of increasing voluntary contributions to the Canada pension plan. He did not even mention the provinces, although two-thirds of them would have to support it.

Instead of playing the politics of cynicism, why does this government not commit to working with the provinces to improve the Canada pension plan?

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Minister of State (Finance), CPC): Mr. Speaker, again, we know the Liberals do not want to give Canadians choices. They want to force Canadians to pay higher job-killing payroll taxes.

By contrast, our government believes that Canadians want to pay lower taxes. They also want the freedom to make their own financial decisions. That is why we are open to giving Canadians the opportunity to invest into a voluntary Canada pension plan. That is what we do. We give Canadians the opportunity to save for a secure, dignified retirement.

Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has spent nine long years in office and many years before that opposing every conceivable reform to the CPP. Simply put, the Prime Minister hates the Canada pension plan. Now he comes up with a last-minute plan that was not even in the budget.

Why should Canadians believe for one second that the Prime Minister is serious about doing anything at all with the Canada pension plan, except to blow it all up?

• (1445)

Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Minister of State (Finance), CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are proud that this government has spent nine years cutting taxes for Canadians, bringing forward options so they could save for retirement.

We intend to consult with experts and stakeholders during the summer on options for allowing for additional voluntary contributions to the Canada pension plan. Our government understands that Canadians want low taxes and the freedom to make their own choices. However, the Liberals would impose a job-killing payroll tax.

We know the Liberals would shut down the tax-free savings account. We know they would take away income splitting, and income splitting for pensioners. We will not let that happen.

* * *

CANADA POST

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, stories of constituents upset with Canada Post's decision to end door-to-door delivery are pouring in across Canada, not only because of the decision itself but the treatment that people receive from Canada Post. When one of my constituents phoned to express legitimate concern about the location of a community mailbox in her neighbourhood, she felt that her concerns were unfairly dismissed. She told us that she was upset beyond belief.

When will the minister start listening to Canadians and stop making excuses for Canada Post?

Mr. Jeff Watson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member knows that in 2014 Canada Post delivered 1.4 billion fewer letters than it did in 2006, and that two-thirds of Canadians currently do not have door-to-door delivery. Canada Post must balance its finances without being a burden on Canadian taxpayers.

The NDP's so-called plan for Canada Post would cost taxpayers half a billion dollars a year, which means it would have to raise taxes on Canadians. We will not let it.

[Translation]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would just like to remind everyone that Canada Post made nearly \$200 million in profits last year alone.

Over 3,000 people in my riding have signed a petition opposing the elimination of home mail delivery. The towns of Salaberry-de-Valleyfield, Huntingdon and Saint-Louis-de-Gonzague have passed a resolution calling for a moratorium on the installation of community mailboxes. Nearly 600 cities and towns have denounced what is happening at Canada Post.

Will the government listen to our constituents or will it keep forcing people to use community mailboxes?

[English]

Mr. Jeff Watson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, maybe the member should actually read Canada Post's 2014 annual report. On page 68, it states:

Without pension relief, the Corporation would have been required to make special payments of approximately \$1.3 billion in 2014. The special payments without pension relief would amount to \$1.4 billion in 2015...

They should not be spiking the ball. Canadians expect that Canada Post will not be a financial burden to them, and so do we. That is why we expect it to carry through with its five-point plan.

* * *

[Translation]

PUBLIC SERVICE OF CANADA

Mr. Mathieu Ravignat (Pontiac, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is getting harder all the time to separate fact from fiction in the Conservative budget.

The Conservatives claim that they will save \$900 million by scrapping public service sick leave and creating a private short-term disability plan, as Canada Post did for its employees. However, Canada Post did not report any savings.

Why are the Conservatives trampling on collective agreements in order to achieve fictitious savings?

Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the 40-year-old sick leave accumulation system is antiquated and does not meet the needs of the majority of our employees. We need a system that is fair and reasonable for employees, of course, but also for taxpayers. That is our plan. We will be fair and reasonable during bargaining. We have to reach an agreement, if that is possible.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

The budget numbers are hard numbers, and they have been better.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative Minister of Finance must have taken a page out of the old Liberal playbook, pretending to balance the books.

It now turns out that the \$900 million so-called savings the minister is banking on by scraping public sector sick leave just does not add up. The management geniuses at Canada Post tried this a couple of years ago. How much did they save? Nothing. These guys are booking on \$900 million, a complete fiction.

Why are Conservatives tearing up collective bargaining rights for a terrible plan just to trick Canadians?

• (1450)

Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Canada Post plan is not the plan we are suggesting and are bargaining in good faith with the unions on this.

If the NDP wants to be the advocate for the union bosses, it has the right to do that in the House. We will stand up for the taxpayers.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Ms. Joan Crockett (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the RCMP recently arrested 10 people who were radicalized in Montreal and who were planning to travel abroad to join the international jihadist movement.

Could the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness please tell Canadians what our government is doing to counter this threat?

Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, here is what Louise Vincent, the sister of slain Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent, said, “If C-51 had been in place on October 19...Martin Couture-Rouleau would...have been in prison and my brother would not be dead today”. That is why we put this bill together, despite the opposition, comments and attitude of the NDP.

The RCMP said “we welcome” the lowering of thresholds in Bill C-51. Why? Because police will be able to put terrorists behind bars and keep Canadians safe.

* * *

*[Translation]***NATURAL RESOURCES**

Ms. Laurin Liu (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives lack vision and are not fit to build the economy of tomorrow.

According to Analytica Advisors, the Canadian clean technology industry is losing market share, dropping from 14th to 19th place in the world. That is because of the government's lack of political will and lack of investment in innovative technologies.

Why is the government asleep at the switch when it comes to supporting the green technology sector?

[English]

Mrs. Kelly Block (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are investing in green infrastructure, energy efficiency, renewable and clean energy technologies that produce less emitting energy and fuels. We are proud that Canada has one of the cleanest electricity systems in the world, with 79% coming from non-emitting sources.

While that member voted against increasing investments in clean technology, we remain committed to supporting its development.

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we want clean energy, not hot air.

Yesterday, the Minister of the Environment's department admitted that it could not do the math on climate change. It looks like the government cannot do the math either when it comes to clean-tech exports and jobs.

Global investment in clean tech last year topped \$300 billion, but according to a new report, Canada's share of that global clean-tech market dropped by 41%. Why? Because the Conservatives are doing nothing for our clean-tech sector and exports.

Where is the plan to support Canada's clean tech and boost our exports?

Mrs. Kelly Block (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, unlike that member who wants to impose a carbon tax, our government's sector-by-sector approach is demonstrating results, while keeping taxes low.

Our government has made significant investments to promote clean energy projects that protect the environment, create jobs and grow the economy. We are proud that Canada relies on non-emitting sources for 79% of our electricity mix, one of the cleanest in the world.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the results speak for themselves, and they reveal an abysmal Conservative record on trade, a growing clean-tech sector that is being muscled out of the global market—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Don Davies: They laugh, Mr. Speaker.

Trade talks with Japan are completely stalled and the Conservatives are unable to even set a date for negotiations. Canada has fallen from 15th to 23rd in exports to key Asian markets and has record trade deficits in 2015.

Oral Questions

The New Democrats understand that strong trade performance is critical to Canada's economic future. How does the minister defend his record of failure that is leaving Canada behind?

Mr. Parm Gill (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the NDP has consistently opposed our efforts to open new markets for Canadian businesses. In fact, it has an abysmal record on the trade file. The fact is that the NDP is ideologically opposed to any and all trade. It does not understand trade and it does not like trade.

Only the Conservative government is focused on the priorities of Canadians when it comes to creating jobs and opportunities.

• (1455)

Mr. Ryan Cleary (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, NDP): Mr. Speaker, actually, it is the government, with its complete intransigence, disrespect and refusal to match its words with actions, that is putting Canada's trade deals at risk.

The Conservatives promised my province of Newfoundland and Labrador a fund for fisheries marketing and research in exchange for giving up local fish processing requirements. Then they changed the rules mid-game and reneged on that promise.

Will the Conservatives finally live up to their word and give Newfoundland and Labrador the transition fund we were promised?

Hon. Rob Moore (Minister of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member's problem is that he opposes a trade agreement that his province and the industries in his province and the people of his province support.

Our government remains open to working with the province of Newfoundland and Labrador on its specific proposals for a minimum processing requirement fund. We have indicated all along to the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador that we are open to a fund that includes support for displaced workers, research and development, and innovation.

However, this fund was always designed to compensate Newfoundlanders for any losses for having given up minimum processing requirements. It was never intended as a slush fund that would be to the detriment of other provinces.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I asked the Minister of the Environment a very simple question at committee: Could she state the new 2030 targets in megatonnes? Incredibly, the deputy minister jumped in and said that it was very complicated.

However, 30% of 731 megatonnes is not complicated, and it is the responsibility of the minister to know her facts and to have a plan as to how we will make those targets.

The minister has had 24 hours to crunch the numbers. Could she state the 2030 target in megatonnes?

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our

government announced a very fair and ambitious target for Canada that would be in line with other major industrialized countries.

Canada is taking a leadership role on the climate change file. We plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 30% below 2005 levels by 2030. That translates to 225 megatonnes. We will continue to take a responsible approach, a balanced approach.

Building on this, we will reduce methane emissions in the oil and gas sector, regulate the production of chemicals and nitrogen fertilizers, and regulate emissions from natural gas-fired electricity generation.

[Translation]

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, in committee, the Minister of the Environment again demonstrated a disengaged attitude with regard to the federal strategy for combatting climate change.

Did the minister consult the provinces before announcing a 30% reduction in greenhouse gases by 2030? Did she consult the oil and gas sectors? Why are the minister and this government taking such a patently ad hoc and embarrassing approach?

[English]

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we will continue to work co-operatively with the provinces and the territories. I have met on numerous occasions with the provincial and territorial ministers. As well, I had a meeting in Ottawa with all provincial and territorial ministers in December. The provinces have set their own emission targets and have the authority within their provincial jurisdictions to take actions within their own respective jurisdictions.

We respect the provincial jurisdictions, unlike Justin Trudeau, who has promised to—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I think the minister meant to say the member for Papineau. She will want to remember to use ridings and titles, not proper names.

The hon. member for Brossard—La Prairie.

* * *

TRANSPORT

Mr. Hoang Mai (Brossard—La Prairie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Dany Dubuc-Marquis was involved in a fatal accident due to a faulty ignition switch in his car, yet for eight months the government did nothing. Only after GM had issued a recall did the problem even begin to be addressed. Now we have seen the same lack of oversight with the recent Takata airbag recall.

When will the minister finally give powers to Transport Canada to issue recalls?

Oral Questions

● (1500)

Mr. Jeff Watson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, obviously the safety and security of Canadians is our top priority. In 2014, we passed measures to strengthen our recall system, which the member opposed, and in budget 2015, our government committed to further improvements, giving us the power to order recalls and levy monetary penalties.

Transport Canada, in the situation of the airbags, has received no complaints related to this issue from Canadians and is not aware of any incidents having taken place in Canada. Obviously, Canadians can determine if their vehicles are affected by recalls by visiting Transport Canada's website or by contacting their vehicle manufacturers or dealers.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Hoang Mai (Brossard—La Prairie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, that is incredible. It sounds like they are waiting for deaths to occur before taking action.

Unfortunately, the death toll resulting from the delayed recall of GM vehicles is rising. To date, GM has acknowledged its responsibility in 107 deaths and 199 cases of injury linked to defective ignition switches. It is time for the government to step up to the plate before other tragedies occur.

I will repeat my question: when will Transport Canada finally have the authority to issue recalls?

[*English*]

Mr. Jeff Watson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I reject the absurdity of that preamble and the statement he made about the government's care and concern about people. I reject that entirely.

Of course the safety and security of Canadians is a top priority for this government. That is why we took measures in 2014 to strengthen the recall system. He opposed that, by the way. If he really cares about it, he should support what the government is doing.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Jay Aspin (Nipissing—Timiskaming, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government's universal child care benefits and family tax cut benefits 100% of Canadian families with children.

Can the Minister of Employment and Social Development please inform the House on how much money families are saving?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, they are not only saving through the family tax cut and benefits but also through the tax-free savings account. We have a low-tax plan for retirement savings.

Today the Liberal leader announced that he would bring in a high-tax plan. He would hit workers and small businesses with a massive premium hike that would force small businesses to lay off thousands of Canadians. This policy would send shockwaves through our economy. It is a major risk. It demonstrates once again that this Liberal leader is just not ready for the job.

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans knows better than anyone the struggles of the fishermen on Prince Edward Island. The lobster season in both fishing areas was delayed—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. I think the hon. member for Cardigan had more to say and I would ask members of the government to wait until he is finished before they applaud. They might find that they do not feel like applauding him when he has finished his question.

The hon. member for Cardigan.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay: Mr. Speaker, it is a pity she would not help them with their struggles.

The lobster season in both fishing areas was delayed substantially due to ice conditions, and both fishing areas have requested an extension in the season.

Will the minister listen to the fishermen who are dealing with lost wages? Will she deal with the P.E.I. Fishermen's Association and give Prince Edward Island fishermen the appropriate extension that they need?

Hon. Gail Shea (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I meet with the P.E.I. Fishermen's Association on a regular basis, and with a number of other fishermen's associations as well. For the hon. member's information, he says that we do not help the fishermen, but let me give these statistics: in 2009, the value of lobster sold was \$507 million. In 2013, that value is \$680 million.

When it comes to an extension of the season, that decision will be made based on science.

* * *

[*Translation*]**QUEBEC BRIDGE**

Mr. Denis Blanchette (Louis-Hébert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Quebec Bridge has been added to the list of the top 10 endangered places in Canada. How appalling. The Conservatives have been in power for 10 years and are leaving Quebec City with a heritage bridge that is in critical condition.

The NDP came up with a real solution to get CN moving. Will the government finally listen to reason and support my bill?

● (1505)

Mr. Jeff Watson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, only our Conservative government has taken real action on repainting the Quebec Bridge.

The NDP's proposal is a political mirage. The NDP knows very well that it is too late to pass the bill. CN must immediately make good on its commitment to the people of Quebec City and restore the Quebec Bridge to its former glory.

Oral Questions

[English]

JUSTICE

Mrs. Stella Ambler (Mississauga South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Toronto police have laid the first charge under the government's cyberbullying legislation. Could the Minister of Justice update the House on the action our government is taking in this area?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Mississauga South for her interest and her hard work on behalf of her constituents and also commend the Toronto police for their outstanding efforts. We know that bullying and cyberbullying have a very far-reaching and corrosive impact on Canadians, particularly our youth.

Our government took concrete action by passing the Protecting Canadians from Online Crime Act to further protect our most vulnerable. It prohibits the non-consensual distribution of intimate images in Canada in our Criminal Code. Our government will continue to protect law-abiding Canadians and ensure that those who commit these horrendous crimes will be held accountable.

* * *

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, if the government did not get the hint already, today Ottawa city council formally voted to ask the Conservatives to move the memorial for victims of Communism back to its original site.

A fundamental cornerstone of our democracy is consultation, and consultation requires listening. Will the minister do our democracy the honour of actually listening and respecting elected representatives? In other words, will Conservatives change the location of the memorial back to its original site?

Hon. Shelly Glover (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our federal government provided federal land for a national monument that will in fact commemorate over 100 million innocent lives lost under Communist regimes. We will be very proud to put that monument in a prominent location to do just what we promised to do.

Allow me to correct some of the misinformation spread by some of the members of the opposition. It will not be built in front of the Supreme Court. It will be down the street on a completely separate plot of land.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Scott Andrews (Avalon, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, the fate of the CETA agreement hangs in the balance of the government's callous short-shifting of the Newfoundland and Labrador fisheries investment fund. It is to everyone's advantage to move forward.

My question is for the Minister of International Trade. Have his officials estimated what a challenge to this trade agreement would cost taxpayers if the province does not remove minimum processing requirements? If so, what is that estimated cost, and what would be the other trade ramifications on an MPR challenge under a future CETA agreement?

Hon. Rob Moore (Minister of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency), CPC): Mr. Speaker, this agreement represents an unprecedented opportunity for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I want to quote from Derek Butler, executive director of the Association of Seafood Producers. He said, "As we said in December, we've been fighting EU tariffs for years now, and we should not put their removal in peril. Jeopardizing CETA—or freer trade generally—is not a solution."

We remain open to working with the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador to come to an agreement on this one.

* * *

[English]

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTIONS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am sure you are aware, as all members should be, of the proper procedures for taking pictures inside the chamber. Through your office, you have provided the opportunity for members of Parliament to acquire a picture through designated individuals.

Today, during question period, while the member for St. Paul's was putting forward her question, the member for York Centre appeared to take a picture using a telephone. I do not know how many pictures were taken.

We ask that you look into the matter. However, given that the member is sitting in his place, he might want to provide some comment as to why he was taking pictures and how many pictures he took.

● (1510)

Mr. Mark Adler (York Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have no idea what the member is talking about. I did not take any photos during question period or at any other time when I was sitting in my place here in the House.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I am not the only member of the Liberal caucus who saw the member with a camera in hand, and the flash went off. When the flash goes off, it usually indicates a picture has been taken.

I ask that your office look into the matter. I would also ask the member to perhaps reflect on his comments and whether or not he possibly has a faulty flash in his telephone.

The Speaker: The point raised by the hon. member for Winnipeg North can serve as a reminder for colleagues to be very careful with the equipment they bring into the chamber, especially during debates.

Of course, we should all be listening attentively to the questions and the answers and not be distracted by gadgets. In today's modern technology, cameras are a part of many different devices, and I hope members are very sensitive to that when they have them out. We would not want to upset our colleagues

Routine Proceedings

I will take the hon. member for York Centre at his word. He indicates he has not taken a photograph. I will consider the matter closed. Perhaps he could assuage the fears of the hon. member for Winnipeg North and have a brief conversation with him to help him understand the situation. However, at this point we will move on, given the facts that have been presented to me.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mr. Mike Wallace (Burlington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report on the Canadian delegation of the Canada-Japan Inter-Parliamentary Group respecting its participation in the co-chairs' annual visit to Japan, in Tokyo, Japan, on April 23 to April 26 of 2014.

Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the pleasure to rise and present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian delegation of the Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union respecting its participation at the 132nd Inter-Parliamentary Union assembly and related meetings, held in Hanoi, Vietnam, on March 28 to April 1, 2015.

Mr. Gordon Brown (Leeds—Grenville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, two reports of the Canadian delegation of the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group.

The first concerns the 54th annual meeting, held here in Ottawa from June 6 to June 9, 2014.

The second concerns the annual meeting of the Southern Governors' Association, which was held in Little Rock, Arkansas, United States of America, August 14 to August 17, 2014.

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COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

HEALTH

Mr. Ben Lobb (Huron—Bruce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, from the Standing Committee on Health, a study on the federal role in the scope of practice of Canadian health care professionals.

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Orders 104 and 114, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 37th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding membership of the committees of this House, and if the House gives its consent, I intend to move concurrence in the 37th report later today.

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. David Tilson (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the sixth

report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration in relation to its study of the main estimates 2015-16.

• (1515)

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the ninth report of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development in relation to the main estimates 2015-16.

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND ESTIMATES

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 10th report of the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates in relation to its study of the main estimates 2015-16.

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MEMBERS NOT SEEKING RE-ELECTION

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as we approach the end of this Parliament, we are aware that there are a number of our colleagues who have already indicated their intention not to seek re-election. As such, there have been discussions among the parties about how we can appropriately accommodate an opportunity for these members to provide a valedictory or departure speech summarizing their significant contributions to our country. As a result, I expect you will find unanimous consent for the following motion.

I move:

That a take note debate on the subject of Members not seeking re-election to the 42nd Parliament take place, pursuant to Standing Order 53.1, on Tuesday, June 9, 2015; and

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, when the House begins the said proceedings, and for the duration of the debate,

(a) no Member may speak for longer than ten minutes and the speeches not be subject to a question and comment period, provided that any Member rising to speak may indicate to the Chair that he or she will be dividing his or her time with another Member;

(b) no quorum calls, dilatory motions or requests for unanimous consent shall be received by the Chair;

(c) after four hours, or when no Member rises to speak, whichever comes first, the debate shall be interrupted, rather than terminated; and

(d) the debate shall be resumed at the ordinary hour of daily adjournment on Wednesday, June 10, 2015, and concluded at 12 midnight or when no Member rises to speak.

The Speaker: Does the hon. government House leader have the unanimous consent of the House to propose this motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

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COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if the House gives its consent, I move:

Routine Proceedings

That the 37th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, presented to the House earlier today this day, be concurred in.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

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PETITIONS

IMPAIRED DRIVING

Hon. Ron Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I stand to present a petition and sadly inform this House that 19-year-old Kendra Cole was tragically killed by a drunk driver who chose to drive while impaired. Obviously, it is devastating for Kendra's family, and our thoughts and prayers are with them.

This petition is tabled through an organization called Families for Justice. It is a group of Canadians who have had loved ones killed by impaired drivers. The petitioners believe that Canada's impaired driving laws are much too lenient, and they would like the crime to be called what it is: vehicular homicide. It is the number one cause of criminal death in Canada.

Over 1,200 Canadians are killed every year by drunk drivers. Families for Justice is calling for mandatory sentencing for vehicular homicide and for Parliament to support Bill C-652, Cassandra's law.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it certainly is an honour for me to rise in the House to present this petition from northerners who support our universal health care system. They want to ensure that every citizen of northern Ontario has access to the same high-quality service, wherever they live and regardless of their financial circumstances.

CANADA POST

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table a few petitions.

The first petition is with respect to the cuts to Canada Post, and it is signed by constituents from Elliot Lake.

The petitioners are asking the Government of Canada to stop these devastating cuts to our postal services. As members know, we have just heard that it made \$200 million last year.

• (1520)

[*Translation*]

AGRICULTURE

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing, NDP): The second petition I want to present is signed by my constituents in Hearst. The petition calls on the government to respect the rights of small family farms to store, trade and use seed. It also asks that small family farms be consulted and that policies and programs benefit women as well.

[*English*]

TAXATION

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the last petition is asking the Government of Canada to cease taxation on menstrual hygiene products and to extend the 0% GST rate to menstrual hygiene products.

CANADA POST

Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions. The first is from thousands of Canadians who are concerned about cuts to Canada Post. They call on the Government of Canada to reverse these cuts to services announced by Canada Post and instead look to innovate in such areas as postal banking.

NATIONAL SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD DAY

Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is from thousands of Canadians who are concerned about overfishing and destructive fishing practices that are threatening marine life and the health of our oceans. They say that over 120 million people around the world have fish as part of their income, and they want to see sustainable seafood choices.

The petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to designate March 18 national sustainable seafood day.

[*Translation*]

CANADA POST

Ms. Mylène Freeman (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition calling on the government to reject Canada Post's plan to cut services. Between 6,000 and 8,000 Canada Post workers will lose their jobs, and seniors, people with reduced mobility, self-employed workers and small businesses will suffer the most as a result of these cuts.

TAXATION

Ms. Éline Michaud (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am presenting a petition signed by hundreds of Canadians across the country who are calling for the elimination of the federal tax on feminine hygiene products.

[*English*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present two petitions today.

The first petition is from residents from throughout the Victoria region, including, within my riding, Salt Spring Island and other areas of Saanich—Gulf Islands, calling on Parliament and this House to put forward a real plan for reducing greenhouse gases along the lines of the bill that was passed in the previous session and killed by the Senate.

Government Orders

PESTICIDES

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is from residents of Calgary. Over 225 petitioners call on the government to take action, following Europe's lead, to protect pollinators in Canada by acting against neonicotinoid pesticides.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition today to end violence against women. The signatories to the petition wish to draw the government's attention to the following facts: that women are 11 times more likely than men to be victims of sexual violence and three times more likely to be victims of criminal harassment; that indigenous women in Canada are seven times more likely to be murdered than non-indigenous women; that nearly 1,200 indigenous women have gone missing or been murdered in Canada; and that Canada has clear domestic and international obligations to address violence against women, including the United Nations' call for all countries to have a national action plan to end violence against women.

Therefore, the signatories call upon the Government of Canada to create a coordinated, comprehensive national action plan to address violence against women and to launch an independent national inquiry into the deaths and disappearances of first nations, Métis, and Inuit women.

ASBESTOS

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have two sets of petitions I would like to present.

The first set of petitions calls upon the House of Commons and Parliament here assembled to take note that asbestos is the greatest industrial killer the world has ever known and that more Canadians now die from asbestos than all other industrial and occupational causes combined.

Therefore, the petitioners call upon Parliament to ban asbestos in all of its forms, end all government subsidies of asbestos, both in Canada and abroad, and stop blocking international health and safety conventions designed to protect workers from asbestos, such as the Rotterdam Convention.

SYRIA

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second series of petitions I would like to table is calling upon the House of Commons to take note that the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has asked for further help to settle 100,000 Syrian refugees.

The petitioners ask the Canadian government to open more spaces in Canada to Syrian refugees of any religion and to quicken the processing time for more Syrian refugees to take sanctuary in Canada.

[*Translation*]

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Marc-André Morin (Laurentides—Labelle, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition signed by several hundred people in Laurentides—Labelle. The petitioners are calling

on the House to ensure that Canada's policies and programs protect the right of small family farms in the south to use and trade their seed.

* * *

● (1525)

[*English*]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all notices of motions for the production of papers be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

DIGITAL PRIVACY ACT

BILL S-4—NOTICE OF TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I must advise that an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Orders 78(1) or 78(2) concerning the proceedings at the report stage and second reading stages and the third reading stage of Bill S-4, an act to amend the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act and to make a consequential amendment to another Act.

Pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 78(3), I give notice that a minister of the Crown will propose, at a future sitting, motions to allot a specific number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of the proceedings at the said stages of the said bill.

* * *

YUKON AND NUNAVUT REGULATORY IMPROVEMENT ACT

BILL S-6—NOTICE OF TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I must advise that an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Orders 78(1) or 78(2) concerning the proceedings at the report and third reading stages of Bill S-6, an act to amend the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act and the Nunavut Waters and Nunavut Surface Rights Tribunal Act.

Government Orders

Pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 78(3), I give notice that a minister of the Crown will propose, at a future sitting, motions to allot a specific number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of the proceedings at the said stages of the said bill.

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SAFE AND ACCOUNTABLE RAIL ACT

The House resumed from May 12 consideration of the motion that Bill C-52, An Act to amend the Canada Transportation Act and the Railway Safety Act, be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Robert Goguen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to the bill before us, the safe and accountable rail act. The bill would fulfill this title by strengthening safety in our efforts to further improve safety management systems in the rail transportation industry. This is especially vital for addressing safety risks before they become bigger problems and before accidents occur.

Railways are a vital part of Canada's transportation system and keeping them safe is everyone's concern. The railway industry and the government need to work together to protect the health and safety of Canadians and to secure the conditions for a prosperous economy.

In the past, railways and many other safety-critical industries pursued safety through compliance with prescriptive rules and regulations. As safety research progressed during the 1990s, however, it became clear that compliance with rules and regulations alone was insufficient to ensure the highest possible levels of safety. What companies needed for a truly effective safety regime was a proactive system approach to safety that allowed them to identify hazards and to mitigate risks in order to prevent accidents. This approach also allowed lessons learned from minor incidents and day-to-day operations to be included in the system, thereby creating a sea of continuous safety improvement with more likelihood of avoiding accidents.

When the railway safety management system regulations first came into force in March 2001, they were the first of their kind in the federal transportation sector. They were created with significant industry input and emphasized the railways' responsibilities for safe operations. The regulations were established to encourage the development of a safety culture throughout all levels of an organization and to ensure that safety is considered as a factor in all decisions.

The safety management system helps organizations better comply with regulatory requirements and demonstrate their commitment to the safety of their employees. Key elements of safety management systems include, for instance, the development of safety goals and performance targets, risk assessments, responsibilities and authorities, processes and procedures, and monitoring and evaluating. Achieving an effective safety culture is the ultimate goal of safety management systems. An effective safety culture in a company can contribute to reducing public and employee fatalities and injuries, property damage resulting from railway accidents, and the impact of accidents on the environment.

Since the introduction of the railway safety management system regulations in 2001, a lot has been done and much has changed. Our

railway network is characterized and challenged by a growing user base, vast distances, new and aging infrastructure, and a significant rise in oil on rail. Regulated safety management systems have come a long way since their beginnings. They have now been implemented in rail, marine and aviation transportation modes in Canada, and have become an international standard for managing safety.

The importance of safety management systems and their implementation in Canadian railway systems was one of the most significant issues researched during the last Railway Safety Act review and a simultaneous study of rail safety in Canada undertaken by the Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities. While safety management systems were generally supported, both reviews concluded that implementation among the companies was uneven and that more needed to be done by the companies and the regulator to ensure full implementation throughout the industry. As a result, Transport Canada made several amendments to the Railway Safety Act in May 2013, to increase rail safety by strengthening its oversight and enforcement capacity, and expanding safety management systems for railways. Following these amendments, Transport Canada accelerated the development of the new railway safety management system regulations, 2015, which came into force on April 1.

The new regulations improve the implementation of safety management systems by incorporating more detailed requirements to clarify expectations from both industry and the department. The new regulations also improve the overall consistency and quality of railway safety management systems by adding consistent terminology, provisions requiring evidence of implementation, requirements for the identification of an accountable executive and the creation of a policy protecting employees from reprisal for reporting contraventions, and by expanding application to local railway companies.

However, our government is not stopping there. This bill introduces an amendment that would not only make sure that railway safety measurement systems exist, but that they are also working and are effective. Under the current Railway Safety Act, the Minister of Transport can take enforcement actions, including prosecution, for any non-compliance with the railway safety management system regulations.

● (1530)

The minister can even order a railway company to take corrective measures, should the minister be of the opinion that the company's safety management system presents deficiencies that risk compromising safe railway operations. However, the current Railway Safety Act lacks the authority to address issues with the way the rail companies implement their safety management systems. This bill would fill that gap by introducing a new power for the minister to order a company to take corrective measures should a company's implementation of its safety management system risk compromising safety.

Government Orders

This new power would also allow the minister to order corrective action if a company is not following its safety management system procedures and policies to the extent of risking safe railway operations.

Fairness is also paramount to this proposed amendment, to further strengthen railway safety management systems. Similar to the current safety management systems power related to deficiencies in a company's system, an order made under this new power would be subject to review by the Transportation Appeal Tribunal of Canada; this at the request of the company.

Together, the rail industry and government have accomplished tremendous work toward enhancing the safety of our railway network in the last decade and continuously improving company safety culture, but we still have more to do to make our railway system safer. Transportation safety is crucial, not only for the welfare of families and communities in Canada but to support Canada's long-term economic growth. We need to continue to work together to achieve our goal of giving all Canadians a safer and more responsible railway system and to assure global markets that our transportation systems are not only efficient but also safe and secure.

Mr. Mike Sullivan (York South—Weston, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments from my colleague opposite. One of the things he suggests is that the system would become safer because the minister would have the power to order a railway company to comply if she or he finds that the safety management system is not being properly implemented. However, as we have discovered from the Auditor General's report, Transport Canada has failed miserably at examining the safety management systems of the rail companies, and as a result was given a failing grade by the Auditor General in terms of the audits of those safety management systems.

How can the minister actually make an order if the Transport Canada folks are not even able to look at safety management systems to see if they are actually compliant?

Mr. Robert Goguen: Mr. Speaker, obviously any direction or order taken by the minister would be contingent upon the minister's departmental staff doing the proper inspections. We all know that we have increased our capacity to make such inspections. We have doubled down on the safety as a result of tragedies that have occurred. Obviously, we are going to put our utmost attention to ensuring that tragedies and accidents in the future are minimized through careful scrutiny of all safety regulations.

The minister would be able to make directions when shortcomings are noticed. Certainly, that is the full intent of this act: to make the railway safer for all Canadians while enhancing Canada's economy.

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I enjoyed my hon. colleague's comments. I would like to hear what the position of the government is in terms of its reasoning for deciding to impose the responsibility on the railways only, in terms of liability insurance, and not on shippers as well or some mixture of the two. I am interested in the member's response to this. The railway companies argue that they do not always have control over what is in the cars that they move.

• (1535)

Mr. Robert Goguen: Mr. Speaker, obviously no system is perfect, but certainly the user-pay principle is one that is tried and

true. There have been increased issues with regard to compensation and liability, which this government has put in place to protect the public. We will continue to go in that direction. Obviously, we will continue to strengthen the system as we see fit.

Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I note that the title of the bill is “an act to amend the Canada Transportation Act and the Railway Safety Act”. I heard the member say in his speech that there is much more to do on the issue of rail safety in Canada. This is a bill, even though we will be supporting it on this side, that is very light in the way of changes to increase rail safety in Canada. The member has acknowledged that there is much more to do. On this pressing issue of public safety for Canadians, why did the Conservatives not take advantage of this opportunity to do more now?

Mr. Robert Goguen: Mr. Speaker, perfection should never be the enemy of the good, and yes, there is more to do, but these are complex issues.

We know that Canada has a vast railway system, and we know the issues will vary from region to region. Obviously, more study and attention to detail and getting it right the first time is what would be paramount in the mind of this government, of course, while ensuring safety of the public in Canada.

Mr. Mike Sullivan (York South—Weston, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Beaches—East York.

I note that the bill would adopt one of the things that the NDP has been calling for, which is the polluter pay principle, so that at any time there is damage to our environment caused by industry, or in this case by railroads and industry, there would be recognition on the part of governments everywhere that the polluter should be responsible for the cleanup and pay for the cost of the cleanup. The bill before us goes a small way toward ensuring that would take place.

Of course, we know the history of where the bill originated, and we have been talking about rail safety since the disaster at Lac-Mégantic. This was a tragedy that killed 47 people, wrecked the town and cost half a billion in cleanup. However, the rail system, as we have it now in Canada, has not been sufficient to protect towns, villages and cities along the way, and the people who reside in them, from the consequences of the enormous increase in the transportation of dangerous goods by rail.

Up until 2009, there were maybe 500 railcars transporting dangerous oil by rail. Since that time, the level of this material has gone up by something like 400-fold, so that we are now seeing 200,000 barrels a day travelling through our communities.

Originally, people thought those barrels of oil were fairly benign. Crude oil is a heavy, massive weight substance that does not catch fire very easily. However, little did we know, with the advent of fracking and diluted bitumen, we now have transportation of goods that are explosive, not just flammable. As a result, we are now transporting what people have referred to as “bomb trains” through our cities and countryside, and throughout the entire country.

Government Orders

The notion of bomb trains is not lost on the people of Canada, and when it happens, we need to have a regimen that actually keeps them safe. It is one thing to suggest, as some on the opposite side have suggested, that if we do not put it in trains, we could put it in pipelines and that we cannot have it both ways: we cannot be opposed to transporting it via pipelines and trains. However, in fact, this material is so dangerous, it is not allowed to be in pipelines. It has too much gas in it, which provides too much pressure. Therefore, the only way it can be transported is by truck and by train.

It is up to the Government of Canada to ensure that, if this is how we are going to transport our natural resources, the transportation is done in a way that is safe and in a way that protects the citizens of the country.

In my riding of York South—Weston, there are three separate rail corridors. Two are on the edges of the riding and one goes right through the centre of the riding. The one that goes through the centre and the one at the bottom edge are both CP main lines. Those corridors carry tremendous quantities of this crude oil in these big black tanker cars, which everybody learned the name of after Lac-Mégantic: DOT-111s.

The minister, shortly after the Lac-Mégantic disaster, announced new emergency directives where the rail companies were not allowed to have single-person crews, have these trains unattended or transport dangerous goods without having two people on the crew. She also announced that they would be eliminating the use of the DOT-111s within three years.

In what universe does that make us safer? For three years then we have to live with the reality that these bomb trains are going past communities, including my community of York South—Weston. Therefore, these bomb trains are still a feature of the urban landscape and something we have to be extremely vigilant about, and I do not believe that the current Conservative government has been vigilant enough.

The bill would do two things.

It would create a regimen whereby the rail company shares the liability with the shippers in terms of dangerous goods. Ultimately, the rail companies would theoretically be responsible for the entire cost in conjunction with the shippers. However, in regards to the cost at Lac-Mégantic, the government has made it very clear that the Province of Quebec will continue to be on the hook for that cleanup, because there was not enough insurance in the system before Lac-Mégantic took place. MMA, the railroad that was involved in the Lac-Mégantic disaster, had \$25 million of insurance which was quickly exhausted, and the governments then took up the rest of it, not shippers and not the rest of the railroads.

• (1540)

In terms of the dangers of these rail cars going past our communities, there have been some good moves by the government, but there clearly is not enough. Since Lac-Mégantic, there have been at least seven other massive explosions and collisions of these bomb trains in Canada and the United States. There has been Aliceville, Alabama; Casselton, North Dakota; New Brunswick; West Virginia; Saskatchewan; Gogama; and, more recently, Heimdal, North Dakota.

In some of those occurrences, the cars were not DOT-111s. They were the newer cars, the CPC-1232s. Apparently those newer cars, when they break in a collision, blow up just like the DOT-111s. That is what has been happening all across North America.

What is the solution? The minister has said we are going to replace these with the DOT-117 cars, in 10 years. We have now gone from a 3-year window, which is quickly running down, to a 10-year window before our communities will start to feel safe. We do not even know what is safe about these new DOT-117 cars.

The minister has also lowered the speeds through urban centres to 40 miles an hour, or about 62 kilometres an hour. All of the collisions in recent memory, including one of the two at Gogama, have been at speeds that were less than the speed the minister says is safe in urban areas. How is that to make us feel safe? It does not. The residents of York South—Weston do not feel safe and are demanding that the government do something more.

The government did ask the railroads last year to provide them with route analyses and risk assessments. The route analyses are because we are aware that in the United States, governments there have directed railroads to steer clear of major urban centres like Washington, D.C. They are not allowed to travel through that community.

However, here in Canada, the railroads were given the option to come up with a route analysis and decide for themselves whether it is too risky to go through towns. We asked to see those risk assessments that were done by the railroads for the ministry. Transport Canada said that they were the private property of the railroads. We asked the railroads to give us a copy of the risk assessment, and the railroad said that Transport Canada was free to give us a copy. Then the minister came to the committee and said that they are not. We are still no clearer.

I was at a meeting last week of emergency services on rail safety in the city of Toronto, called because the city has determined it would like to know what Toronto emergency services need. Toronto emergency services confirmed that they do not know what the railroads' risk assessments are. They do not know how risky it is, and where the hot spots are likely to be if there is a problem in a rail corridor running through the city of Toronto. They still do not know, except on an annual basis, at the end of a year, what dangerous goods are going through the city.

It seems ludicrous to consider that information to be private and confidential to the railroads when it is the life and limb of the residents of the city of Toronto, and other cities across this fair land of ours, that is at risk should something happen.

If the railroads have produced a risk assessment that says they should be going slower, then let us make them go slower. If the risk assessment says there are particular spots where they should not travel at all, that they should go around, then let us make them do that.

Government Orders

As far as we know, there has been zero action by the minister, by Transport Canada, by the Transportation Safety Board, or any of the agencies dealing with transportation in this country, to deal with the fact that when one of these tank cars breaks in a collision, and they break at speeds as low as 30 miles an hour, maybe even 25 miles an hour, they explode.

We have yet to hear the minister say that she will find a speed that they are safe to travel at. Until she does, the speed that these trains are travelling at through my community, through the rest of the city of Toronto, is too fast.

● (1545)

We are not going to create a system that is 100% safe. CN admitted that at the transport committee, after Gogama, when it said it could not make it 100% safe and can only do the best it can. We need it to be certain that these things are not going to explode in my community.

Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as I noted in my previous question for the member across the aisle, this is an act that is intended to amend the Railway Safety Act. However, it focuses almost entirely on the issue of compensation, liability, and insurance, which is a very retrospective view on accidents. Part of the issue is that not only is rail safety in Canada a very pressing issue, one of great concern for the public about safety, but it is so in the context of rapidly increasing risk.

In fact, when the minister appeared in committee, she provided information about the transportation of oil by rail. The numbers are increasing at a phenomenal rate as we go through the years. The numbers she provided start at 78 million barrels of crude oil in 2013, and there is projected to be a quarter of a billion barrels of crude oil transported by rail by 2017 and going forward.

I am wondering if my colleague can tell us why he thinks the government has been so light on dealing with rail safety issues as part of this bill.

Mr. Mike Sullivan: Mr. Speaker, he is completely right. The bill is quite light on the whole issue of safety. It gives the minister a few more powers, but those powers require knowledge in the minister's hands. Clearly, Transport Canada is not doing the inspections necessary to determine whether the railroads are keeping the lines safe.

This bill is in fact a gift to the major railroads, CN and CP, which were carrying over \$1 billion worth of insurance. They now only have to carry \$1 billion, so they have had their insurance costs reduced, and above \$1 billion they are not liable. They cannot be liable unless they acted in a way that was deliberately in contravention of safety regulations. It is only if they were deliberate about it.

Therefore, it is essentially a gift to the big railroads. It would fill in a gap for the smaller railroads that now have to carry more than \$25 million of insurance, and it would provide for a fund. However, the fund will take 15 years to fill up, and even then we do not know if it will be enough.

The bill does not contain a whole lot to make us feel safer in this town of ours.

● (1550)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, where I agree with the member is on the ever-growing demand and expansion of the transportation of crude oil. His colleague made reference to how profound it is going to be on our rail lines in terms of more than doubling over the next number of years. We in the Liberal Party feel it is absolutely critical that we have a safe rail line system to protect the interests of all Canadians, no matter what region they live in and wherever the line goes through with the crude.

However, there is another side to this, which the member made reference to, and that is the issue of pipelines. In listening to what they were saying, it seems that New Democrats have excluded the potential benefits of expanding pipelines in order to alleviate some of the pressure of transporting crude oil on the rail lines.

I am wondering if he could comment on whether he believes there should be more pipelines in order to alleviate some of the pressures of transporting oil in communities in Canada.

Mr. Mike Sullivan: Of course, Mr. Speaker, it was the Liberal government that brought in the Railway Safety Act, which in fact took away the responsibility of direct oversight from the federal government and turned it over to the railroads themselves.

However, in terms of pipelines, it is my clear understanding that crude oil has too much gas in it to be transported in any pipeline. It cannot be transported in a pipeline and has to be transported by rail. The maximum pressure that is allowed inside a pipeline to prevent a pipeline from bursting is 19.7 kilopascals, and this stuff generates greater pressure than that. As a result, the only option, without pre-treating all of the oil at great expense to the oil companies, is to transport it by rail.

Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of Bill C-52, an act to amend the Canada Transportation Act and the Railway Safety Act. The bill is returning to us from committee where we heard testimony from witnesses, representatives like Safe Rail Communities in the Toronto area, who share the NDP's view that "Although it has some promising elements...Bill C-52 could go further to ensure safety and accountability".

Opportunities were missed here, but nevertheless I stand in support of the bill in light of the need for an immediate response to rail safety issues in Canada.

As I have mentioned in the House before, the growing frequency of train derailments since the disaster in Lac-Mégantic has led to many Conservative promises to rectify shortcomings with safety inspections and rail safety compliance measures. The Conservatives have yet to honour that commitment, and the bill goes nowhere near what they need to do to honour those commitments.

With three train derailments occurring in the span of a month last year, this is a pressing issue. It is one that the government has been scrambling to catch up with and has still not caught up.

Government Orders

So far, these accidents have occurred in rural areas. As the critic for urban affairs, I would note that the bill would do little to alleviate the costs and the human tragedy inevitably associated with a derailment in one of our big cities, one of our dense urban communities in this country.

Starting with the Liberal government, in 1999, successive Liberal and Conservative governments have let companies self-regulate and self-inspect their equipment and railway lines. This approach is clearly not working.

The bill put forward by the minister is an effort to address some of the liability and accountability issues associated with rail safety. It proposes several necessary fixes, but it is just a start.

It appears to me that the government is in no hurry to catch up on rail safety issues. We heard the member across the aisle today talking about the need for more study, while communities across this country are anxious about dangerous goods being transported by rail quite literally through their backyards.

The bill sets out to provide some compensation for victims of derailments after the fact. It is as if the government has accepted the inevitability of train derailments in this country. We not only need stronger laws, but we need stronger enforcement of laws and regulations, and we need penalties on those who break them.

It is clear to us and to experts such as the Transportation Safety Board that the government has very serious problems in terms of oversight inspections and audits. Nevertheless, the proposed changes in the bill remain necessary, and while not fully or nearly adequate, they have the support of this side of the House.

Bill C-52 sets out to do three main things. It requires minimum insurance levels for railways transporting dangerous goods. It establishes a disaster relief fund paid for by crude oil shippers to compensate victims of derailments, provinces, and municipalities, and it gives more authority to the minister, cabinet, and railway safety inspectors.

With respect to minimum insurance levels, the bill provides for a legislated minimum insurance coverage of \$25 million for railway companies transporting minimal quantities of dangerous goods, and up to a maximum of \$1 billion for railways that are transporting substantial quantities of dangerous goods. Railway companies will be liable for losses, damages, costs, and expenses resulting from a railway accident involving crude oil or other designated goods, up to the level of the company's minimum liability insurance coverage.

Based on the costs of train derailments like that in Lac-Mégantic, these measures appear to be justified.

After that disaster, the Montreal, Maine and Atlantic Railway exhausted its insurance coverage of only \$25 million and went bankrupt. Yet damages paid by taxpayers with respect to that derailment have been to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars. The Quebec government has estimated that the total cost will be well over \$400 million.

• (1555)

The second thing the bill sets out to do is establish a pooled disaster relief fund to be made available if the minimum insurance

levels are insufficient or exceeded. While this is a step forward, there are outstanding concerns that this also may not be sufficient in the event that another major disaster, particularly in an urban area.

When it comes to disaster relief, the first responders on the scene will inevitably be firefighters and sometimes the police. For that reason, the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs asked that the committee consider a mechanism to fund training, such as through a small allocation of the disaster relief fund, since the bill did not address the serious firefighter training gap that currently existed in Canada. Indeed, equipping and supporting municipal first responders to rail emergencies is of the utmost importance, yet this important aspect is not addressed by the bill and there is no ability to fund training out of this pooled fund.

When my colleague from Brossard—La Prairie followed up at committee on the recommendation from the fire chiefs to use this relief fund to pay for this training, representatives from Transport Canada admitted that the resources had not been a key focus at this point of this bill, but that those questions would come up as they “work through the ways in which we can improve the system as a set of jurisdictions and responsible authorities”.

This is evidence of the government being excessively casual on this pressing issue of public safety. It reveals a lack of urgency from the government. It is a case of the Conservatives making promises but not following up with the necessary resources to back those promises up. It was the same lack of urgency exhibited by the minister in her recent announcement that Canadians would have to wait a full 10 years for the phase out of the dangerous railcars. That is far too long.

On the issue of authority to the minister, cabinet and railway safety inspectors, the bill implements a number of changes to the Railway Safety Act that would give more authority to the minister. As my colleague from York South—Weston has pointed out in practical terms, these are not real. However, railway safety inspectors would be authorized to order a person or company to take any measure they deemed necessary to mitigate a threat to the safety or security of railway operations. Therefore, providing extra authority to railway safety inspectors is a positive and gets us back to where authority ought to lie for safety, with the government and the inspectors it hires rather than safety management systems.

The amendments would also authorize the minister to order a company that was implementing its safety management system in a manner that risked compromising railway safety to take the necessary corrective measures. However, as my colleague has pointed out, it is not clear how the minister will understand or come to know what is in those safety management systems to act on those. Clearly, the missed opportunity here is that of increasing the number of inspectors. Since 2013, Transport Canada has hired just one additional rail safety inspector even though the amount of oil by rail has more than doubled in the last two years.

Government Orders

While the government has a responsibility to ensure that tragedies like Lac-Mégantic never happen again, we do want to ensure that railways have enough insurance to cover all costs in the event of a disaster, and the bill would do that.

Clearly, there is more to do. One of the things that is missing from the bill is defining “fatigue science” in the Railway Safety Act. It is our worry that its absence will not ensure that fatigue management is based on science. Fatigue has been said to be one of the contributing factors for train derailments. Therefore, the fact that the Conservatives refuse to do something about this issue is quite puzzling and disturbing.

• (1600)

On the environmental side, we want to see the polluter pays principle applied to ensure that the total environmental and cleanup costs of rail accidents are borne by the industry and not downloaded onto the taxpayers.

The most important thing, however, is that we pass this bill before the next election to ensure we take at least a small step forward, even though that step is inadequate.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member indicated that a good portion of this bill related to basic insurance requirements and a pooled fund to take care of a disaster that might happen.

First, would he agree that the pooled fund, although it is at \$250,000, can pay-out a larger claim, which is backstopped by the consolidated revenue fund, and then, if it is paid out, further and subsequent assessments can be made to ensure the polluter pays?

Second, what is his opinion with respect to having pipelines transport some of this crude oil as opposed to rail? Is he aware that there are plans to potentially take some of that oil through a pipeline to join it to the energy east pipeline as opposed to rail? Could he comment on that as well?

Mr. Matthew Kellway: Mr. Speaker, I am aware that costs in excess of the pooled disaster relief fund would be paid out of the consolidated revenue fund.

It is worth noting the costs that flowed from Lac-Mégantic. The Quebec government has put at well over \$400 million. Other estimates are much higher. I guess it depends on how one accounts for these matters. It should also be noted that those costs were mitigated by the particular geology of that area, a layer of clay not allowing the oil to seep down causing greater environmental damage than it did.

It is in light of those costs that one can anticipate a train derailment in the context of a dense urban area. It is not to be missed that hundreds of thousands of barrels of oil are being transported by rail through dense urban areas. A derailment there would have costs well in excess of those in Lac-Mégantic, and those costs would be environmental and, most tragically, human costs. There are communities of thousands of people in my city of Toronto within a stone's throw of railway tracks that are transporting thousands of barrels of oil a day in very dangerous railcars.

• (1605)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, rail line safety is important to Canadians and it is important to the Liberal Party. There is absolutely no doubt about that.

My question is related to the member's colleague who attempted to answer a question of mine. I would like to get clarification because I believe his colleague was wrong in his assessment.

The member made reference to the fact that we doubled transportation of crude oil via rail in the last couple of years. Given the future demand, we will see it more than double in the few short years ahead of us. One of the viable options is to look at pipelines, yet the NDP seems to take the position that we should transport oil via rail. If we listened to the previous NDP speaker, he implied we could not transport it through pipelines because of its explosive nature.

Does the member believe his colleague is right, that crude oil cannot be transported through pipelines for that increased production? Is that why the NDP has taken the position of transporting it along our rail lines?

Mr. Matthew Kellway: Mr. Speaker, I do not know what my colleague's background is or what his credentials are to pass judgment on the chemical make-up of some of the oil being transported either by rail or through pipelines, but I do know that 72 million of the barrels of oil being transported this year by rail come from Canadian sources. That is 72 million out of 162 million barrels of oil, so 90 million barrels of oil that are not of Canadian origin are being transported by rail in our country. Some of that oil comes from the Bakken oil fields, which is a highly volatile form of oil. However, I am not in a position to pass judgment on the actual chemical make-up or the challenges of transporting Bakken crude by way of our pipelines.

However, I do know that one viable alternative for dealing with this issue is dealing with our dependence on fossil fuels and limiting the amount of fossil fuels on which Canadians depend and rely. Our party has an answer to the global warming and climate change issue of which I am very proud. It comes in the form of my Bill C-619, the climate change accountability act. It would reduce the demand of Canadians for fossil fuels and reduce the need to be shipping fuel by either rail or pipeline in any direction across the country.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Mississauga East—Cooksville.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak in support of Bill C-52, an act to amend the Canada Transportation Act and the Railway Safety Act. Many members of the House have already expressed their sound support for the safe and accountable railway act. Members opposite who have just spoken have said they are in support of the bill, so I will not repeat many of the areas that they have addressed.

Government Orders

Principally, the bill deals with base insurance amounts and a pooled fund to deal with disasters and ensures a structure to deal with that.

I will turn my attention today to another point of significant importance to all Canadians. That is safe grade crossings.

The safety of grade crossings is a cause championed by the member for Winnipeg South Centre, who herself proposed amendments to the Railway Safety Act through her bill, Bill C-627. She appeared before the committee to emphasize the importance of protecting people and property from unsafe railway operations. Bill C-627 and Bill C-52 have become a coordinated effort to ensure that the Minister of Transport and her officials have the mandate and powers to stop the threat to the safety of persons or property from all rail operations. It is a fairly significant addition and piece of legislative work that both the member and this particular bill address. As recognized in both these pieces of legislation, the minister must have the legislative authority to develop, administer, and enforce safety regulations of federally regulated railways.

However, our government's work goes beyond just the legislation before the House. The week of April 27 was Rail Safety Week, and we saw two important announcements that bracketed the range of rail safety challenges from local to international.

At the beginning of the week, the minister announced \$9.7 million in new funding to improve safety at more than 600 grade crossings. At the end of the week, the minister and her United States counterpart announced new tank car standards in a joint United States-Canada plan to phase out rail cars that do not meet the new standards. Of course, they will be phased in, because it takes time to replace these cars. These two announcements target both local concerns—the specific places where people and trains intersect daily—and the overall safety of rail operations in Canada and the United States.

It is easy to see why Canadians are concerned about grade crossings. Canadian cities and towns grew up alongside rail lines and continued to spread around them. As subdivision plans are made and the cities continue to grow, obviously those subdivisions and those buildings will be near rail lines. As a result, we have some 37,000 public, private, and pedestrian railway crossings. Although the number of crossing accidents has fallen dramatically since 1980, the Transportation Safety Board of Canada says the risk of trains and vehicles colliding at crossings is still too high. Crossing accidents account for nearly 20% of all rail accidents in Canada, with 30% of these accidents resulting in death or serious injury.

In response to the Transportation Safety Board's call for government action on grade crossings, new grade crossing regulations came into force on November 27, 2014. These regulations and the accompanying standards are intended to help prevent accidents and improve the safety of federally regulated grade crossings.

Sometimes some small things can be done to ensure that safety is first and foremost. These include approximately 14,000 public and 9,000 private grade crossings along with more than 42,000 kilometres of federally regulated railway tracks in Canada.

The regulations that came into force on November 27, 2014, will improve safety by establishing comprehensive and enforceable safety standards for grade crossings. They clarify the roles and responsibilities of railway companies and road authorities and ensure the sharing of key safety information between rail companies and road authorities.

• (1610)

This last element is important. Railway companies share responsibility for grade crossing safety with road authorities, which include provinces, municipalities, band councils, and private crossing owners. All of these parties are responsible for managing railway crossing safety in Canada, so effective collaboration is crucial.

The new regulations have a phased-in approach, and railway companies and road authorities must meet all requirements over the next seven years. This phased-in approach requires immediate safety improvements at grade crossings across Canada, while allowing sufficient time to comply with all the requirements and the regulations.

The new funding for grade crossings announced on April 27, 2015, will be available through Transport Canada's grade crossing improvement program. Under this program, eligible railway crossings will be upgraded based on factors such as traffic volume and accident history. The improvements may include flashing lights and bells, gate barriers, linking crossing signals to traffic signals, upgrading to brighter LED lights, or adding new circuits or timing devices.

Transport Canada also encourages the closing of certain grade crossings under federal jurisdiction. The grade crossing closure program provides grants to crossing owners in exchange for closing a crossing. In 2014-15 Transport Canada approved \$165,000 in funding to close nine crossings in the interests of public safety.

Other initiatives to improve safety at railway crossings include Operation Lifesaver. This national public education program aims to reduce loss of life, injuries, and damages caused by grade crossing collisions and pedestrian incidents. Transport Canada provides Operation Lifesaver with \$300,000 per year for its outreach and education programs.

Government Orders

Improving safety at grade crossings is an important contribution to rail safety. Another is making all rail operations safer, especially in densely populated areas, as was already mentioned. That is why the minister issued an emergency directive this spring that set the speed limit for trains in densely populated urban areas at 64 kilometres per hour. Slower train speeds were among the Transportation Safety Board of Canada's recommendations. The directive also increases inspections and risk assessments along key routes used for the transportation of dangerous goods, include crude oil and ethanol.

The joint United States-Canada announcement on tank car standards in April was the latest step in our government's coordinated effort to improve rail safety following the Lac-Mégantic disaster. These efforts began soon after the accident and the first advisories from the Transportation Safety Board of Canada.

In July 2013, Transport Canada ordered rail companies to have crews of at least two persons on trains carrying dangerous goods and imposed stricter requirements for securing unattended trains. This was followed in 2014 by a series of measures, including banning the least crash-resistant DOT-111 tank cars from carrying dangerous goods and requiring companies to phase out cars not meeting new safety standards by May 1, 2017; the coming into force of a series of new regulations, such as the Railway Safety Management System Regulations, 2015; Railway Safety Administrative Monetary Penalties Regulations, Railway Operating Certificate Regulations, and amendments to the Transportation Information Regulations to improve data collection; requiring railways to secure unattended trains with a minimum number of handbrakes and other physical defences to prevent runaways; and tightening railway labelling of hazardous materials.

With the focus on rail safety and the dangers associated with railway operations, we must not lose sight of the important role rail transportation plays and has played in Canada's economy, supporting our exports and bringing goods to Canadians. However, the shadow of Lac-Mégantic looms over anyone living near rail lines, and the daily risk of collisions at grade crossings requires that we do more to ensure rail safety.

Our government takes these potential threats very seriously and is moving to ensure that does not happen again.

I hope that all of my colleagues will join me in recognizing Bill C-52 as a key contribution to improving rail safety and will vote in favour of the bill.

•(1615)

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Blanchette (Louis-Hébert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the bill is obviously a step in the right direction. It could, however, be improved, which is what a debate is for.

In light of the new products being transported by train, for example, more volatile products that the companies themselves struggle to categorize, does my colleague opposite think that the existing minimum levels are high enough? If not, what does he suggest?

[English]

Mr. Ed Komarnicki: Mr. Speaker, the minimum level of insurance was arrived at after discussion with stakeholders after

looking at what was available in terms of insurance provisions. It also depends on the volume and amount of crude being hauled. If they were smaller companies, such as the short lines that carry it for short distances, the risk assessment was made and some minimal amounts were put in place in the first year. These amounts are doubled into the second year, bearing in mind the risk assessment for the most likely of cases in the greatest percentage of times.

Of course, on some occasions that insurance might be exceeded, but in any event there would be a pooled fund that shippers would contribute to that would allow for additional coverage. Indeed, as I mentioned before, that would be backstopped by the consolidated revenue fund so that if more is required, it is paid, and then subsequent assessments could be made to ensure that it is there.

Therefore, it is a pretty good approach. Everything considered, I think stakeholders will be agreeable to that course of action.

•(1620)

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my hon. colleague if he thinks it makes sense that the government believes we should wait 10 years before requiring new railcars of the latest standard—I think the DOT-117s—to be put into service.

Mr. Ed Komarnicki: Mr. Speaker, the DOT-111 cars needed to be replaced, and the minister indicated some pretty stringent timelines, another set of timelines, having regard to the fact that the rail system is integrated. It is a North American system, integrated with the United States, and there has to be capacity to produce these cars. Witnesses who appeared in committee indicated the length of time it takes to produce new cars to replace the others. Those factors have to be taken into consideration when deciding on the timelines for the replacement of these cars.

Everything considered, the minister made the appropriate decision. Of course, there will be other factors that will need to be taken into account with respect to safety while these cars are being replaced.

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Blanchette: Mr. Speaker, I would like to get back to what the member said earlier in response to my first question. He spoke about insurance for small companies. However, a small company was involved in the incident in Lac-Mégantic, unfortunately. It is clear that what is currently in the bill would not be enough to cover another incident of that scope, which I certainly hope never happens.

Would the member be prepared to look at increasing the minimum amount of insurance in light of what we already know?

[English]

Mr. Ed Komarnicki: Mr. Speaker, if the insurance is not adequate, the taxpayer ends up paying. The principle behind this bill is to ensure that the polluter pays.

Government Orders

There are minimum amounts of insurance that have been arrived at, taking risk into account and taking into account what is happening, but, in addition to that, there would be a pooled fund of \$250 million to take care of any issues that go beyond the insurance. That would be backstopped by the consolidated revenue fund so that if the insurance comes up short, the consolidated revenue fund would cover it and the cost would be assessed back to those who should pay, which would be the rail haulers and the shippers.

That is the direction of this bill. It is taking the direction that those who pollute should pay, not the taxpayer. The bill does a fairly admirable job, and the member and all of his party should support it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Before we resume debate, it is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasung, Aboriginal Affairs; the hon. member for Windsor West, The Environment.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Mississauga East—Cooksville.

Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon (Mississauga East—Cooksville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege for me to speak today in support of Bill C-52, the safe and accountable rail act.

This bill is an essential milestone in the government's ongoing work to strengthen railway safety. I would like to use my time to demonstrate to this House all the hard work we have collectively accomplished with regard to railway safety.

In November 2013, the public accounts committee tabled its seventh report that contained an examination of railway safety oversight related issues. The report's five recommendations followed similar railway safety oversight themes that were outlined in the 2013 fall report of the Auditor General of Canada.

Similarly, the Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities completed an in-depth review of the Canadian regime for the safe transportation of dangerous goods and the role of safety management systems across all modes of transportation.

Before proceeding, I would like to thank the members of both committees for their thorough exploration of these issues, which serve to further enhance transportation safety for all Canadians. I would also like to thank the witnesses for participating and providing their invaluable knowledge and insight. These railway safety and transportation of dangerous goods studies and recommendations are important considerations to further enhancing the national transportation system. Let me assure the House that the safety of Canadians remains this government's biggest priority.

As such, it is important to review the many activities and measures that our government has taken to strengthen railway safety, transportation and movement of dangerous goods.

Following the tragic derailment in Lac-Mégantic in July 2013, our government took decisive action to ensure the safety and integrity of our railway system. The Minister of Transport directed Transport Canada to issue an emergency directive to railway companies. This included requiring a two-person minimum for locomotive crews on

trains carrying dangerous goods. We also imposed stricter rules for securing unattended trains, and companies importing or transporting crude oil were also directed to conduct classification testing of that oil.

In January 2014, our government also launched a comprehensive review of the current liability and compensation regime for federally regulated railways. The goal was to ensure that a polluter pays and that there are resources available to compensate potential victims, pay for cleanup costs and ensure that taxpayers are protected. Input received from stakeholders during the review informed the development of the strengthened liability and compensation regime for federally regulated railways included in this bill, Bill C-52, the safe and accountable rail act. The regime includes enhanced insurance requirements for railways and a supplementary shipper-financed fund for incidents involving crude oil or other designated dangerous goods. In addition to addressing liability and compensation, we also introduced strengthened oversight and enforcement under the Railway Safety Act.

Additionally, to provide emergency planners and first responders with information to assess risks in their communities and to plan and train for emergencies, last fall we directed railway companies to share with municipalities and first responders data on dangerous goods being transported. I am happy to report that communities across Canada are now receiving this data from railway companies.

While Canada has one of the safest and most efficient railway systems in the world, we know that we can always do more and we are committed to restoring the public's confidence in our railway system. In addition to the actions I have already noted, we have taken further measures to enhance the safety of railway operations and the movement of dangerous goods, and we will continue to do so.

I can assure members that we are well advanced on implementing each recommendation the Transportation Safety Board has made. As I stated, our government is committed to restoring confidence in our railway system.

We will continue to work closely with stakeholders, including municipalities, provinces and officials in the United States to assess what more we can do to enhance safety.

Government Orders

● (1625)

In April 2014, our government announced measures to address initial recommendations from the Transportation Safety Board into the derailment in Lac-Mégantic. First, we ordered the immediate removal of the least safe tank cars from dangerous goods service. We also introduced new safety standards for DOT-111 tank cars and required those that do not meet these new standards to be phased out. I am pleased to say that the new safety standards for DOT-111 tank cars were published in the Canada *Gazette*, Part II, in July 2014. A detailed update was published on March 11, 2015, outlining the new specifications for the TC-117 tank cars that go beyond any requirements proposed for improved TC/DOT-111s. These improved tank cars would be the only option for newly built cars for the transportation of flammable liquids as soon as October 15, 2016. An aggressive phase-out program starts to remove legacy DOT-111s carrying crude oil two years from now and allows only fully retrofitted and TC-117 compliant tank cars 10 years from now.

On train speeds, we require railway companies to slow key trains transporting dangerous goods and introduce other improved operating procedures. For example, we are requiring railways that transport dangerous goods to permanently address route planning and risk analysis.

We also require emergency response assistance plans for tankers, including single tank cars carrying crude oil, gasoline, diesel, aviation fuel and ethanol. These plans have been reviewed and approved. As of September 20, 2014, there are now expert teams ready to respond to any petroleum spill, if needed. A task force has also been created to bring key groups like municipalities, first responders, railways and shippers together to strengthen the emergency response capacity across the country.

As members may recall, the Transportation Safety Board released its final report and recommendations regarding Lac-Mégantic in August 2014. The government officially responded on October 29, 2014.

First, the board recommended that Transport Canada require railway companies to put in place additional physical defences to prevent runaways. To this end, the Minister of Transport issued an additional emergency directive and ministerial order to implement significant changes to improve train securement and require railway companies to meet standardized brake requirements. The board's second recommendation emphasized the need for regular and thorough audits of railway safety management systems. In response, Transport Canada has revised its inspection and audit plans to allow for the increased frequency of safety management system audits, and allow for full audits to be completed on a three- to five-year cycle.

In addition to its two recommendations, the Transportation Safety Board also issued two safety advisories on mined gas and flammable liquid classification and on short-line railway employee training. These are being addressed as well.

Following the July 2013 Lac-Mégantic accident, we immediately required classification testing of crude oil. We also required emergency response assistance plans for specific flammable liquids and ethanol.

In July 2014, our government introduced a regulatory amendment that provides authority for our inspectors to conduct a more thorough verification of classification of dangerous goods. This amendment means that industry must now prove the results of its testing.

To wrap up, I will speak about employee training. We are requiring railways to submit training plans to the department for review. In 2015, the department will also carry out targeted audits to determine specific gaps in industry training plans. The results will help us determine what new or improved requirements are required for a strengthened training regime.

● (1630)

Our government remains committed to further strengthening railway safety for all Canadians. We will continue to take concrete action going forward.

I would like to ask all of my colleagues to support this bill and vote for it.

● (1635)

Mr. Mike Sullivan (York South—Weston, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the speech from my colleague opposite. One of the things he talked about was the lowering of speeds for key trains, or trains carrying dangerous goods.

It has come to our attention that recently a number of disasters have taken place using even the newest models of railcars, and they have taken place at speeds significantly lower than the speed limit the minister has imposed. Does the member believe that the speeds the minister set are in fact safe for people in urban areas?

Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member opposite for his question. I am not sure exactly what he is suggesting.

I guess the safest measure would be for the trains not to move and then we would not have any dangerous situations. However, in order to transport goods, the trains have to move, but lowering the speed would improve safety, which is one of the measures that has been taken. We have to look at all the factors that can cause accidents and look at all the factors to improve safety, which include speed, technical requirements and new requirements for tanker cars. All put together, this would greatly improve safety.

Even driving in a car at a very slow speed, one may get into an accident. Therefore, I think we have to be reasonable in how we look at this issue.

Government Orders

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have had the opportunity to speak on the legislation in the past, as many members have. However, I would like to give recognition to the many railway workers. In Winnipeg, for example, there is the Symington Yard, CN yards in my neck of the woods, and CP tracks. These yards provide phenomenal employment opportunities and do incredible work in ensuring good safety levels. These are the people who are actually doing the job and making sure as much as possible that our rail lines are safe.

However, there is also a responsibility and a role for government to look at ways to improve the system, through technology and promotion of research and development, and encourage rail lines to do more on that front. I wonder if the member might comment on the corporate responsibility of using technology and research to continue to improve our rail lines, and that the national government, and to a certain degree other levels of government, have a role to play.

It is not just one thing: pass legislation and then our rail lines are safe. There are many different stakeholders who need to play a role in ensuring that our rail lines and trains are safe for communities in which they travel through.

Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon: Mr. Speaker, I am very passionate about technology, improvements, and the implementation of research and technology in the railway industry. My first degree after I graduated from high school was railway technician. I was an intern on a steam locomotive, and I know how far we have come.

There are technological innovations that can be implemented and used for railway safety, whether that be electronics or other devices, and some are used. I mean, we have a very advanced railway system in this country. However, there are new things that can be used that would not only enhance the safety but also make the work of those people the member mentioned much easier and more effective. I think that the corporations, railways, will and should implement these new technologies, new innovations and new inventions to the system to make it safer and better.

• (1640)

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at the outset, I want to mention that I was interested in the comment by my hon. friend from Mississauga East—Cooksville that when he was a student, he actually worked on steam engine trains. I look forward to hearing his interesting stories about growing up in Poland, where he had that experience as a young person in university at that time. I am sure he must have some interesting stories from that experience that perhaps we will hear in the House some time or that he and I might share on another occasion.

I am happy today to have a chance to participate in the third reading debate of Bill C-52 for a number of reasons. As the critic for the Liberal Party on natural resources, I recognize that the amendments to the Canada Transportation Act and the Rail Safety Act will have a profound impact in terms of shipping critical natural resources like oil, as has been discussed here today.

Unfortunately, my view is that this inept Conservative government, this Conservative regime, has completely bungled the Keystone XL project. It has bogged down the energy east pipeline project, and it should never have ignored environmental and

aboriginal concerns and rubber-stamped, as it did, the northern gateway project.

The result of this ineptitude on behalf of the government in getting any pipeline project through has created a growing reliance on rail lines to get this valuable commodity to market, and hence, of course, related concerns about railway safety. These are concerns, I should add, that are in my view completely justified, given the government's track record on railway safety over the past decade.

I am also pleased to be able to speak today, because as a Nova Scotian, I am concerned about the future of the Cape Breton and Central Nova Scotia Railway, which has provided more than 135 years of rail service to Cape Breton Island. It has been very important for many industries in that area. In fact, in many ways, it made those businesses able to continue to succeed and employ people and provide benefits in their communities. It should be a concern to all of us when we see that rail line in deep trouble, because it is very much threatened today.

I know that the Minister of Transport, being a transplanted Cape Bretoner, is also concerned about the future of rail service to Cape Breton Island, as are my colleagues from Sydney—Victoria and Cape Breton—Canso. I know how critical CN Rail operations are for the Port of Halifax, my home city, when it comes to moving containers, and other goods as well, to destinations throughout North America.

Atlantic Canada has a long-standing and very deep appreciation for our national railways, which have connected us to the rest of Canada for over 100 years. Whether it is VIA Rail passenger service, which has unfortunately been curtailed significantly in recent years, or freight trains rumbling through Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, two beautiful provinces, of course, along with all the others, railways are a critical part of our economic infrastructure and are an economic lifeline for my region.

As an aside, I should note that I was happy recently to have the chance to take the VIA Rail train from Halifax, along with a number of MPs, to show our unwavering support for the continuation of strong passenger rail service from Atlantic Canada to Montreal. I am pleased that it appears that we succeeded and that the service will be maintained.

As the member of Parliament for Halifax West, I often get calls about CN's main line, which runs through my riding. It runs through Clayton Park, Rockingham, Birch Cove, and right through the heart of Bedford. In fact, I can hear the train whistle from my backyard and often hear the train rumbling by at different times of the day and night.

When I am canvassing in my riding, which I do regularly, I also hear concerns from constituents about issues like the fact that they do not always know what is being shipped through the community on those railway cars, and that can be of great concern. Perhaps they are worried about the state of the maintenance of the tracks and overpasses that are part of the system.

Government Orders

I had a recent example of a rail safety concern, raised by a constituent, regarding the maintenance of culverts and overpasses. When we think about rail safety, we normally think of what happened in Lac-Mégantic. We think of toxic or explosive materials being carried in railway cars. We do not think of something as simple as a culvert under a railway.

● (1645)

In fact, I had a call from a constituent about the fact that a culvert under the tracks in Bedford was getting clogged with debris and was causing flooding.

In my province of Nova Scotia, we had a rough winter, but we also have the experience normally of temperatures going up and down in the winter. It can be very mild one day and very cold the next. We can imagine that if a culvert backed up, there could be a substantial amount of ice developing on a railway. It is a pretty scary prospect in the middle of a community if there could be a derailment. That is something that was important to deal with. In fact, I worked with Canadian National Railway and with the City of Halifax to get the culverts cleared, which they were. It brought to light a conflict about who was responsible for the maintenance of culverts and overpasses and what impact they can have on rail safety. It is an aspect we would perhaps not think of normally.

Like all Liberal members in this place, I share Canadians' deep concern about rail safety in this country. My friend from Trinity—Spadina spoke earlier to Bill C-52, and he spoke eloquently about the issue of rail safety being paramount in his riding, which has some of the busiest tracks in Canada. He noted the ongoing challenge of trying to moderate the speed of trains in his community, something my hon. colleague from Mississauga East—Cooksville was talking about a few minutes ago, and of trying to get a handle on the dangerous goods that travel through some of the most densely populated areas of this country.

He said:

We also know the real safety solution for this is one that pushes the issue into another realm of debate. Solutions include shorter trains, more highly regulated chemicals in those trains, perhaps transporting the diesel and the highly volatile chemicals only in the new and improved rail cars, and until that happens much lower speed limits being imposed.

The member for Trinity—Spadina also commented on the fact that during the recent by-election in his riding, the New Democrats claimed that they did not support any pipelines in Canada and that their preference was to ship everything by rail. I heard earlier today my hon. colleague for York South—Weston suggest that the oil that is being transported by rail could not be transported by pipeline. That is the first I have ever heard that suggestion. As the critic in my party for natural resources, I have been hearing and reading a lot about this subject of oil and gas and so forth for quite a while now, so I would be curious to hear what kind of oil it is he is saying cannot be transported by pipeline.

They do not say to just establish a responsible situation in terms of pipelines, where we have rigorous reviews, proper environmental assessments, community involvement and support, and consultation with first nations and if it passes all that, okay.

We do need pipelines in this country, and we use lots of products that move through pipelines. The NDP's attitude seems to be no pipelines whatsoever under any circumstances.

Of course, then we have the Conservatives, who say that any pipeline in any circumstance is fine. It is an interesting dichotomy.

Let us get back to Bill C-52. This legislation is about two things: first, changing the way we establish minimum insurance levels for railway companies that are regulated by the federal government; second, creating a new compensation fund that would cover damages arising from railway accidents involving the transportation of certain kinds of dangerous goods.

Rail safety has, of course, become a profoundly important issue for Canadians since Lac-Mégantic, and the Conservative government has been slow to react. It has come out with a series of dribs and drabs and a slow release of technical and regulatory amendments in bills like Bill C-52.

The sad truth is that the government's attempts to improve rail safety are in part its reaction to the horrific train explosion at Lac-Mégantic, where so many innocent people lost their lives and so many families were touched by tragedy. I know every member in this House was saddened and horrified by happened in Lac-Mégantic.

This legislation is dubbed the safe and accountable rail act. It is always interesting the names the Conservatives come up with. I think they sometimes spend more time figuring out what attractive names to use for their bills than they do actually thinking about the contents of the legislation.

● (1650)

This bill would amend two other acts, the Canada Transportation Act and the Railway Safety Act. With respect to the Canada Transportation Act, Bill C-52 would strengthen the liability and compensation regime for federally regulated railway companies. It would do this by establishing minimum insurance levels for railway companies and a supplementary shipper finance compensation fund. This fund would cover damages resulting from railway accidents involving the transportation of certain dangerous goods.

Among other things, the amendments would establish minimum insurance levels for freight railway operations based on the type and volume of goods being transported. They would require the holder of a certificate of fitness to maintain liability insurance coverage as required by the act and to notify the Canadian Transportation Agency without delay if its insurance coverage was affected. Certainly that makes sense.

The amendments would establish that a railway company was liable, without proof of fault or negligence, subject to certain defences, for losses. There would be absolute liability for losses, damages, costs, and expenses resulting from a railway accident involving crude oil or other designated goods up to the level of the company's minimum liability insurance coverage. The amendments would also establish a compensation fund in the accounts of Canada, financed by levies on shippers, to cover the losses, damages, costs, and expenses resulting from a railway accident involving crude oil or designated goods that exceeded the minimum liability insurance coverage.

This bill would also amend the Railway Safety Act to, among other things, allow a province or municipality that incurred costs in responding to a fire that was the result of a railway company's operations to apply to the Canadian Transportation Agency to have those costs reimbursed by the railway company.

It would clarify the cabinet's power to make regulations regarding the restriction and prevention of access to land on which a line of railway was situated, including by means of fences or signs. In other words, it would make that area safer so that people would not go on the line and perhaps intentionally cause harm or be in a situation where they might be harmed themselves. It would also authorize a railway safety inspector who was satisfied that there was an immediate threat to the safety or security of railway operations to order a person or company to take any measures the inspector specified to mitigate the threat.

It would authorize the minister to require a company, road authority, or municipality to take corrective measures the minister specified were necessary for safe railway operations. It would provide the cabinet with regulation-making power regarding the submission of information that was relevant to the safety of railway operations. Finally, it would authorize the minister to order a company that was implementing its safety management system in a manner that risked compromising railway safety to take necessary corrective measures.

While Bill C-52 and other legislation address some of the measures the Liberal Party has been calling for in this area, in my view, they fall short of the Conservative government's promise to ensure the safety and integrity of Canada's railway system.

The facts speak for themselves. We saw three new derailments in February and March in Ontario alone.

Canadians have been duped with a piecemeal approach to rail safety. This latest bill is just the latest example of a government that still fails to take rail safety seriously. How else can we explain the fact that Transport Canada's rail safety division is understaffed, underfunded, and undertrained? It has been the victim of a revolving door of Conservative ministers, with five ministers in nine years.

Transport Canada is filled with very good public servants who are dedicated to ensuring the safety and integrity of our railway system. Make no mistake about that. However, it is too bad the government does not have the same level of integrity and commitment. As my colleague from Ottawa South, the Liberal Party transport critic, has noted in his comments on this bill, rail safety funding is down 20% over the last five years. During this period, when we have had so much more concern about rail safety, the Conservative government has cut funding for rail safety by 20%. How does that match the rhetoric from that side of the House?

• (1655)

Let me quote my hon. colleague from Ottawa South. He said:

What the Conservatives are doing by subterfuge, by stealth, by miscommunication, by misleading Canadians, frankly, is they are trying to create an impression that they are on top of this profoundly important public safety issue called rail safety. They are not.

I wish the minister would listen to my hon. colleague from Ottawa South on this file, and listen to witnesses who appeared at committee

Government Orders

to offer constructive criticism of Bill C-52. A number of key expert witnesses testified that they had never been properly consulted by the government regarding this legislation. At committee, they expressed profound questions about the insurance implications, distributive effects, employment implications, and trade competitiveness implications of this bill. Unfortunately, these concerns seemed to fall on deaf ears.

It is important to note that this comes at a time when Transport Canada has a lot of catching up to do since its budget was slashed by \$202 million in the main estimates, which is 11%. These cuts follow a scathing Auditor General's report, which noted among other things that the government only performed 26% of planned audits. It did not audit VIA Rail at all, despite VIA carrying four million passengers per year. Would VIA Rail passengers, as many of us are—and I hope more Canadian will be—not like to know that at least someone once in a while audits to make sure that the required rail safety measures are in fact being followed? The fact that this is not happening with Transport Canada's audits is very disconcerting, but it is no wonder when the government is cutting the funds to do just that.

We need to recognize that there is a capacity deficit, and we need to ask what the government's real priorities are. Let us consider these two facts. On the one hand, the Conservative regime has budgeted \$42 million for economic action plan advertising. Everyone has seen these wasteful ads and vanity videos. On the other hand, the funding for rail safety is \$34 million. Here we have it: \$42 million for partisan self-promotional advertising, and only \$34 million for rail safety. How is that for priorities? This sadly indicates the misguided priorities of a failed government corrupted by 10 years in power.

My colleague from Ottawa South said that he asked the minister 10 times in committee why she cut Transport Canada's budget by 11%, and she denied the cuts every time he asked. However, the Parliamentary Budget Officer says that those are the numbers. Therefore, it is clear that the Conservatives have made some very poor choices and have their priorities badly skewed.

The Conservatives' failure is amplified by the fact that the Auditor General's report also revealed that the government does not have enough inspectors and system auditors to carry out critical safety functions. That is extremely alarming: not enough inspectors and not enough system auditors. This is rail safety that we are talking about. It is ironic that at the same time as the government has failed to provide adequate resources to ensure we have the safest rail system in the world, its failed pipeline policies have resulted in more oil being shipped by rail, thus adding to the potential for serious accidents.

Government Orders

Let me wrap up by saying that Canada was unified by our national railway, and many of us in Atlantic Canada and across our great land continue to live near the same rail lines. Many of us live in communities that grew up around rail lines. It is the federal government's responsibility to ensure the safety of people who travel on rails, live adjacent to railway tracks, and operate trains.

Although this bill does not go nearly far enough to protect Canadians, it does at least contain measures that Liberals have been calling for. We appreciate that. The Liberal Party will continue to pressure the government to make a greater effort to ensure rail safety is its top priority.

• (1700)

Mr. Jamie Nicholls (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a few members in the House today have mentioned SMS systems.

Do the Liberals believe that the current SMS systems are working? Do they realize that 15 years after the Liberal government brought in these SMS systems, in 1999, we are still trying to fix the glitches in the system? What would the member have to say to that?

Hon. Geoff Regan: Mr. Speaker, we have grave concerns about the way the government is operating a variety of systems. I talked about what it has done in terms of real railway safety and the fact that it has cut funding. How can we have confidence in the government overseeing or regulating any system when it has cut the number of auditors and inspectors who are there to check whether these things are being run properly and in a safe manner? That is not happening. We should be very concerned about it.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I was dismayed that my hon. colleague from Halifax chose a bill that is primarily directed to liability in relation to rail safety to promote pipelines in his address. I certainly do not believe that pipelines carrying unprocessed bitumen to tide waters for refineries in other countries are in Canada's national interest.

It is also important to say that, as far as I know, the Green Party is the only party that opposes Keystone, energy east, Kinder Morgan, and Enbridge. I know he said that the NDP opposes all of them. I wish that were true, but I do not think that is the case at the moment.

Therefore, I want to give my hon. colleague an opportunity to perhaps rethink if that is the official position of the Liberal Party forever, regardless of the jobs that are lost. Unifor recently submitted evidence to the Kinder Morgan process about how many jobs are lost when raw bitumen has to be mixed with toxic diluent to even move through a pipeline, because it is a solid, to put it in a tanker to ship overseas for jobs elsewhere in refineries.

Hon. Geoff Regan: Mr. Speaker, what the member is suggesting is that this product should be moved by rail instead of pipeline. She is saying that she is opposed to pipelines, period, so let us move it by rail. She is maybe saying not to move it at all, to not have any petroleum products. The idea that we would move away from fossil fuels is appealing for people who are concerned about the environment, as we all should be, but that is not going to happen tomorrow.

If we go out to any major highway, we will find a lot of vehicles that are using petroleum products to operate. That is not likely to change in the next month or year. It may change over a longer

period, but, for the time being, these products are important to our economy and we have to have ways of moving them.

However, we need to be very responsible in terms of how we assess pipelines, for example, and other natural resources projects. They have to be done in a responsible way, with rigorous environmental assessments and proper consultation with communities and first nations. That is very important. One does not just approve every one of them, the way that the government wants to do.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the candour from the leader of the Green Party. It is a crystal clear position in regard to pipelines, which is that there be no pipelines. The NDP is a little wishy-washy. It tries to give the impression that it might possibly, some day, potentially be open to some sort of a pipeline, if in fact it could ultimately be proven. That is the position it seems to take in the province of Alberta; elsewhere its position seems to be closer to the Green Party's position.

We need to recognize that the amount of export of crude oil is increasing dramatically in Canada, and all Canadians are concerned with ensuring we have a safe rail line system. It would be irresponsible of a party that wants to govern to rule out the potential contributions that pipelines could make in the transportation of a product that is very important to our lifestyle, our economy, and our social fabric. It would be irresponsible to rule out pipelines.

• (1705)

Hon. Geoff Regan: Mr. Speaker, I agree with my hon. colleague. What he said makes absolute sense. It would be irresponsible.

Let us do this in a responsible way. In fact, we have thousands and thousands of kilometres of pipelines across the country that are already transporting oil and natural gas. They provide an important service for our economy. It is important to recognize that these are things we use on daily basis.

Do we need to encourage other kinds of energy sources? Absolutely. Do we need to encourage renewables? Yes, and the government, in my view, is not doing nearly enough. It is not interested nearly enough in these issues.

Regarding the suggestion from my hon. colleague from British Columbia that government should decide where things are going to be refined or upgraded, I do not know if the Green Party has in mind that the government would own the refineries or upgraders, or what it has in mind. However, I do not see much economic basis for what she is talking about. I think its economic policy has to hold water, not just its environmental policy, which is also very important.

Mr. Mike Sullivan (York South—Weston, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's comments. However, one of the things he talked about was this notion that somehow Bakken crude can be delivered in pipelines. It cannot, without the Reid vapour pressure of the materials being reduced significantly, which is an expensive process. They do not reduce the Reid vapour pressures unless they have to transport it in a pipeline because it is a big expense.

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That is what I was referring to; it was Bakken crude. Bakken crude by itself has too high a Reid vapour pressure to be transported by any of the reputable pipeline companies, which is one of the reasons it is transported in rail cars.

That being said, the rail car system in this country is currently not safe enough for the transportation of these kinds of dangerous goods. The Reid vapour pressure and other parts of that Bakken crude are explosive, and the containers it is being shipped in are subject to being ruptured in even the smallest of collisions at slowest speeds. That is what we are hoping the current government will take some steps on, and to date it has not.

Hon. Geoff Regan: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for that clarification. However, I think if he checks, he will find that even Bakken crude is not uniform. Crude from various wells, whether it is in the Bakken or elsewhere will have different properties in each case. It is variable.

The fact is that the vast majority of crude moving by rail, from what I have heard and read, certainly can be moved by pipeline. That is one of the reasons there is such a push for more pipelines. There may certainly be cases where that cannot happen and it has to go by rail, in which case we need to have a very safe system. That is why we are concerned about ensuring that the current government goes further and is more responsible in its attitude toward rail safety.

Mr. Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay—Superior North, GP): Mr. Speaker, the member for Halifax West has repeatedly used the word “responsible”. He has implied that the Greens are not being responsible by wanting to stop the expansion of growth of the tar sands and shipping unprocessed crude overseas. That is not the case.

However, speaking of responsibility, the real question is whether it is responsible on the part of the Liberal Party to have absolutely no plan to price carbon and to leave it up to the provinces to do it. Is that leadership? Is that the kind of leadership it promises after October 19?

Hon. Geoff Regan: Mr. Speaker, first, I do not think my hon. colleague characterized accurately what I said whatsoever. I talked about the Green Party's plan suggesting that we should do all of the upgrading, refining, that the Government of Canada ought to dictate where that happens and how it happens. The party's idea is perhaps that it should own and nationalize that industry. I am not sure exactly what it has in mind, but that is what I was talking about. He suggested something entirely different. I think he should be clear about that, and I think he may recognize that. I see him grinning back there. I encourage him to be more accurate in terms of characterizing what I have said about that.

In terms of our policy on climate change, I would encourage him to look at the speech that my leader gave in Calgary a few months ago. I think we see many provinces going in that direction, and I think we have seen people across Canada starting more and more to adopt exactly that point of view.

• (1710)

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan (Scarborough—Rouge River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Rivière-des-Mille-Îles.

The entire country was shaken when, on July 6, 2013, a freight train carrying Bakken formation crude oil rolled downhill and derailed. We watched footage of the explosion and the fire with our hearts in our mouths. We mourned, with the families, friends and communities, the 47 people confirmed and presumed dead. We wondered why there were more and more accidents on what was once the safest way to travel. We were shocked when we found out that in this case Maine and Atlantic Railway only carried \$25 million in third party liability insurance, which is not nearly enough to cover the incredible magnitude of the resulting damage and loss of both life and property that night.

Currently, estimates of damages in Lac-Mégantic exceed \$400 million, and the cost of rebuilding Lac-Mégantic to what it once was will be far higher. Taxpayers are on the hook for hundreds of millions of dollars in cleanup and rebuilding costs, and we cannot put a price on the tragic loss of 47 Canadians.

The rail system in our country has gone through decades of deregulation, underfunding, mismanagement and bad decision making under the present government and the previous government.

The bill does not go far enough to address many of our concerns. I support the bill, but we must do more. The tragic Lac-Mégantic derailment has shown us that our liability and compensation regime for rail must be strengthened. However, it is important to also address the fundamental problems that have led to a dramatic increase in rail accidents.

In 1999, the Liberal government amended the Railway Safety Act to accelerate deregulation, a policy continued by the subsequent federal governments. In 2001, direct federal oversight was replaced by safety management systems, which were drafted by the companies themselves. The federal government's role in rail safety changed profoundly.

Meanwhile during this time, we have seen a dramatic increase in the number of rail accidents. These accidents have had increasingly dangerous consequences in our communities. According to the Railway Association of Canada numbers, in 2009, only 500 cars a year were carrying highly flammable fossil fuel. In 2013, 160,000 cars carried flammable fossil fuel. By 2017, our rail system is expected to be transporting 33.9 million tonnes of fossil fuel per year. These numbers do not include other hazardous materials being transported through our communities.

There is absolutely no doubt that protecting the public is our core responsibility and improving liability and accountability measures is long overdue for our railways.

It is sad that it took the tragedy at Lac-Mégantic to get the government to be serious about that responsibility. We have had exponential growth in the transport of hazardous materials. We should have been working on increasing protections ages ago.

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In 2013, 144 accidents involved dangerous goods, 7 of which resulted in dangerous goods being released. Many of us have heard of the three derailments in northern Ontario. These derailments happened in the space of less than a month, between February and March of this year. In two of these derailments, tank cars carrying crude oil burst into flames. In both of these incidents of fire, the tank cars involved were upgraded models of the DOT-111s.

The government ordered the phase-out of the DOT-111s over the span of a decade. The Transportation Safety Board, which investigates railway accidents, has flagged the length of the phase-out as a huge concern.

In fact, in February 2014, there was a derailment in my riding on Sewells Road and Reesor Road. According to police, the freight car was empty, and a CN Rail spokesperson confirmed that no dangerous goods were involved and no one was injured. We were very lucky.

My riding is criss-crossed by railway tracks and is home to CN's Toronto east rail yard. The Canadian National line, running near Steeles, transports oil and gas and other flammable materials every day. Most of the tracks run at street level, in many instances, a few metres from homes, from parks where children play or people bike and run.

I am speaking today because I am concerned about the carriage of volatile materials with inadequate regulations in such close proximity to where my community members, my neighbours live.

Aside from discussing liability after an accident, we need immediate measures so we can help prevent and mitigate disasters.

I am not the only one who feels that we need stronger measures for rail safety. On March 31, the mayor of Toronto and 17 councillors from across the municipality wrote to the Minister of Transport, asking that Transport Canada establish stronger protections for cities than the ones being implemented right now. A recent report by the *Toronto Start* found that dangerous goods were often transported through the heart of Toronto.

● (1715)

The city has a set of recommendations, and I am proud to stand with them and demand stronger enforcement of regulations, and the adoption of stronger regulations to keep Canadians safe, Torontonians safe and all Scarborough residents safe.

As I mentioned, the goods transported by our rail system have been increasingly dangerous and our rail safety regimes need an overhaul to keep people safe. This would also mean that we need adequate resources to implement this plan in Bill C-52 and to implement additional oversight and regulation called for by our communities.

However, the budget at Transport Canada was cut 11% this year, or by \$202 million. The government spent \$42 million on economic action plan advertisement last year, yet spent \$33 million on rail safety. It is shameful. Year after year, Transport Canada has seen budget cuts.

How can the government talk of meaningful oversight without providing the resources to do so? Oversight clearly requires resources.

As for Bill C-52, essentially, it requires minimum insurance levels for railways transporting dangerous goods and establishes a disaster relief fund paid for by crude oil shippers to compensate victims of derailments, provinces and municipalities.

We are concerned that the minimum insurance levels established in this bill may not be sufficient. Insurance levels should be based on the threat to the public, not just on the type and volume of the goods being transported. Estimates of damages at Lac-Mégantic exceed \$400 million, but these new rules do not appear to get us to that level for small companies.

The bill would also establish a pooled disaster relief fund that would be made available if the minimum insurance levels were insufficient. However, is the relief fund going to actually have enough money? That is the question that is on everybody's mind.

For the 200,000 barrels of oil transported daily, Transport Canada estimates that oil levies would contribute about \$17 million annually to general revenues. This is a step forward, but there are certainly many outstanding concerns. We would need to have that levy in place for about 15 years before we could actually reach the \$250 million level where it believes we would be able to respond to any level of crisis. I would again point to Lac-Mégantic. It cost \$400 million for the damage done in that one accident alone. Therefore, this levy would certainly not be enough.

We also want to ensure that the fund being established sufficiently covers all disasters, including unlimited liability for the railway's negligence. The bill would ensure that municipalities and provinces would be better able to be reimbursed by the railway company for the cost of responding to a fire caused by their operations. However, we have a long way to go to ensure accidents are less likely.

We need to figure out how to protect the lives of people living in Canada. We need real plans to manage the risk created by the kinds of dangerous goods being transported through our communities. We need to ensure that the federal government maintains an active role in rail safety regimes. After those years when the Liberal government allowed self-regulation and we saw numerous increases in accidents and a decline in safety, we need to ensure there are independent inspectors and that companies are held accountable.

Finally, we need to continue the national conversation about how we are going to process oil, bitumen and other natural resources in our country. We have an opportunity here to do much more in Canada to create real rail safety, and passing this bill will not create a safe rail transport system. Canadians deserve real rail safety measures and safe rail systems. This bill is one step, but it just does not go far enough.

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Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I agree with many of the comments that were just made by my hon. friend from Scarborough—Rouge River, about rail safety and the minimum amount that is now in this legislation.

While, overall, I think everyone in the House sees the bill as an improvement, there is much more that needs to be done on rail safety, particularly, as other members have noted, now that we are moving unconventional forms of fossil fuels that represent very different kinds of threats. There is more to be learned about the quality of fossil fuels. Bitumen from the oil sands is, without diluent added to it, quite a benign material to transport, but bitumen will not move through a pipeline without adding toxic and more dangerous materials that are more flammable. As other colleagues have mentioned, Bakken crude from North Dakota is entirely different.

Does my friend have any comments around whether the municipalities along rail routes should be receiving warnings of the most toxic and dangerous materials?

• (1720)

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague has agreed with much of what I have said. We need to ensure that our communities are kept safe. There are many measures possible, and we need to ensure that we do not put our residents in harm's way by not doing everything we can to ensure the transport of goods along our railways is safe. We need to work toward that.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Laurin Liu (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House to speak to Bill C-52.

Basically, this bill requires railway companies that transport dangerous goods to have a minimum amount of insurance coverage. It also establishes a disaster relief fund paid for by crude oil shippers to compensate victims of derailments, provinces and municipalities.

The measures contained in this bill are vital, and that is why I support them. However, the bill is not enough to ensure proper rail safety in Canada. The Government of Canada has been deregulating the rail industry for decades. It started under the Liberals' watch. They began making amendments to the Railway Safety Act as early as 1999 in order to hasten the deregulation of this industry.

I would also like to talk about my constituents' concerns regarding the transportation of dangerous goods. Last week, I went door to door with a team of volunteers in order to talk to my constituents about the environment and their concerns about environmental assessment.

We found that a great deal of deregulation has occurred in the rail industry. There has also been a lot of deregulation regarding pipelines and the associated environmental assessments. The Conservatives have seriously undermined Canadians' confidence in the federal pipeline assessment process by gutting the environmental rules and seriously limiting public consultation.

Obviously, the Conservative government is willing to deregulate at any cost in order to promote the industry, and it is our environment and our health that will suffer for it. In fact, Ottawa recently transferred the responsibility for determining whether a pipeline project would have an impact on fish and aquatic species at risk to

the National Energy Board. The National Energy Board is responsible for monitoring the oil and gas industry, not the environment and aquatic species. The board does not have the necessary expertise to reassure Canadians that there will be a rigorous environmental assessment process.

Getting back to the subject of rail industry deregulation, in 1999 the Liberal government amended the Railway Safety Act. Successive governments maintained that policy. In 2001, when direct federal government oversight was replaced by safety management systems, the federal government's rail safety role changed dramatically. Nothing in this bill guarantees that rail companies will comply with the government's regulations.

In conclusion, I would like to say that Canadians deserve a government that will take action to prevent accidents and protect their health, their environment and their safety across the country. The federal government has so neglected railways in Canada that the transportation of dangerous goods by train has become extremely risky. That is why we need a national transportation strategy such as the one proposed by my former colleague from Trinity—Spadina, Olivia Chow. We need a strategy to ensure that dangerous goods can be transported safely with the infrastructure we have in Canada. That is why we put this proposal forward. I would like to conclude by saying that the government's approach has been a complete failure. The NDP has solutions that will really keep Canadians safe.

• (1725)

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Resuming debate.

Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): I declare the motion carried.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the third time and passed)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton) : I see the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development rising on a point of order.

Mr. Mark Strahl: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if we could get unanimous consent to see the clock at 5:30 p.m.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

*Private Members' Business***PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

[English]

NATIONAL ACTION PLAN TO ADDRESS VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The House resumed from May 13 consideration of the motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): It being 5:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on Motion No. 444 under private members' business.

Call in the members.

• (1810)

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

(Division No. 408)

YEAS

Members

Adams	Allen (Welland)
Andrews	Angus
Ashton	Atamanenko
Aubin	Bélangier
Bennett	Benskin
Bevington	Blanchette
Blanchette-Lamothe	Boivin
Borg	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brahmi
Brisson	Brosseau
Caron	Casey
Cash	Charlton
Chicoine	Chisholm
Choquette	Christopherson
Cleary	Côté
Cotler	Crowder
Cullen	Cuzner
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Davies (Vancouver East)
Dewar	Dion
Dionne Labelle	Donnelly
Doré Lefebvre	Dubé
Dubourg	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Dusseau
Easter	Eyking
Foote	Fortin
Freeland	Freeman
Fry	Gameau
Garrison	Genest
Genest-Jourdain	Giguère
Godin	Gravelle
Groguhé	Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Harris (St. John's East)	Hsu
Hughes	Hyer
Jones	Julian
Kellway	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Latendresse
Laverdière	LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)	Leef
Leslie	Liu
MacAulay	Mai
Marston	Masse
Mathyssen	May
McCallum	McGuinty
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	Michaud
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)	Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
Mulcair	Murray
Nantel	Nicholls
Nunez-Melo	Pécllet
Pilon	Quach
Rankin	Ravignat
Raynault	Regan
Saganash	Sandhu
Scarpaleggia	Scott
Sellah	Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind- sor)

Sims (Newton—North Delta)
St-Denis
Stoffler
Toone
Trudeau

Sitsabaiesan
Stewart
Sullivan
Tremblay
Valeriote— 120

NAYS

Members

Ablonczy	Adler
Aglukkaq	Albas
Albrecht	Alexander
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Ambler	Ambrose
Anderson	Armstrong
Ashfield	Aspin
Barlow	Bateman
Benoit	Bergen
Bernier	Blaney
Block	Boughen
Braid	Breitkreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Bruinooge	Butt
Calandra	Calkins
Cannan	Carmichael
Carrie	Chisu
Chong	Clarke
Clement	Crockatt
Daniel	Davidson
Dechert	Devolin
Dreeschen	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Dykstra	Egliniski
Falk	Fantino
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Fletcher	Galipeau
Gallant	Gill
Glover	Goguen
Goldring	Goodyear
Gosal	Gourde
Grewal	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hawn	Hayes
Hillyer	Hoback
Holder	James
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Kent
Kerr	Komarnicki
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lauzon
Lebel	Lemieux
Leung	Lizon
Lobb	Lukivski
Lunney	MacKay (Central Nova)
MacKenzie	Maguire
Mayes	McColeman
McLeod	Menegakis
Miller	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Nicholson
Norlock	O'Connor
O'Neill Gordon	Opitz
O'Toole	Paradis
Payne	Perkins
Poilievre	Preston
Raitt	Rajotte
Reid	Rempel
Richards	Ritz
Saxton	Schellenberger
Seeback	Shea
Shipley	Shory
Smith	Sopuck
Sorenson	Stanton
Storseth	Strahl
Sweet	Tilson
Toet	Trost
Truppe	Uppal
Valcourt	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Wallace
Warawa	Warkentin
Watson	Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)
Weston (Saint John)	Wilks
Williamson	Wong
Woodworth	Yelich
Young (Oakville)	Young (Vancouver South)
Yurdiga	Zimmer— 146

Private Members' Business

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

It being 6:10 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

* * *

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE AND OTHER FORMS OF DEMENTIA

Mr. Ben Lobb (Huron—Bruce, CPC) moved:

That, in the opinion of the House, the government should, while respecting provincial and territorial jurisdiction, continue to take the necessary measures to prevent Alzheimer's disease and other dementias and to reduce the impact of dementia for those living with this disease, as well as for their families and caregivers, by continuing to focus on: (a) taking leadership appropriate to the federal role that will encourage a collaborative and coordinated approach with the provinces and territories to develop a pan-Canadian strategy for dementia, as agreed to at the recent federal-provincial-territorial Health Ministers' meeting; (b) partnerships within Canada and internationally, including commitments with G7 partners, and the work initiated at the 2014 Canada-France Global Dementia Legacy Summit, to accelerate the discovery and development of approaches for the prevention, early diagnosis, delay of onset, and treatment of dementia; (c) education and awareness to reduce the stigma associated with dementia, including the implementation of the Dementia Friends Canada initiative; (d) dementia research with a focus on primary prevention, secondary prevention, and quality of life, including those initiatives outlined in the National Dementia Research and Prevention Plan; (e) promoting the sharing of best practices among all jurisdictions to ensure awareness of promising treatments and services; (f) continuing to work in partnership with relevant stakeholders, including families affected by dementia and leading national groups such as the Alzheimer Society of Canada and the Canadian Consortium on Neurodegeneration in Aging; (g) ensuring the full inclusion of all Canadians living with dementia, regardless of age, when acting on the above; (h) continuing to support, through national surveillance systems, the collection of data on key aspects of Alzheimer's disease and other dementias in order to inform evidence-based analysis and policy-making; and (i) keeping Canadians informed as progress is made.

He said: Mr. Speaker, that was well said. It is a pleasure to rise in the House today to debate Motion No. 575 on Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia.

Just to lay a brief context behind this issue, it is estimated there are over 40 million people worldwide who are currently suffering from this disease, and there are over 700,000 Canadians who are facing one or another of these diseases. Virtually everybody in this House today will know someone who is suffering, or has known someone in the past who has suffered, from this disease. It is very much a serious issue facing not only Canadians but people around the world. We are here today as parliamentarians to discuss this issue and look at what the government has done in the past and what it is working on today and into the future.

The motion calls on the government to take strong action to address dementia and ensure that we are doing everything we can to help Canadians who are living with this disease. I appreciate the opportunity to speak here today on this topic.

Our government, under the leadership of the Minister of Health, has made great progress to date. Lots of good measures are under way and we can always do more. We cannot stop now. We need to move forward and, if anything, we need to increase what we are doing at an even more rapid pace. Over the past year, there has been a lot of attention in Canada and internationally on how to better address the challenges of dementia. This has not gone unnoticed and

there have been numerous federal investments in activities to advance collective efforts on dementia.

Dementia, particularly Alzheimer's disease, is a complex public health challenge that confronts a large and growing number of Canadians. It affects not only those who are living with this condition but also the relatives and friends who are providing them with care and assistance. As well, there is the broader issue of health care system costs and models of care.

As reflected in Motion No. 575, further research is needed to learn more about what causes dementia and the most effective ways to prevent, identify, treat and ultimately find a cure for it. Addressing these challenges requires innovative actions from government, industry, non-governmental organizations and other partners. Our government recognizes that understanding dementia and its impacts on individuals, families and caregivers is necessary in order to be able to effectively meet their needs. Consistent with the federal role, our government's activities on dementia are focused primarily on research, surveillance and monitoring, promoting awareness, and understanding.

I would like to highlight the works that our government has supported in order to further develop effective programs in response to this issue.

Over the past decade, our government, through CIHR, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, has invested over \$1 billion in world-class neuroscience research to improve the health of those people who live with brain diseases. Since 2006, government investments to the institutes and research specific to dementia have increased by 67%, reaching \$37.8 million in the 2013-14 year. This research has not only helped improve our understanding of dementia, it has also created new possibilities for prevention, improved diagnosis, treatment and quality of life for patients and their families.

Notably, last year's budget announced a new ongoing investment of \$15 million for the Canadian Institutes of Health Research for the expansion and creation of a variety of health research priorities, particularly Canada's strategy for patient-oriented research and the Canadian Consortium on Neurodegeneration in Aging.

Launched in September 2014, the consortium is working on bold and transformative research ideas to improve the lives of Canadians living with dementia. It is focusing on three specific areas of improvement: primary prevention, secondary prevention and quality of life. The consortium is supported with federal funding of \$22.6 million, along with an additional \$9.9 million over five years from a group of partners from the public and private sectors, including the Alzheimer Society of Canada and the Women's Brain Health Initiative.

Private Members' Business

•(1815)

Most recently, budget 2015 proposes to provide up to \$42 million over the next five years to Baycrest Health Sciences to support the establishment of the Canadian Centre for Aging and Brain Health Innovation. Funding for the centre will support new research in the development of products and services to support brain health and aging. The funding includes \$32 million in support from FedDev Ontario, the Federal Economic Development Agency for southern Ontario.

Furthermore, in 2009, our government invested \$15 million over four years to the national population health study of neurological conditions to better understand Alzheimer's disease and other conditions as well as their impacts on Canadians. Findings from the study were released in September 2014. As a result of this study, our government is expanding the Canadian chronic disease surveillance system in collaboration with the provinces and territories to include ongoing surveillance of Alzheimer's disease and other dementias.

In budget 2011, our government committed up to \$100 million over six years toward establishing the Canadian brain research fund. This fund supports neuroscience research in the advancement of knowledge and treatment of brain disease and mental disorders, including dementia. In May 2014, the Prime Minister announced government support for one of the largest single grants for Alzheimer's disease prevention research in Canada under the fund. In September 2014, the government announced support for five additional dementia-focused projects with total funding of \$7 million.

All of these federal investments, partnerships and initiatives are part of the government's national dementia research and prevention plan. We have a strong record of action on this file, but as I said at the onset, more needs to be done.

That is why my motion calls on the government to continue working with the Alzheimer's Society of Canada to establish a program called "dementia friends Canada". This program, originally launched in Japan and more recently in the United Kingdom, will help to engage individuals, communities and businesses in understanding what it means to live with dementia and how to better support those affected within the community.

It is also clear that research is not enough. All of us in this place know that the provinces and territories are responsible for the delivery of health care, but we should ensure that, where we can as a federal government, we are working to support the provinces in addressing dementia. That is why this motion calls on the government to continue working co-operatively with the provinces to establish a pan-Canadian strategy for dementia. The Minister of Health has made good progress on this to date and will be discussing it with her provincial counterparts at the next federal-provincial-territorial meeting.

Having all jurisdictions working co-operatively together is the key to getting a national plan in place and I know that our minister has the dedication to ensure this is done. That is why I encourage all members of the House to support today's motion, so that the

provinces know this is a priority not just for the minister, but for all members of Parliament.

It should be noted that dementia is not just an issue of national concern here in Canada, but has captured global attention. Many countries around the world are facing similar issues. The Government of Canada has committed to work internationally to address the health and economic challenges of dementia and to reduce the burden of this condition.

Most recently, in March of this year, Canada participated in the first WHO Ministerial Conference on Global Action Against Dementia in Geneva, Switzerland. At the conference, Canada was among 80 countries that adopted a call to action to advance efforts on dementia and maintain it as a priority issue on national and international agendas. This conference was the latest milestone in a series of international efforts to address dementia that began at the G8 Dementia Summit in December 2013 held in London, England. Canada also participated in this summit, which was dedicated to seeking a heightened level of international collaboration to face the global challenge of dementia.

Following the summit, Canada joined forces with our G7 partners to work toward identifying a cure or disease-modifying treatment for dementia by 2025, increase investments towards dementia research and reduce stigma, exclusion and fear, among other commitments.

•(1820)

Additionally, the World Dementia Council was formed to stimulate innovation and development of treatments for those with, or at risk of developing, dementia. Five priority areas have been identified, including finance, global integrated development, open science and big data, care and risk reduction. A representative from Canada is greatly involved in this international council.

Canada also co-hosted a followup legacy event with France in September 2014, which brought together 200 experts from a variety of countries and focused on strengthening academic-industry partnerships in order to develop new approaches to dementia prevention, treatment and care. The outcomes of this event informed the development of a global action framework, which brings together commitments on dementia from different countries and organizations.

It is clear that addressing the challenge of dementia requires the participation and collaboration of many sectors and partners. Many initiatives involve the public, private and not-for-profit sectors, including different levels of government within Canada and other countries. By working with a variety of organizations and initiatives, our government is able to gain greater awareness and understanding of dementia and other neurological disorders. Our government is doing its best to ensure that the necessary research is made to better combat dementia.

In closing, I would like to thank the House for the opportunity to speak today about this important issue. There are many initiatives under way in Canada and abroad. We are working to maintain and build on the momentum that has been generated through these initiatives. While we are still learning from each other in the development of innovative approaches to addressing dementia, we are definitely moving in the right direction.

Private Members' Business

I would encourage all members to consider this motion, do their research and if they have other questions, they are free to ask me or any member of our caucus. We would be happy to answer any questions they have.

In the beginning I talked about people in our community who had Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia. I was going to talk about one particular individual who I have had the chance to get to know through the years, Jim Finkbeiner, a resident of South Huron, and his wife Linda.

Jim was diagnosed with Alzheimer's at a relatively early age, in his 60s. He and Linda wanted to do as much as they could while Jim could still participate. They came up to Ottawa, they toured Parliament, went to the provincial legislature and toured there, and they toured around the province, spending a lot of time together.

While they were here, they mentioned that in January Jim had walked from Exeter to Huron Park. He is a former firefighter. That is about a 14-kilometre walk. His latest endeavour, going back a few years now, was to walk from Exeter to Clinton, which is about a 33-kilometre walk in the middle of January.

Being relatively keen to support Jim, I told him that if he was game to do it, I would do it as well. I and members his family went for a walk a week before the Walk for Memories. We did a 33 kilometres trek. Jim was actually in his early stages of Alzheimer's when he did the walk. He did the entire walk on his own.

It shows the tremendous commitment that he had for raising awareness. He did a great job in promoting that people could live effectively with Alzheimer's.

As his disease progressed, it also shed light on the need for support for caregivers. His wife did her very best to keep Jim at home as long as she could, and as the disease progressed, she did have to send him to a long-care facility.

Just before I take questions, I want to stress that this disease, as I mentioned in the beginning, affects 40 million people worldwide. The numbers are going to double before too long. All levels of government around the world need to continue to take action. Now is the time to act.

• (1825)

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member for Nickel Belt brought forward a private member's bill, Bill C-356, not long ago. It contained much of the same material that this expression of opinion, which is what a motion is, contains. Why did the member vote against that initiative. Why did the government defeat the private member's bill that would have created a national dementia strategy in Canada rather than simply, as in the motion before us tonight, an expression of the opinion of the House?

Mr. Ben Lobb: Mr. Speaker, to the member's first point, we have seen recently what motions can do in the House. The thalidomide motion that recently came before the House actually caused action, and I think that is a great example of what motions can do. However, I would point out a couple of potential faults in the well-intentioned bill that the member brought forward.

One is that there are financial considerations involved in his bill. It would also create an advisory board and specifically points out the

payment of members on the board. In addition, there is a clause in his proposed act that spells out a time period of 30 days after the enactment of the act. That is assuming that the bill would actually pass through the House and Senate, which is unlikely, considering the current calendar of Parliament. It is unlikely that any of this would happen.

However, we can put this motion forward. There are differences, but we can get things done for Canadians.

• (1830)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, dementia is a very serious issue. It touches the lives of all Canadians in every region of our country.

The merit of a national strategy has been talked about within this chamber previously. However, I would suggest that we have witnessed a lack of leadership on the part of the current Prime Minister, and to a certain degree on the part of the Minister of Health.

We recognize the importance of working with others, particularly the provinces, which administer health care. In fairness, the member did make reference to that.

It is very important that we recognize that Canada does have a strong leadership role. However, part of that role means that the leadership within the government needs to work with the different provincial entities. Here we are, months away from an election, and we are just now seeing this motion. There must be some disappointment that the government has not acted more quickly in terms of recognizing how important it is to work with the other stakeholders, particularly the provinces, to try to develop that national strategy.

If the member does not want to answer that specific question, maybe he can comment on the important role that provinces play in providing the services that are absolutely critical in dealing with this issue.

Mr. Ben Lobb: Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to answer the question. However, I do not think the member has read my motion, nor has he read the facts on what we have invested on the issue of dementia. I mentioned in my speech that we have invested over \$1 billion through CIHR since 2006, so we are not late to the game. We have made investments right from the beginning of this government.

In addition to that, my motion lays out a number of activities that the government has already commenced, such as surveillance, monitoring, and best practices, and we are encouraging them to continue. These are all things that we have done for years and years.

It appears that once again the Liberal Party is a little late to the game.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and for Western Economic Diversification, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think my colleague has articulated very well some of the important things that have already been done in terms of research and in terms of the minister working with the provinces and territories.

Private Members' Business

I guess I need to go back to the predominant difference between this motion and the well-intentioned bill that we voted on previously, which had its challenges. Could the member quickly rearticulate the real concerns that were in the bill and why this motion is much more appropriate for moving forward in partnership with the provinces?

Mr. Ben Lobb: Mr. Speaker, obviously we are going to respect areas of jurisdiction.

I know the member for Nickel Belt had the best intentions with his private member's bill. I am fully satisfied with his effort. There is no issue there, but some of the pieces that he put in the bill would be problematic, such as the availability of specialists, including neurologists, psychiatrists, nurses, diagnostics, and treatment. These are areas of provincial jurisdiction.

The bill is well intentioned, but it is not the role of the federal government to get involved and start dictating to the provinces: thou shalt allocate this; thou shalt do this; and thou shalt put this equipment into this facility; thou shalt train doctors, nurses, specialists. That is for the provinces to do. We want to support them in any way that we can, but let us not get involved in the issues that the Liberals had in the 1990s and early 2000s when they became involved in areas of provincial jurisdiction

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise on behalf of the official opposition to address this motion this evening. I wish to start by acknowledging something that the member for Huron—Bruce said, and congratulate and thank the government for the research that has been done on neuroscience. He quite properly pointed out the enormous amount of money that is made available for the important work of dealing with Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia, for which I salute him and his government.

On the other hand, this is what the Canadian Medical Association called a "lost opportunity". It said very clearly that the defeat of the bill that the member for Nickel Belt introduced in this House, a private member's bill that would take action and do something, as opposed to expressing the opinion of this House, was a "lost opportunity".

I want to thank the Canadian Medical Association, and Dr. Chris Simpson in particular, for leadership on the entire issue of finding a way to go forward in dementia. That is not just on research, which I concede is a critically important part of this puzzle, but also to deal with the stress, financial and otherwise, on caregivers, and on people who are living with this terrible disease. That is what I want to make the focus of my remarks.

Before I speak to those things, I want to congratulate and sincerely thank the member for Nickel Belt, who has worked tirelessly on this issue, for the leadership he has shown coast to coast in hearing from people who are living with this terrible disease, and for all he has done to raise my awareness and I think the awareness of other members in this House.

I was told by the Minister of Health not long ago, in another context, about how important it is for people to work in a non-partisan way on issues relating to health. She said that Canadians like to see us work together on these issues. I am entirely in agreement with that. That is why it is so disappointing to be standing here this evening, when we were on the cusp of passing the member's private

member's bill to do something about this disease, talking about an expression of an opinion.

Once again, the Conservatives cannot help themselves, because even wording the motion shows what the game is before us tonight. They want us to talk about continuing to take measures to do so, to continue to focus on this, to continue to support. It is a self-congratulatory message that they want us to agree with.

I say at the outset that, of course, we will support the motion, virtually irrelevant though it is, because it is an expression of our concern over this issue. The lost opportunity, as Dr. Simpson pointed out, is the sad part.

I would remind members that on May 6 in this place, we had a vote on that private member's bill. Through the enormous efforts of my colleague from Nickel Belt, the vote was very close. The vote was 139 in favour and 140 opposed. Sadly, one of the Liberal members conceded that she forgot to vote. Had she done so, it would have been the law.

That is why I come here with a certain amount of sadness as I address this critically important issue. The statistics on this disease are absolutely staggering. As the member for Huron—Bruce reminded us, almost three quarters of a million people currently live with the Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia, and cognitive impairment.

People with dementia may live for years with the condition and eventually need around the clock care. The cost, just at the economic level of the diseases involving dementia, is roughly \$33 billion a year. As we have an aging population, the Canadian Medical Association reports that by 2031, fully 1.4 million Canadians will have dementia. By 2040, the annual cost to the country will be \$293 billion. That is simply the cost. I am not talking about the emotional and other costs that are involved.

Other countries show leadership and have the national dementia strategy that my colleague has sought to create in this country, sadly lost tonight. Australia, Norway, the Netherlands, France, the United Kingdom, all have national strategies to address this epidemic.

● (1835)

The Canadian Medical Association urged us to join that list. We said no by one vote. Why is it important? It is important because we need research, and again I salute the government for that aspect of addressing the issue. However, it also points out that the occupation of acute care hospital beds with dementia patients is exploding and costing us billions. They could be placed in more appropriate long-term care beds if we could take a strategic approach in investing in that regard.

As we baby boomers deal with the so-called grey, or silver, tsunami coming at us, it will get staggeringly worse. Other countries are taking a strategic approach to this problem.

The emotional and financial burdens faced by spouses, children and other informal caregivers has to be addressed. There is nothing in the motion to address that.

Private Members' Business

I would like to talk about the comments made in the *Edmonton Journal* by a young woman named Joanne Cave, who is from Edmonton. She is a Rhodes scholar, studying at Oxford. She wrote poignantly about her mother who was a functioning person in the workplace and eventually this slow indignity of dementia that she talked about took its toll. I want to read what she said:

For my peers and I—twenty-something caregivers, stuck in a generational wedge we never anticipated—Canada is failing us now and for the future. Alzheimer's isn't just my daily reality; it's a source of ongoing political frustration.

She talked about the current family caregiver tax credit hardly compensating for the loss of income or unplanned early retirement and the occasional support of personal care attendants and the like. She contrasts that with what the U.K. is doing with caregiving pension credits, or Australia with caregiving pension allowances. She points out just how far behind Canada is in addressing this crisis.

Along with the Canadian Medical Association, we call for increased support for these informal caregivers in various forms, financial and programs to relieve the stress, such as the need for respite workers and that sort of thing. The opportunity lost here is something that causes great sadness on this side of the House.

The Canadian Medical Association talked about the number of patients who could be elsewhere. They occupy about 15% of the acute care hospital beds across Canada, one-third of whom suffer from dementia. The cost of that is just so staggering when we put it in the context of what aging at home with appropriate support would allow, or even long-term care facilities, which are obviously more expensive. However, as Dr. Simpson points out, hospital beds are where a lot of these people are found, and will continue to be found. It is a strain on our system which will be enormous in the future.

After the defeat of the bill of my colleague from Nickel Belt on May 7, the press release of the Canadian Medical Association said it all. This "represents a lost opportunity to make lasting progress in the serious and growing problem of dementia in Canada". Dr. Simpson continues, "We remain one of the few industrialized countries to be without a national dementia strategy".

According to the Alzheimer's Society of Canada, almost three-quarters of a million Canadians have been diagnosed with dementia, and that number will balloon to 1.4 million by 2031. This is the enormity of the problem with which we are dealing.

The Canadian Association of Retired Persons is also saluting the efforts of my colleague from Nickel Belt in his efforts to create a strategy. It talked about recognizing "the needs and improving supports for caregivers", all of which CARP advocates for and supports. Fully 83% of Canadians reported that they believed Canada needed such a strategy, given the aging nature of our population.

There is absolutely no doubt as to the urgency of the issue facing Canadians. We see it. Many of us know people who have dementia. In fact, so many of us know people who are suffering from this terrible affliction and those who support them.

The government motion is an expression of concern. That it is of course supported by us, and I will recommend that the official opposition support this. It could have been so much better. We could have done something for Canadians.

● (1845)

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to say that the Liberals will be supporting this motion.

What bothered me just a little was the partisan nature of the question period and the discussion. This is not a partisan issue. This is something that crosses all political parties, or should. Something could have been done if the federal government had not forgotten that the provinces exist and had not dumped everything on the provinces. Any time the government is asked about anything, it says to talk to the provinces and that it has nothing to do with it.

I am pleased that the member who brought forward this bill talked about working with the provinces and territories. It is not just about working with the provinces and territories; it is about taking a leadership role as a federal government. The important thing to remember is that many provinces had a real problem with the 2014 budget, which actually did health transfers on a per capita basis. There are a number of provinces, especially in Atlantic Canada and especially British Columbia, that have large cohorts of seniors, and the provinces are now going to have to struggle, because there was no demographic consideration on a needs-based transfer. It became a per capita transfer. A lot of provinces are going to be struggling to do this.

I am glad that we are talking about working with the provinces and territories. However, I wonder why it is that when the provinces have been asking the Prime Minister for such a very long time to meet with them to talk about health needs and health care, the Prime Minister of this country has refused to meet with them, for 10 years, on the matter of health, when before that, every single year, the government, including the previous government before the Liberal government in 1993, used to meet with the premiers. There were first ministers meetings to talk about important issues.

If anything is an important issue, this one is, first and foremost, mainly because all of us standing in the House are going to be aging, and we do not know whether we will be one of the groups that will need this care. The aging population in this country has created a huge set of challenges for all of us: the federal, provincial, and territorial governments. The provinces and territories have recognized this. The Council of the Federation has been asking over and over to look at the demographic of seniors who are coming forward.

One of the things to remember is that in 2011, statistical data told us that there were about three-quarters of a million people living with dementia. We know that by 2031, that number is going to double. We know that it currently costs \$33 billion a year to deal with those three-quarters of a million people. We also know that by 2040, that amount is going to increase to \$293 billion a year. I want to repeat that. Currently it costs \$33 billion, and by 2040 it is going to cost \$293 billion to take care of the tsunami, as the Canadian Medical Association calls it, of seniors who are going to be aging in this country and will reach 80 by 2040.

Private Members' Business

This is a huge problem for all of us to think about. There is pressure. It is not only about the issue of dementia itself. Talking about a dementia strategy is a good thing. One thing we need to look at is what it is going to look like. What should we have talked about a while ago when talking about a dementia strategy. We needed to talk about research.

I want to comment on my colleague who brought this motion forward. Liberals will be supporting the motion. It is something we should be supporting. I am not thrilled, however, about anything the government has done to deal with it during its 10 years in office. We have heard that there has been \$1 billion invested in the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. The Canadian Institutes of Health Research were created in about 1993 or 1994, so this is not new, and that \$1 billion has been the static amount the Canadian Institutes of Health Research have dealt with for the last eight years. They have not moved beyond \$1 billion, and \$700 million of that is dedicated to research. We need to look at how to move forward.

It is not as though \$1 billion has been dedicated to research on dementia. It has not. That is for research on everything. That is for the 14 institutes under the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. In the last budget, we saw that the government put a bit of money into CIHR, but it was only for their management system. It was not to give them any more money for research. When we talk about research, that is at the forefront, and the government has done little when it has had an opportunity to deal with research. Now we want to talk about prevention and promotion.

• (1850)

We know some of the things that could be dealt with to delay, not prevent but delay, the onset of dementia. For instance, we absolutely know that increased exercise and proper nutrition have been shown to delay the onset of dementia. We know that if someone has a concussion over the course of their lifetime, his or her risk of developing dementia is rapidly increased.

Seven years ago, I brought in a bill talking about wearing a CSA-approved helmet for recreation sport. We know so many people have been getting concussions when not wearing the right helmet. There is a prevention strategy that was not going to cost anyone any money. The government has refused to do it, and it is seven years later.

Let us talk about what the government could have done and what we are now talking about perhaps doing on the eve of an election. This is kind of sweet. We talk about treatment options. We need to talk about long-term and assisted care.

In 2001, Prime Minister Chrétien's Liberal government indicated that we need to look at home care, community care and integrated care supports in the community. As these are provincial jurisdiction, the federal government put money on the table in the 2004 accord to involve the federal government in dealing with some of these issues that are outside its jurisdiction. The premiers all agreed to it. No one is ramming anything down the province's throat. This was agreed upon. The Conservative government came in in 2006 and walked away from all those tables in the 2004 health accord. In 2014, it cancelled it.

I am just trying to say, it is nice that this is coming. I am not saying that the member has not done a nice thing by bringing this forward, but there was a lot the government could have done. Action could have been taken. Nice is nice, and I will support it for that reason, but I do not see this doing anything.

As far as caregiver support, we have heard from the Canadian Mental Health Commission of Canada that actually 75% of caregivers today are suffering from mental health stress because of taking care at home of the chronically ill and people with dementia, children with disabilities, and chronic diseases. We have seen and heard about that. What did the government do in this budget? It put forward a \$300 tax credit. That does not even begin to touch the need for caregivers in the country. We have seen families who are looking after their senior parents on the one side and their children on the other. They are caught in a sandwich and they are suffering. They are going to be costing the health care system from all of the pressure and the stress they are under. Large numbers of them are suffering from depression because they do not know what to do about it.

In our country we have seniors looking after seniors. I have travelled around the country as the health critic and I have talked to people in town hall meetings. I have had people say to me, "I am 82 and I am looking after my 85-year-old spouse. I cannot even lift him, and I don't get any respite. I get two hours a week of care that comes in. I get to use that two hours to go and buy groceries, to take my spouse to the doctor to get medications, go to the drugstore and to do everything. We have seniors coping with this.

There is a lot that could be done and a lot that could have been done. One can look back and say, "Well, you didn't do this and you didn't do that", but the bottom line is, this was all articulated by the prime minister of the country back in 2001, working with the provinces. In the 2004 health accord all of this was part of the clear objectives set out. As I said, in 2006, the government walked away and said, "We have nothing to do. This is all provincial." That is not true. It was signed on the dotted line by the provinces that they recognized they could not do it without the federal government.

I meet with ministers of health of every political stripe across the country and they say the same thing, "There are things we cannot do without a high-level meeting and without the federal government at the table".

The federal government is responsible for all Canadians. Let us remember that. We cannot pass the buck and say, "This is a provincial jurisdiction and this is not." We have to take leadership and work in partnership.

Mr. Scott Armstrong (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister of Labour, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak about Motion No. 575, introduced by the hon. member for Huron—Bruce.

As we heard from my colleague, this motion was put forward to call for further effort to prevent and reduce the impact of Alzheimer's disease and other dementias on Canadians as well as on their families and caregivers.

Private Members' Business

I could not agree more with the importance of taking further measures to support all Canadians who are living with Alzheimer's disease, so I am pleased to say that our government will be supporting this motion. We are working hard to make progress in fighting this disease and we are committed to taking the steps that my colleague has identified so that we can continue to work toward a cure and support Canadians until we find one.

As I said, we know the significance of this issue. In 2011 alone, it was estimated that 6% to 15% of seniors aged 65 or over were living with Alzheimer's or other forms of dementia. As our population ages, the number of Canadians who are living with dementia is expected to increase. The number is expected to double by 2031. Direct health sector costs linked to dementias are similarly expected to double over the next 20 years and are predicted to be as high as \$16.6 billion in 2031. These additional costs, along with an aging population, will put additional pressures upon our health care system.

It is always helpful to remind people of what we are talking about when we discuss dementia. Dementia is the loss of mental functions as a result of the connections in the brain breaking down over time. The technical term for this is neurodegeneration.

There are many types of dementia, with Alzheimer's disease being the most common. Symptoms can include memory loss, impaired judgment and reasoning, and changes in behaviour, mood, and communication capacity. As dementia progresses, a person's ability to function diminishes and reaches a point where the patient can become totally incapacitated.

Dementia also impacts the families and caregivers of those living with dementia. In addition to the financial burden it imposes, dementia can be devastating to a family's emotional, social, and psychological well-being. All of us have heard of the struggles of families who are working hard to support loved ones who are stricken with this disease.

For the Canadians facing this incredible challenge, we recognize the importance of hope and the need for immediate action. That is why our government has been working to support research on this issue. Dementia has no known cure, and there are no known treatments to alter its progressive course. The current treatment of dementia is limited to the treatment of symptoms, such as the decline in memory, language, thinking ability, and motor skills, but there is no treatment that addresses the cause.

As indicated in this motion, we need to bring together international partners to combat this disease and come up with a cure. Dementia is a challenge that is not unique to our country. There is a growing worldwide recognition that dementia, and Alzheimer's disease in particular, is a key global health crisis in this century.

The World Health Organization estimates that dementia cases will double every 20 years. It estimates that there are currently 47 million people living with dementia and that by 2030 this number could be as high as 75 million people worldwide. The growing social and economic costs associated with dementia care could easily grow to an unsustainable level.

In response, the Government of Canada has worked with the international community to address the challenges posed by dementia.

Following the G8 dementia summit, Canada endorsed a declaration along with our G7 partners that consists of a dozen commitments to strengthen collaboration on dementia. These commitments include an increase in research funding and improving the quality of life for people with dementia and their caregivers. Our Minister of Health has also committed to supporting research that will identify a cure or a disease-modifying therapy for dementia by 2025. That is our goal.

We have been working with the World Health Organization to maintain this momentum. Canada took part in the call to action by 80 countries on this issue, and we are working here at home. Motion No. 575 calls for the development of a pan-Canadian dementia strategy while respecting the jurisdiction of the provinces and the territories.

We are building on a strong track record. Last year, we launched the national dementia research and prevention plan. This plan brings together a significant number of federal investments and partnerships on research and prevention.

● (1855)

These investments form a cohesive effort to improve diagnosis, treatment, and care to help individuals living with this disease and help reduce the burden on families caring for loved one with dementia

The plan also supports healthy living investments and research that may help prevent or delay the early onset of dementia.

We are committed to facilitating collaboration in research on prevention, treatment, and a cure; assessing and sharing best practices; engaging our partners; and raising public awareness on this issue. By compiling current and ongoing research initiatives and aligning research priorities and strategies at the federal, provincial, and territorial levels as well as the international level, we are working with all partners to make the biggest positive impact possible.

Another important federal contribution is the Canadian Consortium on Neurodegeneration in Aging, better known as the CCNA. This consortium is the primary avenue for coordinating research with the provinces and territories. It is led by the government through the Canadian Institutes of Health Research as part of the dementia research strategy, which is Canada's premier research hub on neurodegenerative diseases.

Research undertaken by the consortium is focused on improving primary prevention, secondary prevention, and quality of life for those stricken. The CCNA receives \$31.5 million in funding over five years from the Government of Canada and a group of partners from the public and private sectors. Several provinces have also been engaged as partners in this research endeavour.

Private Members' Business

Our government is also providing up to \$100 million over six years, from 2011 to 2017, to the Brain Canada Foundation to support the Canada brain research fund. This fund provides dollar-for-dollar matched funding to the Brain Canada Foundation to support Canadian neuroscience research and advance knowledge and treatment of brain disease and mental disorders, and these include dementia.

In regard to engagement to address dementia, the government is currently working with the Alzheimer Society of Canada to launch a new program called Dementia Friends Canada. This program will engage Canadians in understanding what it means to live with dementia and in taking action to support those affected within the community.

The burden of dementia on caregivers must not be overlooked, and for this reason our government provides a variety of supports to unpaid caregivers. These include financial credits and benefits, such as the family caregiver tax credit; income replacement through the employment insurance compassionate care benefit; and funding for research and community-based initiatives. It is clear that significant investment and coordination on dementia is taking place at the federal-provincial-territorial level as well as at the international level.

Many of the components are already in place for a national dementia plan and pave the way for future innovation and achievement.

Our government fully recognizes the impact that dementia has on Canadians who are living with this disease and on the caregivers who are providing them with support. We have invested in a range of partnerships and key initiatives related to dementia, research, and prevention to improve care and reduce the burden on families that are dealing with this disease.

I am pleased that my colleague from Huron—Bruce brought today's motion forward. I am also pleased that we are calling upon the government to take even further measures to address dementia and to continue working with the provinces to establish a national strategy on this issue. We recognize the scale of this challenge and the need for a thorough response. We will continue working to deliver to support all Canadians and meet this challenge head-on.

I want to thank my colleague for this motion. I am proud to say that our government will be supporting this motion.

● (1900)

Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am always humbled by the privilege of standing in the House to represent the people of Nickel Belt. On this motion, on this issue of a national dementia strategy, I realize I stand to represent not only the people of Nickel Belt but also the millions of Canadians who are demanding a credible, real, national dementia strategy.

What is at play here is self-evident to many Canadians. This motion perfectly captures the Conservatives' politics, which have been on display here in Parliament time and again on issues vital to Canadians. This motion is more a child of spin and politics than a commitment to the leadership we are looking for. It gives the appearance of doing something to really help Canadians while staying the course on their own priorities.

Members will know that this motion appeared out of the blue a week before debate on my bill, which proposed a real, credible, national dementia strategy. It was a plan that would be anchored in a law, with leadership mandated from Ottawa. Canadians clearly wanted that.

The minister indicated that while initially opposed to the legislation, she had a change of mind. I believe the change of mind had something to do with the dozens of petitions being tabled in the House in support of a national dementia plan, the hundreds of municipal resolutions backing Bill C-356, and the growing number of provincial governments seeing the value of leadership from Ottawa that still respected provincial jurisdiction.

● (1905)

[*Translation*]

Canadians changed the government's mind. During many discussions with the minister and her representatives, we on this side of the House accepted all the amendments proposed to address their reservations. However, in the end, the government showed its true colours and abandoned its leadership and any legislative measure that it would be required to implement. This government's ideology and practice is to disregard authentic national strategies containing real measures that make things easier for Canadians.

This brings me to the vote held on May 6. Despite the fact that the government is now opposed to the bill and even though it has a majority in the House, the bill was defeated by one vote, 139 to 140. The media first talked about the confusion at the time of the vote. One Conservative member voted twice before withdrawing his support for the bill. Let me quickly say that the vote of 140 to 139 is a sharp reminder of the importance of every member's vote. Yes, bills can be passed or defeated by a single vote. The Conservatives have also heard about what their vote means since that night.

[*English*]

However, the vote was also a clear reminder of how we need to listen to the will of Canadians. Nine members of the Conservative caucus did so, voting for the legislation. I have recognized their votes in public comments. There were nine government MPs who joined our party and other parties to support real help for the 747,000 people now dealing with Alzheimer's or related dementia disease, plus the millions of people caught up in providing care and health services.

This motion cleverly includes so many elements from my bill and what is needed for a genuine national strategy, but this motion will not here and now help any of the people who are so in need of help.

Adjournment Proceedings

[Translation]

This motion recognizes the important research initiatives that we on this side of the House enthusiastically applaud. It recognizes the federal-provincial discussions under way, while deploring the fact that they are painfully slow. The motion includes many of the basic elements of a strategy, but it makes no commitment to accomplish what that it sets out.

[English]

The real problem of the motion before us not being as binding as legislation is that, in the words of my colleague the member for Victoria, it risks being a “feel-good, do-nothing motion”. I will say more about motions versus legislation later, but in terms of recognizing what Canadians really need from the current government, we need to hear what they said in the wake of the defeat of Bill C-356 by one vote. Some of what they said, I cannot repeat. “Shame” and “disgrace” were some of the more polite words.

The Canadian Medical Association lamented the lost opportunity. Dr. Chris Simpson, president of the CMA, said:

The defeat of Private Member's Bill C-356 Wednesday night represents a lost opportunity to make lasting progress in the serious and growing problem of dementia in Canada. We remain one of the few industrialized countries to be without a national dementia strategy.

... Bill C-356 would have called on the government to set up a national dementia strategy. Canada would have been able to get to work making sure the health care system has the right resources to deal with this problem before it becomes overwhelming.

However, a national strategy would involve all levels of government and introduce benchmarks, standards of care as well as timeframes. It would also give other levels of government and stakeholders a forum to point out the need for resources. Instead of a series of ad hoc initiatives, a national strategy is a long-term solution for a problem that will be with us for a long time.

● (1910)

[Translation]

Canadians want a real national strategy enshrined in law. That is what we have heard from municipalities, doctors, people with dementia, their caregivers, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, other religious leaders, CARP and other seniors' organizations, unions and many others.

The motion moved in the House reproduces, almost word for word, many of the provisions in Bill C-356. There is heavy emphasis on research, something we have always considered essential to any strategy. That is something that will only contribute to other aspects of a well thought-out strategy.

[English]

However, when we unpack this motion, and all its phrases, again we see that it will stay the course on what Ottawa has been doing, slowly and with so few results. There will be research. There will be discussions with the provinces. There is a nod to sharing of best practices and reports to the public, but with no real accountability or timelines.

There is little evidence of a comprehensive plan that also provides for early diagnosis and treatment. I do not see the continuum of care for people to remain at home and in the community, which is critical as our scarce acute care beds have many people who do not need to be in hospitals.

A real credible national dementia strategy would also now help those overwhelmed in the dementia workforce. For example, the motion mentions support for caregivers, but nothing about how and when. What resources will be given to these people now?

We on this side know the difference of a motion versus legislation. In another Parliament, we saw the passing of Mr. Broadbent's motion to end child poverty by the year 2000. It was unanimous. There was good will on all sides, but we know what happened with that motion. What will happen to this motion when there is no will of governments to follow up with real action and leadership.

We are reaching the end of this Parliament next month. We or others representing our parties will all have to face the voters in our ridings. Organizations like the Canadian Medical Association, CARP and others are advising voters to remember their MP or party votes on dementia. We are pleased on this side for having done our part in education, advocacy and building the momentum for a genuine national dementia strategy. There is no turning back.

Through Bill C-356 and our debate on this motion, Canadians will not be fooled by words any longer. They want a national dementia strategy to actually show up in their community to help their loved ones, their neighbours, their work colleagues, now. Canadians will not stomach more press releases, motions, promises or explaining of votes.

I will support this motion because I like mom, apple pie and everything that is said in Motion No. 575. Speaking of mom, the story of my mom and my family connected me to the millions of Canadians struggling with this health care crisis that dementia represents. She was a straight shooter. She would figure out fact from fiction about what the government says it does or will do.

We on this side are committed to continue the real work required to make this happen. I look forward to the new government in Alberta being part of that work. I look forward to a new government in Ottawa, a government led by my leader, that will lead on this file. Canadians deserve better than what we have.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): The time provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the order paper.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

Adjournment Proceedings

• (1915)

[English]

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to have another opportunity to address this important issue.

As people may know, one of the many challenges remote first nation communities face is substandard health care services. The success and well-being of the community is actually largely dependent on the quality of health care services and how easy it is to access them. Unfortunately, for too many remote and northern first nation communities, the quality and availability of health care services cannot come close to matching those that most Canadians receive.

In these locations, the government has failed the first nations, despite a clear constitutional responsibility to provide health care for those very communities. The problems are straightforward, mostly that nurses are not adequately trained and some communities are isolated from any service at all. In addition to that, building regulations can be completely ignored for many of the nursing stations currently in use.

This spring's Auditor General's report focused on health care in communities like these and brought many problems into focus. According to the report, only one in 45 nurses had been properly trained. In most cases, they do not have the qualifications to provide the most basic of care for these communities, let alone the resources or manpower shortages that only compound the problem. On top of that, nurses are often required to do things outside of their legislative scope of practice.

Health Canada is aware of this and yet nothing has been done to provide appropriate supporting mechanisms for these situations. In one community, two four year olds died because of strep throat-related conditions. Penicillin could have saved them. If they had had access to proper health care facilities, two four year olds could still be alive today.

I understand there is rhetoric on the other side of the House, but this is a serious issue.

Is this the quality of life we want for anyone in Canada? No community should be forced to worry that an entirely preventable and treatable disease can take the lives of its members, but that is the case for too many remote and northern first nations.

[Translation]

There is yet another example of how the Conservative government misses the mark on anything to do with the first nations. It is quick to bring in regulations but slow to invest. However, if we want to help these communities face their challenges over the long term, we need to invest. The government is doing the bare minimum, and it shows.

[English]

If the government really wanted to improve the quality of life for the people in first nation communities, it would provide properly trained nurses and take into account the specific needs of each community when allocating nursing staff levels.

In addition to that, the quality of clinic buildings is also a problem. Many buildings were not inspected on time according to Health Canada's 2005 framework for capital planning and management requirements. If they were, most deficiencies related to health and safety requirements or building codes went unaddressed. Of the 30 reviewed deficiencies, only 4 had been taken care of. This disregard for building quality puts patients and nurses on staff at risk and could limit access to health services in remote communities.

The government brags about its balanced budget. Inaction on problems like these is one way this has been done. The budget has been balanced on the backs of those who need it the most. Why are the Conservatives abandoning remote communities?

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and for Western Economic Diversification, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to address the comments of the hon. member with respect to health care for first nations and Inuit.

Certainly our government ensures that first nations communities have access to health care providers. Guided by the Canada Health Act, provinces and territories deliver hospital, physician, and public health programs to all Canadians, including first nations.

However, as I have previously noted, in order to support first nations in reaching an overall level of health that is comparable to other Canadians, Health Canada supplements provincial services by providing or funding the delivery of effective, sustainable, and culturally appropriate services in first nations communities. This work is done in a collaborative manner with our first nation partners. We also work with the provinces and territories to address the pressing health issues and provide the appropriate access to health services.

It is important to note that over \$2.5 billion is invested annually by the government in first nations and Inuit health, in the form of primary care; non-insured health benefits; and a broad range of public health programs, such as the aboriginal diabetes initiative, the national native alcohol and drug abuse program, and maternal child health programming.

Non-insured health benefits include medical transportation so that when first nation people living on reserve need to access health services that cannot be obtained in their community, and this includes emergencies or routine doctor appointments, Health Canada provides coverage for transportation. This, of course, includes emergency transportation for those living in remote and isolated communities.

On the primary care side, Health Canada directly delivers primary care services in 53 remote and isolated first nation communities in four regions: Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, and Quebec. We also provide funding to first nations to deliver primary health care services in 27 remote and isolated first nation communities, and that includes 12 in Saskatchewan region.

Adjournment Proceedings

We are working closely with first nation communities and have transferred programs and services to varying degrees in over 400 communities. I am also proud of the agreement that we have in British Columbia, covering more than 200 communities there.

It is important that we continue to work collaboratively with our provincial and first nation partners to improve delivery and the integration of health services.

Again, Health Canada's programs and services rely heavily on nurses. Registered nurses and nurse practitioners are predominately the first point of contact, and they are valued members of the community.

We take the recent recommendations of the Auditor General very seriously and are already working to address the recommendations in the report. Notably, to address nursing vacancy rates, Health Canada has implemented a recruitment and retention strategy, and is already receiving more than 250 applications per month.

On recruitment and training issues, having been a nurse who has worked in small remote aboriginal communities, I know that changeover is a real challenge in ensuring that we keep the training going for every new person. However, rest assured, we are committed to having highly educated, qualified individuals, and that everyone has been trained and certified to be a health care provider.

There are many other things that are important in terms of where we go in moving forward. I think there are enormous opportunities with telehealth. However, again, rest assured that we are taking the recommendations very seriously.

● (1920)

Mrs. Carol Hughes: Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General's report provides proof that the Conservative government is not making first nations a priority. The findings of this report are horrifying but not surprising.

The NDP has been stressing the challenges that too many first nations are facing throughout this entire Parliament. Proper nurse training, staffing, and building inspections would make a huge difference for these communities.

Each and every nurse that is sent to remote first nation locations needs to be adequately trained. Nurses should be equipped with the knowledge and experience it takes to handle the situations that will arise in these locations. In addition, each community should be properly examined to discover their unique needs when it comes to health care services.

If we are spending money to send nurses to these locations, it makes sense to ensure they are given every opportunity to do the best job they can. However, the state of health care services in remote first nation communities reflects the attitude of the Conservatives toward first nations as a whole.

First nations' lives matter. When is the government going to address the problems with health care services in northern and remote first nation communities?

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Mr. Speaker, our government will continue to provide front-line services to first nation communities while also

ensuring that medically necessary care and services are available for all first nations and Inuit in Canada.

Our work on first nation and Inuit health care services is collaborative. We have reached a comprehensive deal in British Columbia that contributes to the development of healthier and more sustainable first nation communities. It is one we hope will be implemented across the country.

We are investing in nursing stations and building new ones. We are working with first nation communities and other important partners to address the issues of prescription drug abuse and mental wellness. Budget 2015 would provide annual funding of \$2 million to support mental wellness teams in first nation communities.

Again, we are dedicated to improving the health of Canadians, including our first nation and Inuit communities.

● (1925)

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am not happy to be rising here today to talk about an issue that I think is very important, not only for Canada but for the world, with respect to clean drinking water and the protection of our environment.

This government's consideration of allowing a deep geologic repository for low- and intermediate-level radioactive waste in Kincardine, which it has opened the door for, has caused great grief for many people, because our Great Lakes are so important for drinking water. Our American cousins are very concerned about this, and Canadians as well are very concerned about this.

In fact, over 155 resolutions opposing this plan have been passed, representing every Great Lake province and state and up to 20 million people. That is because the government proposes to store items that are radioactive for over 100,000 years, down a shaft, in a limestone basin. That has never been done before. It is an experiment.

What has happened, which is really concerning, is that the Conservatives single-sighted the Kincardine spot. It was not based on science. It was not based on research. It was not based on a real analysis of what would be the best decision. It was based on a guess, and the guess has gone back to the Minister of the Environment and has caused considerable damage, not only in terms of public confidence about the environment and water quality but also in terms of our American friends.

I point to the fact that the City of Chicago is among 115 groups that sent a letter to the Canadian government. What it pointed out, which is really interesting, is that Joe Clark, the then foreign affairs minister of Canada, asked the United States not to do this, and it agreed that it would not do what we are proposing within 40 kilometres of the Great Lakes, whereas we are proposing to do it within about one kilometre of the Great Lakes. The groups have pointed this out to us numerous times. They want us to behave according to the model we created, and that they abided by, for the greater region of our country.

Adjournment Proceedings

They sent this letter and resolution to the Minister of the Environment, the premiers, the Prime Minister of Canada, Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the Minister of Natural Resources. The United States Secretary of State got it, and even the President of the United States got it.

This is an experiment. There are four of these in the world, and only one is left open. Two are closed in Germany, because they were not sustainable, and they created problems, and the other one right now that is open is in New Mexico, which had toxic radiation escape through the shaft and all the way to the surface, contaminating individuals who worked on the project.

We know for a fact that these are dangerous experiments.

Again, I ask the current government this: Why would it not examine this more thoroughly when we just chose to do a single-source evaluation in an experimental area next to one of the most precious resources in our country and in the world?

Mrs. Kelly Block (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there should be no doubt that our government supports the safe and responsible use of nuclear power and we are committed to ensuring that solutions are in place for managing radioactive waste over the long term. Indeed, Canada has a long history in the safe and responsible use of nuclear power and the waste it generates.

Our government has taken strong action to support this commitment to protecting the safety of Canadians and the safety of our environment. In fact, thanks to our government's strong legislative actions in recent years, Canada has established one of the most stringent nuclear regulatory systems in the world for all aspects of its nuclear activities. As the member opposite knows, the deep geological repository is a proposal by Ontario Power Generation to prepare a site and construct and operate a facility for the long-term management of low- and intermediate-level radioactive waste at the Bruce nuclear site within the municipality of Kincardine, Ontario.

In January 2012, our government and the president of the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission announced the establishment of a joint review panel to assess the proposed project. The joint review panel has conducted an independent, extensive, open and science-based assessment of the proposed geological repository. The panel reviewed an environmental impact statement and determined that there was sufficient information to proceed to public hearings. It then invited the public to provide their views in the fall of 2013 and 2014. The panel report has been received and we will now take the time to carefully review its findings.

This report is public and can be found on the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency's website. As required under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012, our government will issue a decision statement on whether the project may proceed.

During this review period, the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency will continue to invite aboriginal groups and registered participants to comment on potential conditions relating to possible mitigation measures and follow-up requirements that would be necessary if the project is authorized to proceed.

These comments will be taken into account by our government prior to the environmental assessment decision statement. If the project is authorized to proceed to the next phase of the permitting process, the decision statement will include conditions related to the project that will be legally binding on the proponent. However, let me be clear. As this government has said time and time again, no project will proceed unless it is safe for Canadians and safe for the environment.

• (1930)

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the parliamentary secretary's response, but in that response a couple of key things took place. Here is a quote, "mitigation measures". That is the ownership of a failure. Mitigation measures mean compensation, alterations or changes because the project failed. If the project fails, what does that mean? That means radiation exposure within a kilometre of the Great Lakes. That means the limestone where they are attempting to put this did not work and leached into the Great Lakes. For 100,000 years this has to sustain itself without causing problems.

The last point is "legally binding". Legally binding does not do anything for people who get sick from radiation and putting this environmental disaster into the backpacks of our kids.

Mrs. Kelly Block: Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada supports the safe and responsible use of nuclear power and is committed to ensuring that properly funded solutions are in place for managing radioactive waste over the long term. The joint review panel conducted an extensive, open and science-based assessment of the proposed deep geological repository.

Our government has confidence in the review panel process and our government will carefully consider the panel's final report before making any decisions. The minister will also take into consideration comments received by aboriginal groups and registered participants who will be actively consulted regarding the proposed project.

Our government's bottom line for all major resource projects is simple: no project proceeds unless it is safe, safe for the public and safe for the environment.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:34 p.m.)

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