



CANADA

House of Commons Debates

VOLUME 145 • NUMBER 109 • 3rd SESSION • 40th PARLIAMENT

OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Thursday, December 2, 2010

—

Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, December 2, 2010

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

•(1005)
[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8) I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 11 petitions.

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COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

STATUS OF WOMEN

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the sixth report of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women in relation to “Building the Pipeline: Increasing the Participation of Women in Non-Traditional Occupations”.

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Hon. Gordon O'Connor (Minister of State and Chief Government Whip, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations between parties and there has been general agreement for the following motion. I move:

That, notwithstanding Standing Order 83.1, the Standing Committee on Finance be authorized to present its report on the prebudget consultations no later than December 10, 2010.

To clarify, the committee was due to table the report tomorrow but it is asking for a one week extension. I have been told the parties support it.

The Speaker: Does the hon. Chief Government Whip 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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PETITIONS

FIREARM OFFENCES

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I am saddened to present a petition that was collected in my riding in memory of Boris Cikovic, a teenager who was gunned down by thugs trying to rob him.

Collected by Boris' parents and friends in the neighbourhood where he lived and where his promising young life was snuffed out by a bullet on October 3, 2008, the petition was signed by over 600 constituents.

The petitioners urge the government to pass my private members Bill C-537 and make offences involving firearms be automatically tried by a superior court. The bill would also toughen bail conditions by requiring those accused of crimes involving firearms to have to demonstrate in court why they should not be detained in custody before trial.

The man charged with Boris' murder is out on bail. At the same time, Mr. and Mrs. Cikovic are forced to struggle with the knowledge that they may be passing their son's murderer on the very streets of their own neighbourhood where Boris was killed.

•(1010)

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am also pleased to present another petition that was signed by over 800 constituents in my riding in support of Iryna Ivaniv and her four children who are forced to live separated from their husband and father, Volodymyr Kokhanovskyy.

The petitioners believe that Mr. Kokhanovskyy was unfairly denied permanent residence status and therefore the ability to properly provide support for his wife and children.

Furthermore, the petitioners are appalled by the prejudiced views expressed by the case officer in the notes in this file, which were received through access to information.

Routine Proceedings

The petitioners urge the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, the Immigration and Refugee Board Immigration Appeal Division and minister's counsel, hearings and appeals, to grant authorization to permit Mr. Kokhanovskyy to return to Canada and obtain permanent residence status.

HEALTH

Mr. Devinder Shory (Calgary Northeast, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to present a petition signed by approximately 900 residents of my riding of Calgary Northeast and the surrounding area.

The petition recognizes that Gage Latreille of Calgary Northeast passed away as a result of a late diagnosis of biliary atresia. In fact, his father, Dan Latreille, is here today to witness this presentation. I thank him for waiting patiently since yesterday.

The petitioners call upon the House of Commons to strongly support the testing for biliary atresia if symptoms of jaundice last more than 14 days and also to urge Canadian provinces and territories to implement mandatory testing if the jaundice lasts more than 14 days.

What happened to baby Gage can and should be prevented.

VALE INCO

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to present a petition from the residents of Thompson in northern Manitoba who are calling upon the federal government to stand up for Canadians and Canadian jobs.

On November 17, Vale announced the shocking news that it was planning to shut down the smelter and the refinery in Thompson. This announcement means the loss of over 600 jobs and will have a devastating impact on the community, the northern region and the province.

The people of Thompson are saying that the federal government must stand up for them. Not only did the government allow the foreign takeover by Vale, it also gave it a loan of \$1 billion just over a month ago, just weeks before such devastating news.

The people of Thompson and Manitoba are asking that the federal government look to the Canadian people and work with them and the stakeholders in Thompson to save the 600 jobs and the Thompson Vale smelter and refinery.

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mr. Massimo Pacetti (Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am tabling a petition where the residents of Canada call upon the House of Commons assembled in Parliament to recognize Remembrance Day, November 11, as a general holiday throughout Canada, with all the same legal provisions as general holidays such as New Year's Day, Canada Day, Memorial Day in Newfoundland and Labrador, Labour Day and Christmas Day.

The petitioners are saying that Canada owes its freedom to the efforts of our brave servicemen and women and that Canadians have a great sense of pride in the accomplishments of our servicemen and women and they deserve to be honoured for their sacrifices.

I want to thank Mr. Vince Lacroce, the spiritual leader at Laurier Macdonald High School in my riding, for having organized this.

ENVIRONMENTAL BILL OF RIGHTS

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to stand and present to the House petitions signed by more than 12 communities in Alberta: Edmonton, Lloydminster, Calgary, Birchcliff, Sherwood Park, Lethbridge, Fort Saskatchewan, Fort McMurray, Camrose, Spruce Grove, Grand Prairie, Red Deer and Valleyview, all calling on the government to pass Bill C-469, An Act to establish a Canadian Environmental Bill of Rights.

They state in their petition that as Canadians value a healthy and ecologically balanced environment, they call on the government to afford the rights and opportunities to Canadians to participate in decision-making, and the opportunity to hold the government accountable to protect those rights.

FOREIGN TAKEOVERS

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to bring forward concerns from residents in Timmins, Iroquois Falls and region, especially now that we see that Vale has decided to attack the value processing of base metals in Manitoba with its attack on the Thompson smelter, which echoes the attack by Xstrata against Ontario's copper refining capacity that we just witnessed over the last year.

The petitioners are growing increasingly concerned about the government's absolute lack of oversight in allowing foreign corporations to come over, buy up some of Canada's greatest base metal mining assets, strip them, high-grade the resources and leave the communities high and dry.

The petitioners are asking for changes under section 36 of the Canada Investment Act so we can hold these corporate raiders to account and we can set clear transparent standards so we will know that if a company is able to come in and buy up a great resource like Inco or Falconbridge, it will need to be accountable to the Canadian people and prove a net benefit to the people of northern Ontario, northern Manitoba, Newfoundland and Labrador and all across our country.

● (1015)

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Ms. Judy Foote (Random—Burin—St. George's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I stand today to speak to the whole issue around employment insurance. In our country we do need a healthy employment insurance system. A lot of people have no choice but to take advantage of the system, again, a system that they paid into for years, but in some cases, of course, when they are no longer employed for whatever reason, in most cases not of their own making, they really do need to make use of the EI system.

Routine Proceedings

The petitioners are from my riding, but we have also seen petitions that my colleagues have presented from other ridings in Newfoundland and Labrador, and it is the same throughout the country. They are asking that the government maintain the benefit duration for at least 50 weeks in all regions, eliminate the two week waiting period, ensure workers can continue to use their best 14 weeks of employment on which to base their claim, and to continue to allow workers to earn 40% of their rate while on a claim.

This is important for Canadians everywhere. It is a system they have been paying into. It is not money coming from the government. The system is self-sufficient. They are asking that the government gives some serious consideration to not just extending a program for a period of time, but to make the program permanent. That would ensure that people are not left in the lurch when these measures run out or when they no longer have a job that they can return to.

This is important to not just to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, but all Canadians who find themselves out of work through no fault of their own and need to avail themselves of the EI system to live a life that is comfortable for them based on their hours of work, the employment they have had over the years and the fact that they have paid into the system.

AFGHANISTAN

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, dozens of Canadians have signed this petition calling on the government to end Canada's military involvement in Afghanistan.

In May 2008, Parliament passed a resolution to withdraw Canadian Forces by July 2011. The Prime Minister, with the agreement of the Liberal Party, broke his oft-repeated promise to honour the parliamentary motion and, furthermore, refuse to put it to a parliamentary vote in the House.

Committing 1,000 soldiers to a training program still presents a danger to our troops and an unnecessary expense when a country is faced with a \$56 billion deficit. The military mission has cost Canadians more than \$18 billion so far, money that could have been used to improve health care and seniors' pensions right here in Canada. In fact, polls show that a clear majority do not want Canada's military presence to continue after the scheduled removal date of July 2011.

Therefore, the petitioners call on the Prime Minister to honour the will of Parliament and bring the troops home now.

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QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 459, 473, 474 and 477.

[Text]

Question No. 459—**Hon. Marlene Jennings:**

With respect to M-426, adopted in the second session of the 39th Parliament, calling on the government to respond to the challenges faced by Canadians with rare diseases and disorders, has the government: (a) established a definition for serious rare diseases; (b) examined options, including the possible creation of a specific fund, to improve access to rare disease treatments, building on recent work undertaken by federal, provincial and territorial governments under the National Pharmaceuticals

Strategy; (c) considered the establishment of a multi-stakeholder advisory body, including treaters and patients, to recommend treatment access for life-threatening or serious rare disorders, based on scientific standards and social values; (d) explored options to consider national and international expert advice in developing criteria for treating patients based on scientific evidence and patient impact, and to link these activities with ongoing post-market monitoring of real world drug safety and effectiveness; (e) considered options to encourage research and development into treatments for rare diseases and other unmet health needs; (f) considered internationally accepted standards for conduct of clinical trials in rare disorders appropriate for the challenges inherent to very small patient populations; (g) considered how Health Canada's work on a progressive licensing framework could provide appropriate support to the design of clinical trials for very small patient populations and appropriate review of evidence submitted from these trials; and (h) reported to the House the progress accomplished as of October 19, 2010?

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of Health, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the federal government recognizes the challenges faced by Canadians with rare disorders, including the fact that few and expensive treatment options exist and they are difficult to assess due to the inherent limited availability of data. The Government of Canada remains committed to assisting provinces and territories with the cost of their health care system, as underscored in the Speech from the Throne and in the 2010 budget. While provinces and territories have jurisdiction over the delivery of health care, these funds can help with the costs of their drug plans, including public drug programs covering people suffering from rare disorders.

Orphan drugs are often not recommended by the common drug review for formulary listing as they typically fail the test for cost-effectiveness due to their high costs and limited evidence of long-term effectiveness. Participating jurisdictions retain the ability to make listing decisions based on their respective needs and priorities. In fact, some provinces, Alberta and Ontario, have moved forward with their own programs specifically designed for drugs for rare diseases. The government is prepared to work with interested provinces and territories to explore new approaches to assessing treatment options for rare diseases for potential reimbursement by the respective drug programs.

The federal government regulates the authorization process of pharmaceuticals with regard to their safety and efficacy. Health Canada is exploring a new regulatory framework to address issues specific to drugs for rare diseases, such as appropriate pre-market and post-market requirements given small populations. Technical consultations with key stakeholders are under way and will continue over the coming months.

Question No. 473—**Mr. Charlie Angus:**

With regard to government revenues and Vale, for each fiscal year since 2006-2007, up to and including the current fiscal year: (a) what was the total global amount of taxes paid by Vale to the Canadian treasury; and (b) what tax exemptions did Vale receive from the government?

Routine Proceedings

Hon. Keith Ashfield (Minister of National Revenue, Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with respect to the above-noted question, what follows is the response from the Canada Revenue Agency, CRA.

The confidentiality provisions of the Income Tax Act, the Excise Tax Act, and the Excise Act, 2001 prevent the CRA from disclosing specific taxpayer information. Therefore, the CRA is not able to provide the information as requested.

Question No. 474—**Ms. Megan Leslie:**

With regard to the sale of federal land indicated by Halifax, Nova Scotia Parcel Identification Number 279968 on January 14, 2010: (a) what deed authorizes this transfer and why had it not been registered at the Registry of Deeds; (b) what policy or circumstances guided the decision to cede the title of a parcel of land belonging to the government; (c) what policy or circumstances informed the cost assessment of this parcel of land; and (d) who was responsible for this decision?

Hon. Chuck Strahl (Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), the registration of the title represented as an instrument of grant, quit claim deed, which includes the disputed portion of PID No. 279968, the infilled waterlot, was registered on July 9, 2010. It is the responsibility of the recipient of the grant to register title with the Halifax County Land Registration Office.

In response to (b), the petition filed by the owners of a private property as plaintiffs against the adjoining property owners to the southeast, the Crown, and the Halifax Port Authority, claimed adverse possession to the disputed portion, the infilled waterlot, of PID No. 279968 and per the terms of the settlement agreement, the Crown issued the instrument of grant, quit claim deed, to the plaintiffs. Section 8(2)(d) of Canada Marine Act requires that federal real property under the management of a Canada port authority be listed in its letters patent. As the infilled waterlot was listed in schedule B of the Halifax Port Authority's letters patent prior to the petition being filed by the plaintiffs, ceding title of the portion of PID No. 279968 to the plaintiffs per the settlement agreement required both an instrument of grant, quit claim deed, for the property as well as supplementary letters patent to be issued by the Minister of Transport.

In response to (c), an independent cost assessment approved by Public Works and Government Services Canada was undertaken for the disputed portion of PID No. 279968, infilled waterlot.

In response to (d), the decision was made by the Minister of Transport after consultations with Transport Canada officials and legal counsel.

Question No. 477—**Mr. Glen Pearson:**

With regard to the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA): (a) what amount of Official Development Assistance is allocated to Haiti; (b) what specific regions in Haiti have received these funds; (c) since when have these funds been allocated to Haiti; and (d) what is the status of the Haiti Earthquake Relief Fund and the matching funds from CIDA?

Hon. Bev Oda (Minister of International Cooperation, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), following the January 12, 2010 earthquake, CIDA allocated \$150.15 million in humanitarian assistance. In March 2010, at the International Donors Conference on Haiti in New York, Canada committed \$400 million

over two years, 2010-11 and 2011-12, for the reconstruction of Haiti to support the Government of Haiti action plan and priorities. The \$400 million is in addition to Canada's long-term development assistance in Haiti, \$555 million from 2006 to 2011. In total, the Government of Canada's current commitment to Haiti is now over \$1 billion, 2006 to 2012, making it the largest development recipient in the Americas. The bulk of this amount flows from CIDA.

In response to (b), while some projects are targeting specific regions, such as Nord-Ouest, Nord, Nord-Est, Artibonite, Centre, Ouest, Sud-est, Nippes, Grande-Anse, and Sud, most projects are active across the country.

Post-earthquake projects are present in earthquake-affected regions and "host regions", where displaced persons are relocated.

In response to (c), Canada has been providing official development assistance to Haiti since 1968. Based on preliminary data, CIDA allocated \$227 million in official development assistance to Haiti in 2009-10.

In response to (d), in response to the earthquake, Canadians generously donated a total of \$220 million to registered charities. The Government of Canada matched their donations through the Haiti earthquake relief fund.

This fund is financed partly through the \$150.15 million provided for humanitarian assistance and the \$400 million commitment over two years for recovery and reconstruction.

To date, the Government of Canada has earmarked through CIDA more than half of the Haiti earthquake relief fund through the provision of \$65.5 million in humanitarian assistance, \$20 million for a school feeding project, \$30 million for a call for proposals from Canadian organizations, and \$5 million for climate change adaptation initiatives.

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[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if Questions Nos. 462 and 485 could be made orders for returns, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 462—**Hon. Judy Sgro:**

With regard to Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC): (a) what is the current total number of full- and part-time staff at the Department; and (b) what are the projected number of full- and part-time employees at HRSDC for fiscal years 2010-2011 and 2011-2012?

(Return tabled)

*Business of Supply*Question No. 485—**Mr. Mario Silva:**

With regard to the government's aid funding for Pakistan in 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010, and for every project funded, what is: (a) the name of the project; (b) the location of the project within the country of destination; (c) the amount of funding received by the project broken down as (i) grant or contribution, (ii) interest-free loan, (iii) repayable loan, (iv) non-repayable loan; and (d) the department where the funding originated?

(Return tabled)

[English]

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: Mr. Speaker, I ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mrs. Joy Smith: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am requesting that we revert to reports.

The Speaker: Does the hon. member for Kildonan—St. Paul have unanimous consent to revert to presenting reports from committees?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

HEALTH

Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 10th report of the Standing Committee on Health entitled, "An Examination of the Potential Health Impacts of Radio-Frequency Electromagnetic Radiation".

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

•(1020)

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—WEST COAST OIL TANKER TRAFFIC

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP) moved:

That, in the opinion of the House, the government should immediately propose legislation to ban bulk oil tanker traffic in the Dixon Entrance, Hecate Strait and Queen Charlotte Sound as a way to protect the West Coast's unique and diverse ocean ecosystem, to preserve the marine resources which sustain the community and regional economies of British Columbia, and to honour the extensive First Nations rights and title in the area.

Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Nanaimo—Cowichan.

The very important reason that New Democrats decided to bring this particular debate to the House now is to suggest to other members in this place and to Canadians at large that there is an imminent risk and threat to B.C.'s north coast. Even the current Conservative government acknowledged the unique and fragile nature of the ecosystem when the current House leader, along with support from New Democrats and others across the country, enabled the protection of the Great Bear Rainforest. It is also true that the

former environment minister, Jim Prentice, announced the Gwaii Haanas marine conservation park in the same body of water that we will be discussing today.

Even the Conservatives have acknowledged there is something unique about British Columbia's central and north coasts, something fragile, something world renowned. At the same time, the Conservatives are proposing and encouraging the passage of 225 supertankers that are bigger than the Eiffel Tower and which contain three times as much oil as the *Exxon Valdez* did before it spilled, through those same waters.

We hope to illustrate today through our arguments, questions and comments that the nature of this project, the nature of running supertankers off B.C.'s coast, particularly the north and central coasts, poses such significant cultural, economic and environmental risk that the government must remove the uncertainty to this question.

We heard as recently as earlier this week the government profess that there is already some type of ban on supertankers through these very same waters, but in fact, that is not the case. All of the comments from the government have been verbal. Nothing ever has been written down in more than 40 years of discussion.

We all know that in Ottawa this place loves paper. It loves documents. It loves to write things down after things have been said. However, in this case, to simply suggest that a verbal moratorium or some sort of voluntary exclusion zone is enough to satisfy the good people of British Columbia is misleading, dangerous and has to be ended now. The NDP is calling for clarity and certainty over this question.

We already know the numbers on the side of the oil and gas game. There are a number of people who go to work in the fishing, tourism and ecotourism industries. We are talking about a multi-billion dollar industry on B.C.'s central and north coasts, when it comes to commercial sport fishing, recreation and tourism of all kinds. We know that all those jobs will be at risk as well as the billions of dollars that are created through those industries.

We also know on the ecological side that this is one of the most important and precious ecosystems in the world. The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans knows this because she has been in the region. She knows that this has unique value not just to Canada and British Columbia, but to the entire planet. To put it at risk for very narrow, and I would say misguided, interests is wrong of any government of any political persuasion.

Two summers ago I took a boat ride through the route that is being proposed by the Enbridge gateway project. I was with three northern MLAs: Gary Coons, Robin Austin and Doug Donaldson. We all got on a 35-foot fishing boat and followed the route of these supertankers. Supertankers are massive and very difficult to steer through tight turns. We followed the route through to the ocean.

For those who have not been to B.C.'s coast, it is stunning geography with mountains rising to the sky, deep waters and narrow channels.

Business of Supply

Along the proposed tanker route, there are three hairpin 90° turns in succession. At one point I turned to the captain of the little boat we were on and asked if this was a point where tugs would guide the supertankers because it is so dangerous to manoeuvre through. The captain said that there were no tugs planned to guide the supertankers. I said that they would have to slow down. Clearly to make these hairpin turns one after another in imperfect conditions would be dangerous. The captain said that the supertankers could not slow down as the only way they have steerage is if they have some momentum. The supertankers have to take the turns at full and proper speed. That is the only way.

This is a part of the ocean that experiences some of the strongest waves, biggest winds and biggest storms in the world. There have been two major accidents within the last five years alone. Everyone will remember the sinking of the *Queen of the North*.

•(1025)

Industry will tell us that technology has improved. We heard this in the case of the *Exxon Valdez*, that it was a mistake, that the captain was drunk, that things have improved so much since those dark days.

I will remind everybody of that tragedy which occurred just north of the area we are talking about today. Some 3,500 square kilometres of ocean were polluted. Some 750 kilometres of the Alaskan coast were covered in oil. That oil is still there today. It can still be found on the shore and in the marine animals. Traces of that oil spill from so long ago still exist today. What is notable about the *Exxon Valdez* spill is that it ranks 32nd on the list of major oil spills in the world from tankers alone. It was not considered very big on a global scale.

The ships that are being proposed by the Enbridge project are much larger and are of a much more dangerous nature.

It is not just New Democrats who are calling for this ban to finally be formalized in law. The allies that are lining up one after another are significant and important for the current government to pay attention to.

The first group that must be mentioned, because they have been in a leadership role from day one, would be the first nations communities along the coast and along the proposed pipeline route through to Alberta. First nations one after another have stood and said, "Not on our watch. Not in our lifetime or the lifetime of our children will this be allowed to take place because so much is put at risk". For people who rely on the oceans and rivers for their culture and their very sustenance, the question of a few petrodollars over a couple of years versus an entire way of life since time immemorial is not a question that can even be considered deeply simply because the risks far outweigh the benefits.

In British Columbia at the most recent gathering of mayors and councillors, the municipal leaders voted, without dissension, that a tanker ban must be put in place for the north coast. Not a single one of British Columbia's mayors and councillors has raised any opposition to this idea. It passed. The coastal first nations, the first nations summit, all the environment groups in British Columbia and an increasing number of businesses in the tourism, commercial and sport fishing sectors and other sectors have said that the risks are not worth it. The benefit to British Columbia is almost nil, so why would they consider taking on this type of risk.

We have also seen in poll after poll that a minimum of 75% of British Columbians want this formalized into law. They want this done. For the Conservatives representing British Columbia, they know this too. They do not campaign on this. They do not say, "Vote for me and I am going to put more and more supertankers on the coast, 225 of them a year". British Columbians have spoken clearly. If the Conservatives are so committed to the idea of actually representing the west, here is an opportunity to do so.

Throughout the last 50 years, about every 10 or 15 years, industry with its friends in government makes an attempt to break the notion of supertankers on this coast, of oil and gas coming. Every 10 or 15 years another committee is set up and another proposal is put forward. The committee goes out and talks to communities and asks them what they think. The communities overwhelmingly say no and the government proceeds anyway. Then unfortunately, there is a disaster somewhere in the world.

That is what happened in 1971. It happened in 1975. It happened again in 1982. It happened again in the early 1990s. It happened again in 2010 with the British Petroleum spill in the Gulf of Mexico. People at large woke up and said, "You have got to be kidding. We are going to put all of this at risk for what?"

Now, let us look at the specific project the government has been encouraging since day one, the Enbridge pipeline, 1,100 kilometres in length, out of the tar sands to the coast, to put in 225 supertankers per year, some 12,000 over the lifetime of the pipeline.

This project is proposing to put risk in front of British Columbians and those on the coast with minimal to no benefit. Time and time again, British Columbians have united on this issue. I was speaking to oil executives just this morning and put forward this notion. I said that while publicly it may look as though the Conservative government is a friend of the oil and gas industry, it is in fact the worst enemy because it creates uncertainty. The industry responded in our meeting this morning by saying, "Uncertainty is killing us, because we don't know what is going to happen to carbon pricing. We don't know what the government's plans are for climate change".

There is no national energy strategy whatsoever, which industry has been calling for. The heads of Suncor, Syncrude, Exxon Canada, Shell Canada have all said that a national energy strategy, a security strategy, is needed so that Canadians can rest assured there is some kind of plan. What is happening right now is all risk, no benefit. British Columbians, west coasters, are saying "Enough is enough. Put this into law. Make this happen".

Business of Supply

• (1030)

Hon. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that the first nations along the proposed pipeline's pathway said no. I want the member's opinion on twinning the pipe down to Vancouver and allowing the oil to leave Canada through the port of Vancouver.

Does the member believe the twinning process is an option? Has the member discussed this with the companies involved?

Another question I have revolves around marine protected areas. Does the member support the notion that the government should significantly expand the number of marine protected areas?

We are one of the world's laggards in this area. It is absolutely crucial to protect our marine ecosystems in order for this to happen.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Mr. Speaker, when the government announced the Gwaii Haanas marine protected area, it congratulated itself extensively, noting the unique nature of this part of the marine environment. It is located off the southern tip of Gwaii Haanas, at the very end of what was formerly known as the Queen Charlotte Islands. Jim Prentice, the environment minister at the time, and the current environment minister have both said how important it is to have this marine protected area for all sorts of reasons, cultural, economic and environmental.

However, the government is proposing to overlay on top of that marine protected area supertanker traffic, oil tanker traffic, which then leads, as industry has told us, to offshore drilling in the same area.

This should not surprise Canadians too much. Canadians can be forgiven for being a little cynical of the government's plans around the marine protected environment because last year, the Prime Minister was up in the Arctic announcing a beluga sanctuary. What a lovely idea. No one would argue against that. However, the Prime Minister neglected to mention that the government had issued oil and gas drilling leases completely around that little postage stamp of a sanctuary. The belugas will be ducking oil and gas rigs on their way to the sanctuary. And by the way, oil and gas drilling is also permitted in the beluga sanctuary.

That is what the government perceives as conservation. It is clearly not.

In terms of Vancouver, I can get into it a little later, but consultation is needed there as much as it is needed on the north coast. Everybody who will be impacted must be involved. The first nations will be speaking loudly and strongly to this.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to my colleague's passionate and very credible description of the threats we are going to face with this tanker traffic through the straits and what the threat could be to the British Columbia coast.

What concerns me is the pattern we see from the government. The Conservative government has consistently done anything in its power to advance reckless development in the tar sands. It has undermined Canada's international credibility on anything to do with climate change.

Just last week the government used its bagmen and party hacks in the Senate to override the democratic right of the House of Commons on legislation on climate change. It is pretty clear that the government is little more than a front for big oil.

Given the Conservative government's absolutely abusive attitude toward anything to do with climate change, should Canada even be allowed to participate in Cancun or any of the climate change talks?

It seems that the government's plan is to consistently advance whatever reckless plans for big oil there are to the detriment of—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Order. The hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, by creating such an element of uncertainty, this is actually doing harm to the very industry the government hopes to support.

On one hand, the government is saying there is some sort of tanker moratorium, be it voluntary or otherwise. On the other hand, it is telling Enbridge to please apply for a pipeline project that is going to enable 225 tankers in the same place the government says there may be a moratorium. That uncertainty is a killer to business. Everybody knows that.

Another element of this project which is important to my colleague from Timmins—James Bay and anybody in this House who happens to represent a resource constituency, a place that draws from our natural environment, is that this is all for raw export, export of raw bitumen to other places to do the upgrading. This represents thousands of jobs.

It also helps create, as the finance minister will well know, the precarious nature of what is often called Dutch disease, where the Canadian dollar in fact becomes a petrodollar. Every time another tar sands operation is developed, the dollar incrementally rises and manufacturing in places like Quebec, Ontario, even in Alberta itself, becomes harder and harder to do. It becomes harder and harder for us to compete.

This is a known economic reality, and it is being perpetrated by a government that agrees to everything if it has the name “tar sands” attached to it.

* * *

• (1035)

SUSTAINING CANADA'S ECONOMIC RECOVERY ACT

(Bill C-47. On the Order: Government Orders)

November 30, 2010—the Minister of Finance—Third reading of Bill C-47, A second act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 4, 2010 and other measures.

Hon. John Baird (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I believe if you seek it you will find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, all questions necessary to dispose of the Third Reading stage of Bill C-47, A second Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 4, 2010 and other measures, be deemed put and a recorded division deemed requested and deferred to Tuesday, December 7, 2010, at the expiry of the time provided for Government Orders.

Business of Supply

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Does the hon. government House leader have unanimous consent to present the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): 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)

* * *

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—WEST COAST OIL TANKER TRAFFIC

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by acknowledging the very good work that the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley has done on this. He has been a passionate advocate for the motion that is before the House and has been tireless in doing appropriate stakeholder work throughout communities, environmental, business and first nations. I really need to put that on record.

I want to remind people what we are talking about today. We are calling on the government to protect the environment and Canadians by legislating a ban on bulk oil tanker traffic in the Dixon Entrance, Hecate Strait and Queen Charlotte Sound. The important part of this is legislating a ban.

My hon. colleague from Skeena—Bulkley Valley talked about certainty. It is critical that we have this legislative ban so there is certainty, so that people in Canada and British Columbia know beyond a shadow of a doubt that we will have a ban on bulk oil tanker traffic. The member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley ably outlined a number of concerns, and I am going to focus just on the first nations aspect of it because I have only a very brief period of time to speak about this.

I want to start with a news release that was done on November 30. I am quoting Art Sterritt, the executive director of the Coastal First Nations, an alliance of nine first nations. He says:

Our nations have declared a ban on oil tankers through our waters because a spill would kill our livelihoods and wipe out our culture. We have used our ancestral law to ban tankers from our territories. ...now it's time for Parliament to join us in legislating a federal ban on tankers in this region.

He goes on to talk a little bit about why this is so important. He says:

...the region is home to the Great Bear Rainforest, humpback and killer whales and a vibrant coastal economy and ecotourism industry that employs literally tens of thousands of Canadians.

He is joined by a number of other first nations, and I want to put this into the record. On Wednesday, March 24, 2010, several first nations people on the central and north Pacific coast and Haida Gwaii issued a declaration banning tar sands crude oil tankers from their territories. I will not read the whole declaration, but it ends up by saying:

Therefore, in upholding our ancestral laws, rights and responsibilities, we declare that oil tankers carrying crude oil from the Alberta Tar Sands will not be allowed to transit our lands and waters.

In analyzing that declaration, West Coast Environmental Law made a couple of key points. It said that a decision by the federal government to disregard the Coastal First Nations' declaration and give oil tankers a green light would infringe Coastal First Nations' constitutionally protected aboriginal title and rights and Canada's international law commitments.

It goes on to say that:

Many First Nations have voiced well-substantiated concerns that the federal government's proposed review process fails to meet the Crown's constitutional duties to them. ... The government's review process for the Enbridge project does not accommodate First Nations governance and decision-making rights, which are inherent to their Aboriginal Title.

In addition, the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs also opposes both the Enbridge pipeline and the tanker traffic. It says that:

The short-term economic gain promised by government and industry proponents of mega-projects like the Enbridge pipeline...are being opposed by First Nations who are thinking of the long-term impact on their territories and on their communities.

Grand Chief Phillip goes on to say:

It is abundantly clear, B.C. First Nations will not put their territories and waters at risk caused by the proposed Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline and crude oil tanker traffic. As Indigenous Peoples, we know first-hand when third party interests are granted access to the resources of our territories, government and the courts protect those industry interests at great cost to Aboriginal Title and Rights and of the environmental values that many British Columbians share with First Nations.

I could go on about the number of first nations. It is unprecedented, the number of nations that have stood up and said that they oppose this bulk oil tanker traffic. They do not like what it is going to do to the environment, to their cultural rights and to their livelihood. They too are calling on a legislated ban.

To put this into an international context, I want to briefly quote from the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, article 32, section 2. It says that:

States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free and informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting their lands or territories and other resources, particularly in connection with the development, utilization or exploitation of mineral, water or other resources.

● (1040)

We recently have had the Conservative government saying that it now endorses the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. In that light, I would say that nothing can happen around oil tanker traffic unless the first nations are appropriately consulted.

I want to touch on some case law here, because the Canadian courts have enshrined in their decisions the fact that there is a constitutional obligation for the government to consult.

Fraser Milner Casgrain LLP did a paper, a focus on aboriginal law, back in 2004 that talks about an important decision, the Haida decision. I am just going to quote a bit from this. It says:

Speaking for a unanimous Court, Chief Justice McLachlin held that the Crown's duty to consult with Aboriginal peoples is grounded in the principle of the honour of the Crown, which must be understood generously. ...

Business of Supply

In the *Haida* case, British Columbia had knowledge of the potential existence of Aboriginal rights or title and made decisions that might adversely affect these rights. Therefore, the honour of the Crown mandated consultation prior to making a decision that might adversely affect the claimed Aboriginal title and rights. The strength of the case for the Haida title and the Haida right to harvest trees suggest that the honour of the Crown may require significant accommodation to preserve the Haida interest pending resolution of their claim.

They go on to outline a number of key points. I do not have time to read them all, but I want to touch on a couple.

The obligation arises when the Crown has knowledge of the potential existence of the Aboriginal right or title and is contemplating action that may adversely affect those interests.

Clearly, with the number of nations that are involved around the oil tanker traffic and around the Enbridge pipeline, the federal and provincial governments are fully aware of that aboriginal right or title.

Another point this paper makes is "...the seriousness of the potentially adverse effect upon the right or title claimed".

Of course the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley talked about the potential adverse effects on the coast of B.C. should there be an oil spill, and we only have to look to the Gulf of Mexico to see that potential adverse effect. Clearly it is another element where first nations need to be consulted.

It goes on to say:

Good faith in the consultation process is required on the part of both the Crown and Aboriginal groups....

The obligation to consult with and, where indicated, to accommodate Aboriginal concerns lies with the Crown alone. There is no independent legal obligation on third parties such as project proponents.

That is important, because sometimes people have tried to shuffle off the duty to consult to industry, and it clearly lies with the Crown. Although this paper is dealing with mining, it raises some interesting points around the duty to consult and economic benefits.

The Harvard Law mining project made a number of recommendations for the kinds of changes that governments need to make. It also said that, although there are allegations that mining and other projects like this one would provide revenue:

It also, however, frequently interferes with First Nations' use of their traditional lands and significantly harms the environment to which their culture is inextricably linked.

That is a very key point in this particular issue.

Of course I have much more material, talking about case law and analysis around the government's duty to consult, to accommodate, around the issues of rights and title for first nations, and of course the whole issue regarding employment. We know that in many first nations territories in this country, projects have come in and the first nations have not been the beneficiaries of the supposed economic spinoff. Often what happens is that they are left with the devastation of their lands and territories after the company has packed up its bags and gone away or polluted the environment.

Therefore I am calling upon all members of this House to support this very important motion and to call upon the government to legislate a ban on the bulk oil tanker traffic in this northern coastal area.

● (1045)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Ms. Judy Foote (Random—Burin—St. George's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. There have been discussions among the parties and I think you will find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That, for the calendar year 2011 in the present Parliament, Standing Order 81(10)(a) be amended as follows:

81.(10)(a) In 2011, seven sitting days shall be allotted to the Business of Supply in the period ending not later than March 26; eight additional days shall be allotted to the Business of Supply in the period ending not later than June 23; and seven additional days shall be allotted to the Business of Supply for the period ending not later than December 10; provided that the number of sitting days so allotted may be altered pursuant to paragraph (b) or (c) of this section. These twenty-two days are to be designated as allotted days. In 2011, no more than one fifth of all the allotted days shall fall on a Wednesday and no more than one fifth thereof shall fall on a Friday. For the period ending not later than March 26, commencing on the first sitting day of this supply period, no less than two and no more than three allotted days shall be designated in each ten sitting day period of the said supply period and for the periods ending not later than June 23 and December 10, commencing on the first sitting day of these supply periods, no less than one and no more than two allotted days shall be designated in each ten sitting day period of the said supply period, except pursuant to paragraph (c) or section (11) of this Standing Order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to move this motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): 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)

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I apologize to the member for Nanaimo—Cowichan for interrupting her questions and comments.

Since we have just had that motion, I would also like to propose a motion. There have been consultations among the parties and I believe if you seek it you would find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That, at the conclusion of today's debate on the opposition motion in the name of the Member from Skeena—Bulkley Valley, all questions necessary to dispose of the motion be deemed put and a recorded division deemed requested and deferred to Tuesday, December 7, 2010, at the expiry of the time provided for government orders.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Business of Supply

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—WEST COAST OIL TANKER TRAFFIC

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Hon. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague and I both live on beautiful Vancouver Island, so this is a very important issue for us.

I would like to ask my colleague a question and it revolves around twinning. If the pipeline cannot go in an east-west direction, perhaps there is an opportunity for discussions to take place with the private sector to see if the pipeline could be transferred to a north-south direction through Vancouver. I know it is extremely important that we lessen our dependence on fossil fuels. I would like to know if she thinks that would be an option.

The Cancun conference is taking place right now. The government has tragically taken a series of stands with respect to the environment, whether it was COP 10 in Japan or now in Cancun. The government is really not providing Canadians with any kind of demonstrable, doable and effective plan to deal with climate change.

What are the two things my colleague would suggest that the government do right now with respect to global warming?

• (1050)

Ms. Jean Crowder: Mr. Speaker, I am going to reverse the order of the member's questions.

With respect to the two things the government could do, it could immediately look at implementing Bill C-311, the climate change accountability act, and implement the environmental bill of rights put forward by the member for Edmonton—Strathcona. Those would be two good steps in demonstrating Canada's position on climate change.

With regard to the twinning of the pipeline, I will come back to the first nations' perspective. I know we are talking about twinning here, but any additional construction is going to have an impact on territories. Before any consideration of expansion of even existing projects is considered, first nations must be at the table, must be appropriately consulted, must be included in any implementation of any decision. That is the appropriate step to take on that particular project.

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the member if this is part of a pattern of blatant disregard for British Columbians by the Conservative government?

We certainly lived through the first strike that the Conservatives forced on B.C., the softwood lumber sellout, which cost us thousands upon thousands of jobs. The HST was imposed as well on British Columbians. Now the Conservatives seem intent on imposing monster tankers going up and down the coast with the incredible risk that it poses to the B.C. economy and to our environment and our quality of life.

Is this the third strike of the Conservatives' blatant disregard for British Columbians, for B.C. interests and for British Columbians' quality of life?

Ms. Jean Crowder: Mr. Speaker, that is a very good question. I remember a couple of throne speeches ago when the Minister of Finance actually said that this budget was good for Canadians from the east coast to the Rockies. Those of us on the other side of the Rockies said, "Wait a minute; we are part of Canada. At least the last time we checked, we were still part of Canada".

I think the interests of people in British Columbia have sadly been left out by the Conservative government. As the member for Burnaby—New Westminster rightly pointed out, the HST has had devastating effects on, for example, the restaurant industry. That industry has taken a huge hit over the last couple of months.

When we look at things such as oil tanker traffic and the impact that the *Exxon Valdez* had in Alaska and we see what is happening in the Gulf, why will the government not listen to British Columbians? The majority of British Columbians say they do not want these giant oil tankers in these waters. They do not want to have to deal with the aftermath of a potential oil spill. The industry itself has often said that it cannot guarantee that there will not be an oil spill.

Why would we do it? We have often talked about the precautionary principle. Why would we not use the precautionary principle when we are talking about these oil tankers?

The impact is unimaginable. People who have not visited this part of the country have no idea of the geography and the weather patterns. It would be a catastrophe if we had an oil spill in the middle of winter when we could have 90-foot waves.

Mr. Brian Jean (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak about this topic, which is very important to Canadians. I will be sharing my time with the member for Abbotsford.

I was actually born in British Columbia and I spent a lot of time on the water. I do have a full understanding of what this entails. I have to say, listening to the NDP, one would think Chicken Little was running around and the sky was going to fall.

The reality is that oil tankers have been trading safely and regularly off British Columbia's coasts for many years. In fact, for more time than I have been alive they have been trading safely. I do not believe there has been one oil tanker incident at sea in that period of time.

Measures actually exist to prevent this kind of thing and to ensure the safe transportation of petroleum products, not only to prevent possible ship-source spills but also to ensure preparedness and an appropriate response in the unlikely event of a spill. So there is actually a dual way of dealing with it if it does happen.

As I said, there has not been one incident at sea since before I was born. The likelihood is very remote indeed. We have had additional things happen, double-hull tankers and things such as that. Of course, we have our pilots who make sure that our ships get to where they are supposed to go, and safely in places where it might pose a danger.

Business of Supply

Transport Canada's marine mandate is related to navigation. Navigation is very important. Shipping and protection of the environment from ship pollution are also included, and that includes response and enforcement. As I mentioned, we have a lot of different ways to make sure that this does not happen, not only to avoid it but to take care of it if it does indeed happen.

Transport Canada's goal as the lead federal department responsible for Canada's national ship-source oil spill preparedness and response regime is to ensure a national response capability is in place and to be ready to respond in the event of an incident wherever it is in our nation.

That is where we are today. Notwithstanding what the New Democrats claim, we all know that they would like to shut all our borders and shut down Canada. That is not the position of this government. It is about jobs and creating jobs for Canadians. At the same time, it is about making sure that future generations, our grandchildren and great-grandchildren, have a safe and great environment in which to live. That is what this government is going to do and actually is doing.

Operators of oil-handling facilities in fact must maintain a minimum level of preparedness and have oil pollution prevention and emergency plans in place.

The government has a strong regulatory regime that encourages and demands that people who handle this type of fuel are ready to take action if necessary and that they avoid it in all possible cases through better equipment and through investments by them.

As I mentioned, Transport Canada is also mandated to regulate the ship-source oil spills regime. Offshore oil and gas exploration and environmental response for such activities fall under the mandates of some other departments, particularly Natural Resources Canada and the Atlantic and Newfoundland offshore petroleum boards.

The national ship-source oil spill preparedness and response regime was established in 1995, following increased public attention on high-profile oil spills in North American waters. The regime is built on a partnership between government and industry, with the respective responsibilities of each party set out in the Canada Shipping Act.

The key underlying principle of the regime is that polluters pay, that polluters are responsible, as they should be. Canadian taxpayers should not be on the hook for the negligence of a polluter.

In this particular case, this is the situation with this government and our strong response in relation to industry. Industry is accountable for both areas: the prevention of oil spills and the actions necessary to prevent them, as well as the response to its own ship-source oil spill, subject to government oversight and regulations.

So even though we require industry to pay for this, to be prepared and to clean it up, the government has a strong regulatory regime to make sure they actually do that and are held to account.

Private sector funds deliver the operational elements of the regime, which ensure that industry has the capability to respond to individual ship-source oil spills of up to 10,000 tonnes in Canadian

waters south of 60° north latitude. A network of four Transport Canada-certified response organizations provides this coverage.

Response organizations are required to ensure that there is response capability in place should a ship-source oil spill occur.

Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding the NDP's attempt to drag me away from my speech to talk about the great things the government is doing and what the NDP is trying to stop us from doing, I am going to continue on with my speech, but I appreciate the clatter across the way, though.

● (1055)

Under Canadian legislation, the Canadian Coast Guard is the lead agency responsible for ensuring the appropriate response to spills in Canadian waters. In this respect, the Canadian Coast Guard maintains a national response capability to supplement that of the private sector response organizations and to provide coverage where there is no clearly identified polluter or response organization responsible for that area.

Where most of these incidents could occur, which they have not in decades, at least in the water, we have organizations we can look to in the private sector. However, when we are not certain as to which organization is responsible for the clean up in a certain area, the Coast Guard is in place to provide coverage where there is no clearly identified polluter.

Canadians want the government to be responsible if no private organization is held to account in that area, for whatever reason, either it is something that happens without our knowledge or the knowledge of the Coast Guards or it just suddenly appears. That does happen. Where that is the case, the Coast Guard will come in and take care of the situation, such as in the case of ship source mystery spills or spills in the Arctic, which is north of 60° latitude.

Environment Canada is responsible for providing environmental, scientific and technical advice to the Canadian Coast Guard. Therefore, the government relies on it for its expertise, as does the Coast Guard, for a certified response organization to effectively respond to a marine oil spill.

In the case of oil handling facilities located south of the north of 60° latitude, Transport Canada requires that each facility have on-site plans, equipment, personnel, training and exercise programs that enable them to deploy an immediate response in the event of a ship source oil spill. Also, it has an agreement in place with a certified response organizations, so we would have an immediate response. Therefore, if there were to be any damage, it would not be of any substance.

Transport Canada manages the national aerial surveillance program, which is the primary tool for detecting any illegal discharges at sea and for environmental monitoring.

I had an opportunity to see a facility like this in eastern Canada. I was impressed with the detail and its ability to track oil pollution and ships in all of our waters. I think most Canadians would be impressed with the initiatives this government has taken.

Business of Supply

Therefore, polluters should be aware that we can see what they are doing and where they are. We can see oil coming from a ship.

We have a strong regulatory regime in place in relation to the ability to see what goes on in our waters. There are currently six regional advisory councils on marine oil spill preparedness and response across Canada. These councils serve as advisory bodies to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and make recommendations on oil spill preparedness for ship source and oil handling facilities spills in accordance with the Canada Shipping Act.

The membership of these advisory councils includes a cross-representation of individuals, groups and companies whose interests could be positively or negatively affected in the event of a ship source or oil handling facilities spill. That is because this government takes very seriously the issue of pollution and protecting our environment.

These interests might include fishing, aquaculture, aboriginal and environmental interests, port authorities, businesses and tourism associations and shipping interests. This varied and balanced representation allows the advisory council to offer valuable and pertinent information to Transport Canada. Clearly on all the bills and initiatives the Conservative government has put forward, we have consulted widely with stakeholders to ensure we strike the right balance, and this is no different.

We also have the ship source oil pollution fund, which is available to pay compensation for spills of all types of oils from ships of all classes. The House may not be aware of this, but we almost tripled the financial consequences of spills. In 2009 the Marine Liability Act was amended by the Conservative government to further protect Canadians from those financial consequences, up to \$1.3 billion. That is because the government cares about the environment. We will ensure that we continue to trade and do a good job for Canadians on the environment, in the industry and in the economy. We will continue to create jobs.

• (1100)

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is curious that the government could not find anybody from British Columbia to talk about this other than the member from the source of this oil in the tar sands. It is fascinating.

He mentioned in his speech that Canadians could rest assured because the Coast Guard was well-equipped to handle any major oil spills from supertankers of the B.C. coast, which is what we are talking about today. There have been two major spills from ships in the last five years on that very coast.

• (1105)

Mr. Ed Fast: Not in B.C.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: I will remind my friend from British Columbia that this is absolutely possible in B.C.

This is what an audit from the Coast Guard said about its capacity to respond to a spill:

The Canadian Coast Guard lacks the training, equipment and management systems to fulfill its duties to respond to offshore pollution...such as oil spills.

This is from an internal audit of the Coast Guard. This is not some outside group saying that the Coast Guard is not well prepared.

How can my friend say Canadians can rest assured that the safety mechanisms are in place and that the Coast Guard will do it? The Coast Guard has audited itself and has found it is not able to do it.

Mr. Brian Jean: Mr. Speaker, the member should have stuck around for my first parliamentary speech. I was born in British Columbia, in the beautiful area of Westbank. I am a third generation British Columbian. It is a great place to be from, just like it is great to be from Fort McMurray. I invite all my friends from the NDP to come and see what takes place in Fort McMurray.

I am a registered trapper. I spend a lot of time in the outdoors. On the weekends and in the summers, most of my life in northern Alberta was spent outdoors. Nobody can give me lessons on what the Conservative government needs to do to protect the environment.

In fact, I had the opportunity to attend law school in Australia, where I had a very good education on environmental law, halfway through a Master's in law. I will take no lessons from the NDP. All it wants to do is close the borders. It does not want anybody to have a job in our country. It wants us to go back and move into caves and that will not happen.

We will protect the environment and the jobs of Canadians and we will do it without the help of the NDP.

Hon. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague, the parliamentary secretary, mentions the government is trying to protect the environment from climate change. That is not the case whatsoever.

At COP 10 in Nagoya, the Government of Canada was preventing the biodiversity convention from moving forward. It blocked the ABS convention and in blocking that, it blocked the ability of biospheres to generate funds to be reinvested in the environment. This is devastating for our ability to deal with the march to extinction that thousands upon thousands of species face today.

Could he tell the House and the Canadian public what the government will do to reduce climate change? Will it support a carbon tax or not? How will we get our greenhouse gas emissions down? What has it brought to the table in Cancun, which is taking place right now?

Mr. Brian Jean: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's question, but I wish it would have come from somebody else so I could answer it substantively. I clearly have problems answering a question from the member. He was a member of the Liberal government for a good number of years. Under that government, greenhouse gases went sky high. Under this government, greenhouse gases are not only under control, they have gone down.

Business of Supply

When he was a member of the Liberal government, it had an opportunity to do something. It had an opportunity to help the environment. It had an opportunity to combat climate change.

I will miss the member because he is quite rational on most things. I understand why he is quitting politics. He is ashamed of the record of the Liberal Party and he knows it will be unable to recover from that record.

Mr. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as a proud British Columbian, having lived there all my life, I want to put the lie to some of the scaremongering that we hear from the NDP benches.

Due to the recent oil spill on the U.S. Gulf Coast, it is understandable that attention has been focused on oil tanker traffic on our Pacific coast and the potential threats to our environment which such traffic represents.

It is appropriate to re-examine whether Canada has the right regulations, enforcement and response mechanisms in place to handle an oil spill on the west coast. I believe that all members in the House will conclude that Canada's ability to respond to such events remains robust and sound.

Perhaps the most relevant indicator in understanding oil tanker safety issues is to look at past history. That history clearly shows that oil tankers have been travelling safely along the British Columbia coast for many years. That is not to say there is a zero risk of an accident. Nothing in life is without some risk. The key is to balance risk against the reward, to find out what are the benefits and then to manage those risks.

Allow me to explain what our government is doing to avoid those risks and to ensure that those risks are handled effectively when an event occurs.

There is currently a tanker exclusion zone in place, which protects the most vulnerable parts of our west coast. That is something the NDP never mentions. This exclusion zone applies to all loaded trans-Alaska pipeline tankers travelling southbound between Alaska and the Strait of Juan de Fuca. As a result of this agreement, U.S. tanker ships stay between 25 and 75 miles off the B.C. coast.

Southbound laden tankers are required to report to the Canadian vessel traffic system and immediately if they develop any defect of deficiency which impairs the progress of that vessel. It is important to note that the establishment of the tanker exclusion zone was never intended or designed to absolutely prohibit all tanker traffic or tankers calling in Canadian ports.

Over 1,000 tankers each year comply with and respect the tanker exclusion zone. There have been no reports of non-compliance. Additionally, at least once a year, Transport Canada inspects each and every tanker that arrives in a B.C. port. It has the authority to detain a ship if it is deemed a risk. When ships do pollute our waters, the Government of Canada takes a zero tolerance policy. Canada has a strict liability approach to these kinds of pollution offences.

Transport Canada investigates all reported incidents of ship-sourced marine pollution. Whenever there is sufficient evidence, the department follows up with enforcement action. Such action can include prosecution of the marine polluters, as well as the levying of administrative monetary penalties.

Just to be clear, although there is a federal moratorium in place on the west coast that applies to oil and natural gas exploration and related development, that moratorium does not apply to the storage or movement of tankers, and it should not. With respect to tanker traffic, our government has no plans to remove or change the 1988 exclusion zone on tankers travelling between Alaska and Washington State. We have made that clear time after time. We believe this exclusion represents sound environmental policy and protects the most vulnerable areas of our coast.

I will review for a moment Canada's historical response to tragedies, such as the *Exxon Valdez* spill in Alaska and perhaps the *Nestucca* spill in Washington state.

In June 1989, Canada's federal government appointed the public review panel on tanker safety and marine spills response capability, also known as the Brander-Smith panel. That panel's work resulted in the creation of the Canadian marine oil spill preparedness and response regime. Building on that success, considerable planning work was undertaken by the Canadian Coast Guard and Environment Canada, in consultation with the private sector, to encourage the development of a private sector funded response strategy. Shortly thereafter, the Shipping Act was amended to implement improvements to Canada's oil spill response capability.

● (1110)

To further safeguard our coastal waters, Transport Canada and the coast guard enforce a policy that tankers of over 40,000 dead-weight tonnes are not permitted to use the inside passage but will instead be directed to the outside route for north-south transit. Furthermore, Port Metro Vancouver requires all loaded tankers entering Burrard Inlet and Indian Arm to be escorted by tugs as they navigate toward the oil terminals. They also require mandatory pilotage zones where tankers are required to take onboard a marine pilot with local knowledge before entering a harbour or busy waterway, such as the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Certain vessels operating in Canadian waters are monitored and guided by the Canadian Coast Guard's Marine Communications and Traffic Services centres. The Government of Canada has also taken steps to increase surveillance and tracking of marine traffic, including the implementation of mandatory automatic identification systems.

Let us put all of this into perspective. The demand for oil is growing around the world, especially from countries such as China. Oil refining activity takes place on B.C.'s coast for both domestic and international consumption. The movement of oil occurs primarily through the ports of Vancouver, Prince Rupert and Kitimat. In the last five years, over 1,300 tankers have arrived in Port Metro Vancouver and 187 have arrived in the ports of Kitimat and Prince Rupert.

Business of Supply

Interestingly enough, since 2003, there have been about 475,000 vessel movements per year on the west coast, yet tankers accounted for only 0.3 of 1% of this traffic in the 2008-09 fiscal year. Tankers have been involved in only five shipping incidents on the west coast since 2003, not one of which resulted in pollution to our coast. Indeed, the only significant oil spill on the west coast did not come from a tanker at all, but from the B.C. ferry, *Queen of the North*, when it sank in 2006.

In conclusion, Transport Canada remains confident that the Canada Shipping Act and its regulations, and their regional policies and procedures, have demonstrated their effectiveness on the west coast. Despite an extensive coastline, B.C. has enjoyed an enviable safety and environmental record.

The long and short of it is that the world's demand for oil and gas continues to grow. Canada happens to be one of the world's energy superpowers and the world is beating a path to our doorstep in order to acquire our resources. Much of our future prosperity depends on Canada's ability to grow its markets and to safely and efficiently get those resources to its customers. What has made Canada's west coast and Pacific gateway even more important to our national prosperity is the dramatic growth of economic opportunities in places such as China and India. Tankers are an indispensable way of getting our resources out to those markets.

The question remains: Can tankers safely use our west coast shipping lanes? History and experience show that, in Canada at least, the answer is yes. The answer is yes provided that we continue to focus on a number of key priorities. It is that balance I spoke about earlier in my speech.

Those priorities are, first of all, exclusion zones for the most vulnerable areas of our coast; second, a robust monitoring and enforcement scheme; third, tough laws and regulations relating to tanker traffic along our coast; and finally, a high degree of co-operation and collaboration among the various stakeholders in maintaining a high level of emergency preparedness.

I believe those priorities are being met and that it is possible to secure the future prosperity of our country by ensuring the safe passage of tanker traffic through Canadian waters.

• (1115)

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there are a couple of things I want to focus on, primarily.

The government is essentially saying that moving tankers through the inside passage is safe.

I would welcome my friend to come up to Skeena and actually go on the route with me so that he can visually see what is being proposed and how dangerous it really is because of the nature of the environment that we are talking about.

We are talking about risk/benefit at the end of the day. We are talking about what risks the people of the north coast and along the pipeline route are being asked to take on, versus what benefits are meant to be accrued. This is a fair question,

It is interesting that the government, this same government, blocked an LNG proposal in Maine through waters on the east coast. The veterans affairs minister said, "We've made it perfectly clear

why we've taken that position"—against LNG tankers—"to protect our environment, our citizens and our economy in terms of the fishery.... There's too much at stake. There'll be no equivocation or wavering whatever."

It was okay to block a Maine LNG terminal, which is actually less dangerous than the one that is being proposed in Kitimat, but it is not okay to do so on the west coast.

My question is, if this is about the benefit, the proposal in front of the government right now is to export raw bitumen through the pipeline and into these tankers, exporting jobs out of Canada, thousands upon thousands of jobs, 520,000 barrels a day, those are jobs, is the government not concerned at all that it is promoting and enabling projects that would hurt Canada's own industry?

• (1120)

Mr. Ed Fast: Mr. Speaker, I will take no lessons from the NDP on creating jobs. That is laughable. Every single job creation initiative that this government has brought forward has been opposed by the NDP. Look at the record.

Canada's main driving economic force is our resource industry. What the NDP would like us to do is shut down the resource industry, providing no way of getting our resources out of the country to other areas of the world that need those resources.

The other thing I want to point out to this member, and he of course never raises this, is that by 2015 all supertankers have to be double hulled. The world is moving away from the single-hull tankers that present such a significant risk to our environment. By moving to double-hulled tankers, we increase the safety of shipping even more and allow our country to benefit from its resources by getting those resources shipped out of our country and around the world, building upon the prosperity that Canada has in its hands.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Mr. Speaker, in effect the government is now saying, after the first nations summit, after the UBCM, which is made up of all the mayors and councillors of British Columbia, after every environmental group in the province, after all these groups, that all the mayors and councillors are wrong, that all the leaders of the first nations groups in B.C. are wrong, that the businesses that are represented on the central north coast and in the interior that are saying there is too much risk in this project are wrong and that the government knows best, that the raw export of materials out of Canada, like we did with logs, like we are doing with fish and mining, is somehow good for the Canadian economy.

A voluntary exclusion zone is not going to get it done. We know that. The words themselves are "voluntary exclusion zones for north-south traffic". And this is my point to my friend from Abbotsford, if it is too dangerous to run supertankers from Alaska through the inside passage north to south, why is it suddenly safe and okay to run them through the same inside passage east to west? It is the same water. It is the same part of the world. If it is dangerous for the Alaskans to do it, certainly it is dangerous for us to do it.

The government itself has declared a marine park in the area—

Business of Supply

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Order, please. The hon. member for Abbotsford.

Mr. Ed Fast: Mr. Speaker, I do not know what he is referring to. He refers to a project. This is not about a project. We are not referring to a project here. We are referring to an industry. We are referring to maximizing the potential of our resources in Canada.

Essentially, the project the NDP members are talking about is an NDP pet project, which is to shut down tanker traffic on Canada's west coast. In other words, they are talking about shutting down the resource industries across Canada, inhibiting our ability to export those critical resources into other countries. That is what they want to do. That is why, earlier, I said they have done absolutely nothing to build the economy or to create jobs in this country. They oppose us every step along the way. And we are going to call them on it time and time again.

Mr. Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to join this debate and it is a pleasure also to note that it is the style of debate by which people can tell the problems and challenges that the House has in responding to questions that matter like this, that are going to matter for some years to come. I want to welcome the resolution from the NDP because in bringing it forward they are joining the national conversation that our leader, Michael Ignatieff, started six months ago. Sorry, Mr. Speaker, the leader of the official opposition.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Thank you.

Mr. Gerard Kennedy: Mr. Speaker, the leader of the official opposition put forward a public position for a future Liberal government of a permanent ban on Canada's northwest coast and made it very clear that there is a proper, reasoned way to go about making Canada progress.

What we have seen in the debate today is how badly that perspective is needed. We have had ad hominem attacks on the part of government members, both on the member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca and the originating member of the motion. We have had a flat-out defence of industry for industry's sake.

I have news for the members of the government caucus, not even industry wants that. Not even industry needs to have those kinds of cheerleaders. It understands it is going to reckon with the overall public interest imperative. In laying out a position last June, the leader of the official opposition made it extremely clear—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

• (1125)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Order. If hon. members want to carry on a conversation, if they could take that outside the House.

The hon. member for Parkdale—High Park.

Mr. Gerard Kennedy: What the Leader of the Opposition made very clear was that there needed be other elements to a forward-going policy to deal with oil spills and other components of protecting marine parks.

It is not ironic. It is directly contradictory to the spirit of the people of British Columbia in their role as stewards of their own area, as with other people of Canada, which has become more and more

equated with this particular test of Canadians and their representatives in terms of what is lacking in the current environment here in Ottawa.

In fact, there needs to be a party in government that can do sustainable development, not pose, as so many members of the government have, fake, false trade-offs. Somehow every time there is any kind of implication for someone's economic bottom line, the government thinks the environment needs to be traded off, sold off, hived off and utilized in that favour.

What Canadians are starting to awaken to is that is a view that not only harms our environment unnecessarily and robs the next generation of the utilization of the air, land and water, but it is actually bad economics, bad planning and poor for jobs.

Sustainable development actually means reconciling those interests, coming up with one answer that works on the economic and environmental sides of the equation wherever possible.

When we look at the circumstance of the coast, the Great Spirit Bear Rainforest, which so many people have worked to have as a protected area, being right there and affected, and when we look at the very first baby steps that have happened in terms of marine protection, right in that nearby area, in terms of Canada's first marine park, we realize that the trade-offs being proposed by the kind of wide open acceptance and defence being made of the acceptance of tanker traffic by the people opposite just does not meet the test of any form of reasonableness.

We start to see what some of the deficiencies are in terms of how the government is not able to represent all Canadians and is not able to make these decisions in a way that will actually benefit this generation and the next.

When we look at the area and we see the kind of existing and potential growth from both fishing and eco-tourism and we see the number of jobs attached there, between 25,000 and 50,000, depending on how wide an area of impact we want to talk about, compared to the 1,100 that might be created by the acceptance of this tanker traffic, we have to ask ourselves where the economic case is.

Who on the other side is making the economic case to put those kinds of jobs in jeopardy in a fragile ecosystem, which has been recognized by every scientific and biological expert, that would not withstand a major oil spill?

We had some blithe assurances from the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities about the preparedness of Canada because nothing has gone wrong yet. Perhaps we will hear a little more objectively from Environmental Commissioner on oil spills and Canada's capacity to deal with them next week. We will see what that looks like.

I would just like to let people know that the last major oil spill in Spain was some 60,000 tonnes. Canada's preparedness is only for 10,000 tonnes. It is delegated, south of 60, to the private sector. It is not the capacity of the coast guard or anyone else to be able to respond. Anybody who watched the struggles that the United States went through in the gulf must have a concern.

Business of Supply

Let us come back to the premise that being prepared for an oil spill in an ecologically sensitive zone like that is not sufficient reason to go ahead. The onus on lifting a 37-year moratorium or ban is on the government to make the proof for that.

The fact that the government came so woefully unprepared today to make a case on behalf of this and is still, based on the tenor of the remarks we have heard so far, going to oppose this motion, gives people an idea of the kind of reckless government we have in place. It seems to be here to serve a narrow base of interest. It is not willing to look at the facts nor is it willing to release the facts.

I would like to believe that the ad hominem attack of the member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca is totally unacceptable. I would like it if each member of this House would concede that each hon. member has to be treated with civility and respect. To call into question his decision, after a career of public service, serving this House, and calling into question his motives by defining his particular reasons for quitting differently than he did simply because the member was unprepared for this debate, is utterly unacceptable and beneath the government's position, putting him in a lead position to do that.

• (1130)

I would like to think that some of the future members who speak for the government will repudiate that, that we honour our members, perhaps not as much when they are here, but certainly when they have put in that kind of time and with that kind of unmatched integrity. That integrity extends to that member's support and the other British Columbian members' support of the official opposition for this particular initiative.

This is something where people have worked hard, have engaged people on and will continue to do that, working with the members of any other caucus who want to actually grapple with some of Canada's challenges. It does not just go to some book somewhere and they are all answered for them or it takes a phone call from someone's office and then goes accordingly.

That demeans the House. This debate reached that territory. I, frankly, find it perhaps an accurate reflection of where the government wants to go with this particular debate.

The capacity that we need is to be able to prevent and protect our environment. It is our current health, our children's heritage and in issue after issue on matters of the environment there has been nobody home. We have a part-time minister today. We do not even have someone giving thorough attention to matters of the environment.

We have unmet commitment after unmet commitment. We have the Government of Canada in wholesale retreat right across the country, from research in the Arctic on climate change to the impacts of the oil sands. We cannot find a federal official working for Environment Canada in Fort McMurray today. Regardless of how we look at the facts of that particular set of projects, the biggest environmental challenge in the country, and there is nobody home for the federal government.

When we talk about the ability and the capacity of the government to give us a fair hearing today, I guess we should not be surprised that instead we have had ad hominem attacks and a very loose association with the facts. We think this is too sensitive an area to

permit those very tricky navigable waters, as the lead speaker today put forward, to navigate with oil tankers and expose that kind of spill.

All kinds of experts agree. The government should come forward with opposing facts rather than to put Canadians in that kind of risk for the kind of legacy that is at risk there. There are 2,500 different salmon runs and all kinds of special species that are there that the government should be seeing as part of its job in the particular responsibility it has for now of governing to look after.

It is not just an absence of balance. It is an absence of accepting responsibility to make these reconciliations, to listen to all Canadians and, in this case, in particular British Columbians because, as is so often the case with environmental matters, they are a little ahead of the rest of the country and they certainly know the difference in terms of the trade-offs.

For members of the government to try to lecture the House that this is somehow a great economic expense and therefore everything should be permitted simply shows how out of touch they are. I think British Columbians will be very alert to the fact that there is no one on the government side, not one member from British Columbia or anywhere else, who is prepared to put on the table a balanced view to say what kind of environmental protections they are ready to offer.

What we have heard so far today are these blithe assurances that if messes are made they can be cleaned up flies in the face of the recent experiences of what happens with oil spills in these kinds of areas. It is hard to navigate some of those waters. It can be hazard for larger tankers. We heard somebody say that they are no longer single hulled, but double hulled tankers have oil spills as well. In fact, one of the latest oil spills concerned one of those types of boats.

The UN Convention on Biological Diversity was mentioned by the member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca. When he did that he was talking about a fact. The Conservative government was awarded a dodo award from the international community, from the collection of 194 nations from the not for profit sector. They looked at who was helping and who was hurting when it came to the protection of wildlife and our natural resources and decided that Canada was doing the worst job, that it actually stood in the way of an agreement, that it was preventing reference to the UN recognition of the rights of aboriginal people being in a sharing of resources for first nations.

• (1135)

It is ironic, or perhaps appropriate in that perverse kind of way, that the government's representatives have stood and tried to attack the person who called them on this particular part of its track record, a government that said in its throne speech that it would recognize those rights, stood in the way and helped to water down the language.

Today we are talking about the first nations as much as we are about our overall stewardship, with the vast number of coastal beds already having come out against this, the grassroots of the proposed pipelines are saying that this is something they do not want to do.

Business of Supply

The member for Fort McMurray—Athabasca, who spoke earlier, did not reference the utter failure of benefit-sharing for first nations and aboriginal people. I have spent time in Fort McMurray, and anyone who wishes can find the do-it-yourself environmentalism and the do-it-yourself aboriginal rights that the government has left in the footprint of one of the biggest economic undertakings this country has ever seen. It is shameful and embarrassing, and no rightful government should show up in this place without making commitments to fix it.

To propose some other kind of project without some due regard for what aboriginal rights should mean, for every Canadian who sits at home and wonders what combination of things it would take to offer and extend just the same citizenship rights to every first nation and aboriginal person in this country, surely access to the economic benefits, on their terms and in their own backyard, should be part of it. For people to simply say that they will impose yet another project on top of that against their will is simply untenable.

Reference has been made to the *Exxon Valdez* and the things that we should have learned. This is the exact same territory, some of the same coastline, not very far away, that would be affected. We will find out next week, when the Environmental Commissioner reports, where Canada actually sits. However, from the standpoint of some of the people who have looked at it, there are aspects of what we are doing that are severely outdated, that are not in touch with modern needs, and it is under that regime that some of this stuff would be proposed to go forward.

The Convention on Biological Diversity, which Canada did sign but did not help to create, requires us to protect 10% of our marine coastal environment. We only have half a per cent now. It is reckless of us to consider putting hazardous and high-risk projects like this into operation when we have not figured out how by 2020 we will have these protected areas.

The idea that we should put tanker traffic in close proximity to the area that we have already designated, that has been conceded by the government to have special properties, shows Canadians the kind of choice they have. The government is prepared to put a very little bit of our natural heritage under a bell jar and then leave all the rest of it to wide open exploitation.

The point of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity is how we look after all of our natural resources. The motion today will be a test for how well Canada does. It picked up the dodo award internationally but the question is whether the government will wear a dodo award today. Will it really stand here today against the expressed will of all the first nations that are affected, against the public will of British Columbians, in terms of wanting to have a ban on tanker traffic on this part of their coast?

What we have, from any of the participants here, is straightforward, basically very honest facts put forward. Will the government stop referring to distracting things? It talks about a tanker exclusion zone that only has to do with the tanker traffic going up to Alaska. It has nothing to do with the northwest coast zone that we are talking about.

The government talks about five, six, seven, eight times and letters to the editor and so on. It talks about drilling moratoriums. What it

will not talk about is whether it will ban tankers in a highly sensitive ecological zone of Canada. That is what this motion is about. All the rest of it is obfuscation that should be beneath this House.

We are seeing the government revert to these kinds of ways in committee and in this House. If it can get in the way of debate and get in the way of public understanding that seems to suffice.

• (1140)

The very arrogance of that toward Canadians, and British Columbians in this case, is breathtaking. The government really feels it has the capacity to manipulate, sidestep, and not bear the burden and responsibility of actually governing by coming forward with its position on the facts and showing Canadians where it is coming from when it comes to meeting the challenges of sustainable development.

We have been very clear that we will have an independent review of Canada's capacity on oil spills. We will start where the environment commissioner is able to take us. We will make sure Canada has the capacity to deal with our existing challenges.

We will have a ban on drilling in the Arctic. That is a place where, under current technology, we simply cannot reconcile what is going to happen. We will maintain this tanker ban and put it in legislative form so the ambiguity is missing.

We will put forward the capacity to have this debate and discussion. Each time one of these challenges comes forward, we will better understand, as we should, what some of our responsibilities are.

Per capita, Canadians are the biggest stewards of nature in the world. We have more of the world's resources on a population basis than anyone else. There is no excuse but laziness or disregard for that responsibility that we should not be the best at it. This debate today should be honoured by people's best efforts.

We have put forward a position. We have researched it and talked to all the people who are connected with us. Everybody had an opportunity a few days ago to meet with people at a reception. The Leader of the Opposition has taken a very specific and strong position that I think is generating a great deal of debate, but that debate needs to be fairly met.

I would say to all members of this House that we need to exhibit for British Columbians, and for all Canadians, that we are able to bring forward these issues in a distinctive way. Nobody is going to be assured that we are able to handle an oil spill and therefore we should allow tanker traffic. That is not even at the lowest end of the scale of the kind of standard Canadians expect from us when it comes to managing our environment.

We have an arrangement now that allows Canada to export its products. There is capacity elsewhere to grow that. The economic side is fairly well protected. There may be a particular interest and a particular proposal that has to be denied, but in the interests of Canada's overall well-being, really sustainable development, it should be denied. There should be a tanker ban.

Business of Supply

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his comments and support of what we are attempting to do here. This is in response to the leadership that has been shown in British Columbia, particularly from the first nations, but also from the environment community, and now the mayors as well, and at a minimum 75% of British Columbians.

Every poll that has been done on this issue has shown that more than three-quarters of British Columbians say that an exclusion zone is not going to do it. It is not enough. It is voluntary and not strong enough. We need a mandatory ban on supertankers on the coast.

To correct the timeline for the hon. member, it was an NDP provincial government in 1972, the Dave Barrett government, that actually pushed for this moratorium to be put in place. The concern we had in 1972 when this ball got rolling was the federal government simply verbally stated there should be no supertankers off the coast but it never wrote anything down. That must be a regret for the hon. member.

More important and much more recent in history, the hon. member for Victoria, who in massive public consultation with environment groups, such as Dogwood Initiative, put a motion before the House in 2007, which said that there must be a zone. I welcome the Liberals to the New Democrats' fight here.

There are letters from environment ministers in the former Liberal government which say that this moratorium does not apply to any shipping supertanker traffic. That was the Liberal government in 2005.

I wonder if there is any regret from the Liberals in saying that we should have written something down, and then as recently as 2005 denying the need for the existence of a mandatory non-voluntary exclusion zone for tanker traffic.

• (1145)

Mr. Gerard Kennedy: Mr. Speaker, I want to respond very clearly that Liberals support a tanker ban and have done so for six months.

We welcome this debate today to allow other members to join with us and help not just British Columbians but all Canadians come to terms with making the right choice in that kind of trade-off in terms of reconciling sustainable development.

I think Canadians want to know where we are going in the future. I hope we can invite not just the government members but all members of the House to give Canadians some sense of strong assurance.

This debate should contribute to building a Canadian consensus that this is how we are going to look after the northwest coast of Canada.

Hon. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague has been a champion of the environment in and out of this House for many, many years.

I would like to direct his attention to the current situation in Cancun. Previously members of the Conservative Party have claimed falsely that their government is a champion of the

environment and that it is working to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but the facts actually show the opposite. The government has repeatedly won fossil of the year or fossil of the day awards for its intransigence, inability and unwillingness to deal with the major environmental challenges of our time, particularly global warming.

If my colleague could give the government some advice, what are the two things he would say that the government must do in Cancun right now to address global warming?

Mr. Gerard Kennedy: Very simply, Mr. Speaker, the government has to table the plan to meet even its target. We do not agree with its target. We do not think going 2% above 1990 levels when the rest of the world is striving to do so much better brings any honour to Canada. The government has yet to table any of that information. As a result, it has no credibility when it comes to Cancun.

Canada should also table the dollars it promised. It is the only government to renege on the amount of money it said it would make available to help developing nations get into this fight in order to make the economic reconciliation they need to do. There is \$30 billion pledged. Canada put most of its contribution forward in loans, not in the money that developing countries can have. To break some of the log jams, Canada could be a very constructive force if it was able to show that it could live up to its commitments.

Obviously, we would make those commitments stronger. We would galvanize what is happening. Domestically, people are trying to save energy and contribute to reducing greenhouse gases. The government has cancelled all of those programs. Restoring those would be a big step toward credibility in terms of being someone in Cancun who is not blocking, but actually is helping to build a consensus.

Hon. Keith Martin: Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw attention to the International Conservation Forum which can be found through Google. A new online conservation publication will be available today called "The Horn". It will detail conservation and environmental challenges.

Does my colleague not think that one thing the government could do next year, the Year of Forests, would be to champion the REDD system? Just look at some of the work Tom Lovejoy has done in the United States with respect to addressing the intersection between human security and environmental security and using debt for biosphere swaps. That could be very useful at preserving critical habitats.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): I remind all hon. members that questions and comments ought to be at least generally directed at the motion that is before the House. The hon. member for Parkdale—High Park.

Mr. Gerard Kennedy: Mr. Speaker, the motion today is about the ocean. The ocean is an enormous contributor to our dealing with greenhouse gases, and REDD is looking at forests.

For a relatively cheap price, Canadians can help those other countries meet their needs. The current government's position is to sit with its arms crossed and wait. It will hope for the U.S. Congress to look after Canadians. It will wait and hope things get better, and that this climate change problem will go away.

Business of Supply

We could mobilize countries at a very low price in terms of the kinds of dollars that it takes. There can be carbon sinks created. They are available in the ocean. In fact, one of the reasons to prevent oil spills is to ensure that we have that function of the ocean, which is really important in keeping our air clean and dealing with a lot of the impacts of carbon. There is a defined process that Canada could help bring to a successful conclusion next week in Mexico. It could make sure that it comes to the table with the dollars it promised and the commitment to help the developing countries create some of these bio sinks for carbon in their forests and in their other natural habitat.

• (1150)

Hon. Keith Martin: Mr. Speaker, I have a constructive comment for the government concerning the motion and concerning the oceans, because a tanker traffic fuel spill would be devastating to that area, to be sure.

In the United States, a climate action partnership developed among the private sector, NGOs and elements of the government to deal with climate change in a progressive way. Many of the members of the GOP are climate change deniers, unfortunately, so the private sector got involved and developed a climate partnership, including General Electric, ALCOA and other groups.

One of the things to deal with this challenge is to work with the private sector to ensure we have a fair, reasonable and environmentally sound way of moving oil within our country. Does my colleague not think the private sector must be brought in to negotiate and develop a resolution to this challenge? An east-west pipeline probably will not occur because of opposition from first nations and, of course, other groups, and many of us in British Columbia.

Mr. Gerard Kennedy: Mr. Speaker, it is quite stunning that this government is letting down business as much as it is letting down the environment. Just because one or two businesses have a proposal does not mean the government should go running in support of it. There are many people in Alberta who do not believe that the particular pipeline being referenced is necessary, that there are other routes. It is fine to have competing views.

What this government lacks is the regulation. The Business Council on National Issues and industry associations have said they want the regulation. They want the guidance. They want a government that can bring them together to help reconcile these problems. Uncertainty is bad for business. There is a lack of capacity to bring people together and to seek people at the table with their responsibilities,

It is government's job not just to go along with what business wants every single time, but to say what the public interest requires. Businessmen, particularly those of some of our larger enterprises, including the resource industry, understand that. What they do remark on is the lack of leadership. It is not even a foresight, but simply an acceptance to work harder on that responsibility to bring people together.

In response to the hon. member's question, we are not getting the full capacity of our private sector innovation because the government has not created the environment. It is quite the opposite. We are now falling behind in almost every single measure of sustainable industry simply because we do not have the climate for it here. That is very regrettable.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my Bloc Québécois colleague and my NDP colleague for their warm welcome.

I am pleased to speak today on this opposition day to discuss an NDP motion. I want to take a few seconds to read the motion before us:

That, in the opinion of the House, the government should immediately propose legislation to ban bulk oil tanker traffic in the Dixon Entrance, Hecate Strait and Queen Charlotte Sound as a way to protect the West Coast's unique and diverse ocean ecosystem, to preserve the marine resources which sustain the community and regional economies of British Columbia, and to honour the extensive First Nations rights and title in the area.

First of all, I would like to say that we will support this opposition motion for several reasons. First, we cannot have economic development without considering the people who live in or near marine areas. The first nations were quick to oppose oil tanker traffic. These communities, which are the primary residents and inhabitants in the area, feel that this type of transport and oil tanker traffic could have a considerable impact on them. Furthermore, nearly 80% of the population of British Columbia is against oil tanker traffic in this coastal area. The people of British Columbia and all first nations clearly want us to take action to avoid increasing oil tanker traffic.

Why are we here debating this motion today? First, because Enbridge, a large multinational oil company, plans on building two pipelines to transport oil from the oil sands in Alberta from a terminal to a port complex in British Columbia. Two pipelines approximately 1,170 kilometres in length will link the oil terminal in Alberta to the port terminal in Kitimat, British Columbia.

This will mean that once Alberta has produced oil from the oil sands and it has been transported through the pipeline to the port in British Columbia, it will then be exported. On average, tanker traffic will increase by approximately 225 ships a year. So, 225 ships will be transporting crude oil that is destined, most likely, for Asian markets.

Essentially, it is a question of economics, but we need to look beyond that. We need to recognize that the Pacific coast and this marine area are fragile. In nearby marine areas, the government has created national marine reserves to protect these areas of high biodiversity.

Today we are having a hard time understanding the government's attitude. It seems to be talking out of both sides of its mouth in terms of a moratorium on tanker traffic. Why are we having trouble understanding?

• (1155)

It is because the environment minister told us a couple of months ago that this zone is fragile and rich in biodiversity and that it must be protected. Today, the Conservative government is refusing to take a clear position, while the environment minister is announcing that protected world reserves are a huge step forward in the protection of biodiversity and incredible resources.

Business of Supply

On the other hand, our government wants to ensure that oil from the oil sands finds an export market, from north to south and east to west. It is not true that we will accept putting oil interests first. The people want this ban and it is necessary in order to protect our ecosystems. Over the last number of years, particularly in the port of Vancouver in British Columbia, there has been an increase in tanker traffic. I looked at some numbers. Between 2008 and 2009 alone, there was a 48% increase in the number of oil tankers. That represents a 77% increase in the volume of crude oil transported. In that period, tanker traffic increased by 48% and the volume of oil transported increased by 77%. There has already been an increase in traffic, but the public wants a ban on it.

We need to think about this, because there is a rich biodiversity in the zones that border on the zones mentioned in the motion. For instance, there is the Strait of Georgia, the stretch of sea between Vancouver Island and mainland British Columbia, which is home to 200 species of fish, five species of wild salmon and 500 species of marine plants. This rich biodiversity must be protected because that is what communities want.

Basically, we know that this zone, including the Burrard Inlet among others, is one of the main gateways for transporting the oil and, as I said, the rich biodiversity there must be protected. It needs to be protected because shipping traffic has increased 48%, and this is raising some concerns among the local population and local and municipal authorities.

A few months ago, in response to the increase in tanker traffic I mentioned earlier, the mayor of North Vancouver, Darrell Mussatto, said:

We hope we never have to deal with anything like what is happening in the Gulf of Mexico.

It seems that economic pressure on ports and ecosystems is growing. This has to slow down. When it comes to shale gas development in Quebec, our artists have said, "Wait a minute." Indeed, we can only go so far so fast. Seeing as how there has been a 48% increase in traffic and two more pipelines are going to be built, which will bring an average of 225 oil tankers a year to these fragile zones, the precautionary principle must prevail. This precautionary principle should help us ensure that all necessary guarantees will be given to the public. We are saying this for environmental as well as economic reasons. The people of Îles-de-la-Madeleine are facing the same reality as the people of British Columbia regarding oil tanker traffic and oil and gas development.

• (1200)

Mr. Speaker, I toured maritime Quebec this fall. What did the people in the Gaspé and the Magdalen Islands have to say? An industry that causes so much pollution should not be favoured over our fishery and local economy.

Quebec's coastal areas are built upon exactly the same foundation as British Columbia's. And what is that foundation? The fishing and tourism industries. I have some figures here. On the Pacific coast, 13,000 jobs are related to commercial fishing, which generates \$1.7 billion in revenue. Ten thousand jobs are related to the cruise ship industry and recreational tourism. Since the local economy is

essentially based on these two industries, why would we want to run the risk of moving backward?

History speaks of the catastrophic effects of oil spills. I am thinking of the considerable costs associated with the *Exxon Valdez* disaster, which totalled between \$3 billion and \$9 billion.

Why would we risk jeopardizing local communities? This would merely be an attempt to satisfy the insatiable needs of an industry that contributes to the increase in greenhouse gas emissions. And how many long-term jobs would this project create? According to Enbridge, the company that wants to build these two pipelines, 200 long-term positions would be created. And yet there are already 13,000 jobs in the fishing industry and 10,000 jobs in the tourism industry. Are we going to risk sacrificing 23,000 existing jobs for 200 long-term positions in a polluting industry? The answer is clear; the answer is no.

Who will ultimately pay in the event of an oil spill? In theory, and Enbridge will agree, Enbridge will take full responsibility. In practice, in the event of an oil spill, Enbridge's responsibility is limited to land. In the event of an oil spill, shipping companies are responsible. There is indeed a compensation fund, but it limits redress to \$140 million. If the disaster is on a larger scale—like the *Exxon Valdez* catastrophe, which caused between \$3.5 billion and \$9 billion in damage—the Canadian government, therefore all Canadians, will be on the hook. What is Enbridge's responsibility in that case? It has no responsibility, but the cost is passed on to the public.

Most importantly, we need to ensure that this ecosystem is protected. It needs to be protected because of the unique conditions in this region mentioned in the motion. We know that in the event of an oil spill, it will be impossible to clean up the entire affected site. Cleanup is limited to roughly 15% of the area; the rest of the oil is left behind.

Another important aspect is the climate conditions in the area mentioned in the motion. This area is quite unique. It experiences high winds and that needs to be taken into consideration. We know that with winds of over 45 km/h it becomes impossible to clean up sites. That is precisely the average wind speed calculated over the past few years in the area mentioned in the motion.

We have to take these factors into consideration. We must also take into consideration that in the winter in this area, we cannot guarantee cleanup in the event of an oil spill.

• (1205)

This is also the case in the Arctic. In the event of a spill, we cannot guarantee that cleanup operations will take place during the winter. This is another factor to be taken into consideration when making decisions. We also have to consider the strength of the winds, winter conditions, the fragility of the ecosystems and the threat to some economic sectors, such as fishing and tourism. And why, exactly?

Business of Supply

The production of oil sands oil transported by this pipeline will increase greenhouse gas emissions. In fact, 6.5 megatonnes of GHG emissions will be produced by the construction of this pipeline. That is equivalent to 1.6 million cars on our roads.

This puts local economies and biodiversity at risk, contributes to increased greenhouse gas emissions, makes the rich even richer, and economically consolidates an energy position we do not want. In the end, our taxes and accelerated write-offs will help pay for the associated construction and infrastructure.

Canada does not have a green tax system. On the contrary, the oil industry receives subsidies through more than 50 programs even though the government told the OECD and the G20 summit that it would eliminate this assistance. But no, through tax incentives we will help fund the development and construction of the pipeline infrastructure.

In closing, we must remember that local populations want to preserve the biodiversity of their environment and strengthen their economy. We must respect the wishes of the population and the first nations if we want to continue to hand down to future generations resources they can continue to use, with a view to sustainable development. For these reasons we will support the motion before us.

• (1210)

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my Bloc Québécois colleague and my Liberal colleagues. Perhaps the House will support our motion.

I have a question for my colleague. If the pipeline moves forward, what effect will it have on climate and on the Canadian dollar? That question is very important to Quebeckers. There is something called Dutch disease. When the value of the dollar significantly increases in the oil sector, for example, it has an effect on the manufacturing sector and other sectors of the economy. A very dangerous project like this one on the northern British Columbia coast will surely affect not only the people of British Columbia, but also all Canadians.

My last question has to do with the will of the public regarding this project. If the public disagrees with the Conservative government regarding oil companies, will this affect the government's thinking?

Mr. Bernard Bigras: Madam Speaker, the member answered part of the question himself. The economic phenomenon he described is indeed Dutch disease. Basically, investing a lot of money in certain resources creates pressure, boosting the value of the dollar artificially, which is bad for companies and industries in the export sector, particularly those in the manufacturing sector. That applies to Quebec, and also to Ontario. That answers the first question.

The second part of my colleague's question had to do with global warming. When I saw the numbers, I just about fell out of my seat: 6.5 megatonnes of GHGs. To most ordinary people, the proposal before us might not mean much, but to put things in perspective, it is the same as 1.6 million cars.

Do people realize that, on the one hand, the government is in Cancun talking about how it wants to help fight climate change, while on the other hand, it is going to refuse to implement measures to achieve greenhouse gas reduction targets? Not only will this be a

bad thing for the manufacturing industry economically, but it will also contribute to rising greenhouse gas emissions. That is the opposite of sustainable development.

The government needs to understand that sooner or later, it will have to implement what I call "strategic environmental assessments". The government's plans, policies and programs have to undergo environmental assessment. For this kind of project to go forward, it should include a strategic environmental assessment. This is not just about assessing the consequences for a small, specific area. This is about determining how such a project complies with Canada's international commitments to fight climate change.

The government cannot tell the international community one thing, then come back to Canada to implement policies and programs and authorize projects that will negate all efforts to fight climate change.

Clearly, that approach is bad for both the economy and the environment.

• (1215)

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is quite interesting to see that the Conservatives have no opinion on this today. I do not know why. I have no idea. Anything having to do with the oil companies is always very important to them—or perhaps not. In fact, they might not be such good friends right now.

I have a question for the hon. member about the boycotting of the oil sands. Again today in the news it was announced that one Canadian company, Concord Trucking, a large company, Avon, and yet another company, Lush, will never again use energy from the oil sands in northern Alberta, Fort McMurray and other places. It has become a trend and we are seeing it on the free market. People and companies have said they do not want to be associated with something that is very bad for the environment.

Canada used to have a rather good international reputation with respect to the environment. Now, year after year, the Conservative government—like the Liberal government before it—keeps doing things that undermine that reputation. It is devastating to hear Canadian, American and international companies say they will continue to support the oil sands industry.

As far as Enbridge's plans and those of other companies are concerned, what is my colleague's opinion on the future of Canada's reputation and the future of our economy if this keeps up, if we allow this to continue with this government?

Mr. Bernard Bigras: Madam Speaker, as parliamentarians, we have the opportunity to speak with European parliamentarians on a regular basis. For example, during a recent meeting of the Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association, we learned that Europeans are very concerned about how energy is produced in Canada. We are suffering on the international stage because of that.

Business of Supply

But even worse is the fact that members of this government act like real lobbyists for oil companies on the international scene and try to convince foreign countries that the path Canada is currently on is the right one. It is incredible.

I agree with the hon. member. Businesses want a more sustainable future. Businesses no longer believe that environmental protection is a burden, quite the opposite. Environmental protection stimulates innovation and development. If Canada cannot understand that, the entire Canadian economy is inevitably at risk of being at the bottom of the pile. That may not be the case for a short-term outlook, but it is definitely the case for a medium- or long-term outlook.

Canada's outlook and economic development plans focus solely on the short-term, while other countries have decided to invest in the high-value-added renewable energy sector, for example, which will create many jobs. China is one example; it will become a champion of renewable energy. In the meantime, we are stuck in the stone age in terms of economic development because we continue to invest tax dollars in outmoded energy sources. In the short term, Canada may be proud to say that it is creating jobs, but future generations will pay for the government's inaction and its lack of confidence in the job-creating renewable energy sector.

That is a problem for Canada's international reputation and it will become a problem for Canada's economic development in a few years if we do not reverse the trend and, for one thing, make taxation greener.

● (1220)

Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Burnaby—New Westminster. I would like to thank the Bloc member for his remarks and especially for his support. There are sometimes profound differences between our parties, but we tend to agree on subjects like this.

I would like to begin my remarks by reading today's opposition motion by the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley.

That, in the opinion of the House, the government should immediately propose legislation to ban bulk oil tanker traffic in [a number of places on British Columbia's west coast] as a way...to preserve the marine resources which sustain the community and regional economies of British Columbia, and to honour the extensive First Nations rights and title in the area.

The commission chaired by Gro Harlem Brundtland produced the famous report entitled *Our Common Future* for the United Nations. It defined sustainable development as the obligation of every government to consider the effect that all of our actions will have on future generations. Every time a government has to deal with a problem, it has to take into account economic considerations, of course, but also social considerations and, most importantly, environmental considerations.

If one thing has become increasingly clear, it is that the obligation to consider environmental, economic and social elements has been anything but a priority over the past few years in Canada. Yes, things got worse when the Conservatives took power, but let us look at the facts with respect to the Liberals. While in power, they signed the Kyoto protocol. Then, during their 13 years in power, they were responsible for the largest increase in greenhouse gas emissions of

all Kyoto signatories. That is why we now get very suspicious when the Liberals say that they understand the merits of this proposal.

In 1972, British Columbia's New Democratic government—led by Premier Barrett—asked Ottawa to impose a moratorium. The Liberals, who were in power, agreed to do so but never put it in writing. It was never put down on paper, and that is a fact. That lasted a few years, but then in the 1980s, a right-wing government wanted to lift the moratorium, and everyone was worried. The only good thing to come out of the *Exxon Valdez* tragedy was that after the accident, the government abandoned any thought of letting oil tankers near British Columbia's coastline.

As I recall, even Eddie Goldenberg, former chief of staff to Jean Chrétien, said in a famous speech in the spring of 2008 in London, Ontario, that the Liberals had signed the Kyoto protocol purely for public relations purposes. His exact words were, “to galvanize public opinion”. That is about as cynical as can be. The Liberals signed the Kyoto protocol for PR purposes, but they never followed through on it. As the current leader of the Liberal Party said to the previous leader of that party, “They didn't get it done.”

It is true that the Liberals cannot be trusted when it comes to the environment. They will always signal a left turn, but turn to the right. They will always present themselves as great defenders of the environment and serve up fine speeches. They had the chance to really do something when they were in power, yet they did nothing.

My colleague who will speak after me today, the hon. member for Burnaby—New Westminster, like the Acting Speaker and like my colleague who moved the motion, the hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley, is from British Columbia. These people know the local geography and the extremely fragile nature of the ecosystems in question, and they will be able to tell us more about them. In the few minutes I enjoy here today, my speech will deal mainly with the three aspects of sustainable development.

I will focus on the economic aspect. I am the NDP finance critic. In response to a question, the Bloc Québécois member who spoke right before me referred to something known as Dutch disease.

● (1225)

It is interesting to note that Andrew Nikiforuk's book on oil sands was just translated into French. I must admit, I had the honour of writing the foreword for the French version. When I was writing it, I again concentrated on the economic aspect because the book gives an extraordinary account of all the social and environmental considerations. Of course, it also touches on the economic aspect, as we are doing.

I really want us to look at this aspect. All too often, the environment and the economy are seen as opposites. The Conservative and Liberal arguments are outdated, including these: progress cannot be stopped; the economy has to grow, no matter what; and are you against job creation?

Business of Supply

I submit that the entire debate is false. My colleague from Skeena—Bulkley Valley spoke about this earlier when he talked about the Enbridge pipelines. That same company, need I remind the House, seriously damaged the Kalamazoo River in the United States not long ago. After Enbridge guaranteed the U.S. government that the pipeline would not pose a problem, that river in Michigan was contaminated. It is the same company.

Before letting them begin playing with these ecosystems, we must examine the past. We should pause, take a step back, and look at the effect this is having on our economy in general.

In the summer of 2006, Statistics Canada published a report. It was rather odd to see Statistics Canada on the defensive. It reported that Canada was not suffering from Dutch disease.

For our audience at home, here is the abridged version. In the Netherlands in the 1960s, large offshore gas reserves were discovered. They thought this discovery would result in a huge windfall for the country. They were right about that. However, they had not predicted one thing: the influx of foreign currency had a large impact on its currency at the time, the guilder. The value of the Dutch currency spiked and paradoxically caused great harm to the economy of the Netherlands, because it was increasingly difficult to export the goods manufactured in that European country.

Two years later, the same organization—Statistics Canada—was forced to change its tune. In 2008—before the current crisis hit, it should be noted—Statistics Canada had to report that its 2006 statement was wrong because, in the four-year-period between 2004 and 2008, Canada had lost 322,000 manufacturing jobs, mainly in Ontario and Quebec, the industrial heartland of Canada.

These were jobs with salaries high enough to support a family. Given the nature of this sector's structure, these jobs often came with a retirement pension.

When it comes to sustainable development, it is easy to think first and foremost of the environment. However, sustainable development actually involves all the obligations that we are in the process of dumping on future generations.

When we replace a well-paid job in the industrial sector with a job in the service industry that pays \$12 an hour and does not have a retirement pension, we are burdening future generations with the responsibility of taking care of hundreds of thousands of people who, when they reach the age of retirement, will not have enough money to take care of themselves because they do not have pensions. This is part of the challenge. Sustainable development includes not only environmental and social considerations, but also economic considerations.

Moreover, as the motion indicates, there already is economic activity off the coast of British Columbia. This is the same false argument and the same false dichotomy between jobs and the environment that we heard when I signed the ban on seismic testing in the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

People were saying that I wanted to prevent them from conducting exploration. I said that was not the case and that we were going to do things right so those who were already making a living in industries

that might be affected would not have to suffer any long-term, negative effects of what some people wanted to do.

The problem is that the Conservative government's activities and choices are destabilizing the balanced economy that we have been working to build since the second world war. Going ahead with the proposed action and allowing oil tankers off the coast of British Columbia will serve only to exacerbate this economic, social and environmental problem.

• (1230)

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Outremont for his speech.

I have a question about energy security. In general, energy-exporting countries like Canada have a plan. They tend to have a plan for energy security because in today's world, energy is one of the deeper questions.

We currently have the Enbridge project and other projects like the ones in Quebec for shale gas, and so, energy security issues are very important to Canadians.

My question for the member is the following. Since this government does not have a plan, what economic problems will Canada encounter without a plan and without thinking about the future of the energy economy and the future of the economy in general?

Mr. Thomas Mulcair: Madam Speaker, my colleague from Skeena—Bulkley Valley provided a good summary of the situation.

There is a total lack of long-term vision in what the government is doing. It is leaving the cleanup to future generations because of the way the oil sands have been developed. The next generations will have no energy security because, with projects like Trailbreaker to the east and Keystone, Alberta Clipper and Southern Lights, the government is opening the taps to the United States as quickly as possible. The North American Free Trade Agreement will do the rest. With the proportionality rule, we could not even cut back if we wanted to keep some for ourselves. We will be forced to impose proportionally the same reductions on ourselves as we do on the United States. That is what is going on in Canada.

These are the choices we are talking about. There will be a legacy of huge debts and nothing else. There is nothing sustainable and nothing long-term. We could at least have a vision for developing clean and renewable energies and at the same time finding ways to properly develop the oil sands and perhaps even shale gas. But the techniques currently being proposed for shale gas are very dangerous in the long term for groundwater and for soils.

It is ridiculous to move forward like this without any guarantees that this will not contaminate groundwater and harm farmlands.

[English]

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, last week the Conservatives used the unelected Senate to kill a climate change bill. They have done everything in their power to undermine both international and domestic climate change action. They are turning Canada into an international pariah because they are acting as a front for the tar sands.

Business of Supply

What does my hon. colleague think Canada's reputation is at this stage given the government's continual refusal to make even the most modest advances in dealing with the serious issue of climate change in our country?

• (1235)

[Translation]

Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Madam Speaker, our biggest problem on the world stage on a host of topics, ever since the Conservatives came to power and, as I mentioned, even when the Liberals were in power, is that Canada has lost its credibility with regard to the Kyoto protocol.

It is rather like the balanced economy we have built since the second world war. Our enviable international reputation was built over decades and generations. People used to say that if Canada signed something, then it must be important because Canada is a country that respects domestic and international law.

Unfortunately, especially since the Conservatives came to power, we have seen that Canada no longer has that respect on the world stage. We saw that quite clearly very recently when Canada's bid for a seat on the United Nations Security Council was massively rejected. All of this is interrelated. One does not exist without the other. It is part of a whole.

It is sad, but reversible. And reverse it is precisely what the NDP government will do when the NDP comes to power.

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Outremont for sharing his time with me today.

[English]

Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley for bringing forward this very important opposition day motion.

This has certainly been an issue with the NDP for 40 years. We were very happy to hear that, although they are Johnny-come-latelies, the Liberals and the Bloc are now willing to join with us on something that the NDP has been fighting for.

It is important to note that it was the Dave Barrett NDP government back in 1972, freshly elected as the first NDP government in British Columbia, that pushed for this moratorium and was able to succeed in pushing the federal government at the time to announce it. However, what we have seen subsequently, and what the member from Skeena—Bulkley Valley said so eloquently earlier, are Liberal and Conservative governments trying to undermine that moratorium.

The reality is that in looking at the impact of just one accident, the *Exxon Valdez*, over 20 years later we are still talking about nearly 2,000 species that have not fully recovered. We talk about the fact that the environment continues to be impacted a generation after that accident.

We then have to wonder what the Conservatives are thinking in trying to bring hundreds of ships that are monster tankers, twice as large as the *Exxon Valdez*, to the B.C. coast. It is absolutely absurd that anyone would contemplate something that could be so destructive to the B.C. economy, whether we are talking about

tourism, the fisheries, or other industries within our natural resources. To contemplate that a government would seriously consider bringing monster tankers to the coast is something that defies reason.

What we have heard so far from Conservative speakers in this House is that they are very clearly contemplating this incredibly risky, imprudent action. That is why it is so important that the member from Skeena—Bulkley Valley has brought this forward today. Of course, NDP members in this House will all be standing together to vote for this motion and to push the government to introduce legislation.

In a very real sense, we talk about B.C.'s alienation from the Conservatives, which is so manifest to the Conservative Party itself that it is refusing to call a byelection in Prince George—Peace River. It is doing a great disrespect to the people in northern British Columbia, since other byelections have been held. However, the Conservative Party has been holding off on Prince George—Peace River for the simple reason that it knows there is going to be a backlash for a whole number of reasons that I will get into in a moment. We have been saying all along to hold that byelection, but it is refusing to do so.

Why would that be?

Part of it is the broken promises. British Columbians remember, of course, that when the Conservative Party was running for election it said it would provide support on leaky condos. That was a promise to British Columbians that it promptly betrayed after forming government.

We also have the pine beetle epidemic and the fact that this government continues to use smoke and mirrors in announcing funds but never paying out. In fact, some estimates have been that only 10% to 20% of the pine beetle funding has actually been paid out to support the communities across British Columbia that have been impacted by this epidemic.

The Conservative government keeps churning around money that it is not willing to pay out, even though it is certainly willing to pay out tens of billions of dollars to their friends on Bay Street, to the banking industry and to the big energy industry.

Of course, we have seen the Conservative government's lack of action with the collapse of the salmon fishery. We do have a fourth year of the cycle that took place this year that continues to maintain a healthy fishery's return of sockeye salmon, but we have not seen any substantial increase in resources allocated to rebuild the fisheries in British Columbia.

Those are broken promises, but I think it is more important to talk about the pending third strike against the Conservatives in B.C.

The first strike was the softwood lumber sellout. In this corner of the House, the NDP was the only party who actually read the agreement, spoke out about the agreement and knew that it would cost thousands upon thousands of B.C. jobs. Yet Conservatives from B.C. helped to push something through that was enormously destructive to our softwood lumber industry.

Business of Supply

•(1240)

It is well documented. If we go back in *Hansard*, we will see New Democrats speaking up against that. The Liberals and the Bloc, sadly, supported this Conservative initiative. What happened is exactly what we predicted: the loss of tens of thousands of jobs in British Columbia and a permanent restructuring that has led to massive raw log exports. So British Columbia logs are now fuelling jobs in the United States, thanks to the Conservatives.

The second strike is even more reprehensible; that is, forcing the HST on British Columbians. That is why, as I mentioned earlier, the Conservatives are so scared to call a byelection in Prince George—Peace River. They simply know that what was a solid Conservative riding is not anymore, because in the Peace River region particularly—

I hear some Conservatives denouncing Peace River people and Prince George people. I would say, do not show contempt for people from Prince George and Peace River, because those individuals, those British Columbians, have the right to parliamentary representation. They have the right to call for a byelection, as many residents of that area have. It is simply disrespectful to British Columbians in northern B.C. that the government refuses to hold a byelection there, even though it wanted to hold byelections in Ontario and in Manitoba.

Of course, the HST is—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member.

On a point of order. The hon. Parliamentary Secretary for Official Languages.

Mr. Greg Rickford: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise on a point of order on the substance of this debate.

I thought, having sat here for the last hour or so, we were talking about an important discussion around oil tankers along the B.C. coast.

This is amounting to nothing more than, for the third time in five minutes, apparently taunting this government about holding a byelection. He ought to know that there are technical elements to this and it is not part of the debate. I would encourage you, Madam Speaker, to advise him of such.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): I thank the hon. member for his comments. I am sure the hon. member for Burnaby—New Westminster will bring back his comments to the point of the debate.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, as you know, the point is respect for British Columbians. For the parliamentary secretary to say that for people in Prince George—Peace River, for a byelection that could have been called yesterday or last week or could be called tomorrow, the government is showing some kind of respect by trying to play around with that byelection, is, to say the least, disingenuous.

The Conservatives want to interrupt this question about British Columbia. They are showing disrespect—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): Order, please. I regret to interrupt the member.

On a point of order, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary for Official Languages.

•(1245)

Mr. Greg Rickford: Thank you, Madam Speaker. That may have been his best attempt at a rebuttal. He used the word “disingenuous”. It does not fit into this debate. There are technical elements to this process.

Quite frankly, I would ask the member to move on and make substantive contributions to an important discussion that has nothing to do with the byelection.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): The hon. member has one minute left to bring his arguments to a conclusion. I am assuming that he will—

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, I hope that you are increasing my time, based on these deliberate interruptions by Conservatives, again showing disrespect to British Columbia.

So the second strike was the HST. As Conservatives know, they are responsible for inflicting that on British Columbians.

Now we have a third possible strike; that is, these monster tankers that the Conservatives want to bring to British Columbia. Those monster tankers that these Conservatives are trying to inflict on British Columbia would have an enormous negative impact on our environment, on our economy, on our way of life. We have not heard a single British Columbia Conservative MP stand in this House and say this is wrong.

What we have had for 40 years is a moratorium that was pushed by the NDP and supported by 80% of British Columbians against these monster tankers. The proposal that the Conservatives seemingly support, because not a single one of them has stood in this House and said, “We oppose it”, is to bring in a couple hundred monster tankers, twice as large as the *Exxon Valdez*, with twice as much impact. When we talk about the *Exxon Valdez*, a generation later we are still feeling the impacts, yet Conservatives are not standing and saying they oppose this project and they are not—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): I regret to interrupt the hon. member. He may be able to continue in questions and comments.

Questions and comments. The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I think what is becoming very clear here is that the government is choosing certain winners and losers in Canada's economy.

When serious issues about the use of supertankers through the Dixon Entrance and along the Queen Charlotte Islands is brought forward, we do not see the government standing with members from British Columbia to talk about the effects that is going to have on British Columbia. It has the member for Fort McMurray—Athabasca stand up.

Business of Supply

The government is there to defend, at whatever risk to the rest of the Canadian economy, the absolute pillaging of the tar sands. Meanwhile, serious questions are being raised in this debate by the opposition parties about the effect of this reckless development, particularly on the B.C. coast.

We have a letter from February 15, 2007, from then Canadian Ambassador Michael Wilson, hardly a socialist in anybody's world view, who said that allowing these tankers would pose an unacceptable environmental risk. This is a position that has been taken by numerous organizations, first nations and businesses all across British Columbia, yet the government is willing to take unacceptable environmental risks if it means the quick exploitation of raw bitumen from the tar sands to ship overseas.

I would like to ask my hon. colleague why he thinks the government is deliberately ignoring the wishes of the people of British Columbia in order to advance the pillaging of these natural resources.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, we have seen a huge indication of the lack of respect for British Columbia here today with Conservatives members interrupting B.C. members who are rising to speak and B.C. Conservatives not speaking out on this issue.

When we look at the overall economic impacts, over 50,000 jobs in British Columbia are threatened by these monster tankers. The best economic impacts of this in terms of long-term jobs for the project is maybe a couple of hundred. We can do the math.

New Democrats always do the math in this corner of the House. That is why the ministry of finance, over the last 20 years, has said NDP governments manage budgets better than anyone else, any other party. It is because we always get into the figures and we do the math.

The math shows that to threaten 50,000 jobs for 200 jobs makes absolutely no economic sense whatsoever. We have to wonder when the Conservatives are pushing this project and have stood up in this House seemingly to continue to push it. None of the Conservatives have yet risen to say they support the motion, which I think is a matter of real concern to the 80% of British Columbians who feel that this motion should go through and that the government should be proposing legislation to ban these monster tankers from the B.C. coast.

We have to wonder to just what extent the Conservatives are willing to disrespect B.C., to take B.C. for granted, to continue to think that B.C. is a source of votes they can milk without doing anything to actually deserve or merit the votes of British Columbians.

I think the economic ramifications, particularly of this project, seem to indicate that we are in a situation where the Conservatives, almost surrealistically, do not seem to be listening to British Columbians or keeping the interests of B.C. in mind and are certainly not thinking about the B.C. economy. The net loss of jobs is in the tens of thousands.

• (1250)

Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like the hon. member from British Columbia to explain to me why the oil companies would not refine the oil right here in Canada

so that we would not have to ship it in tankers to other foreign countries.

We could create well-paying jobs in Canada, yet we are creating well-paying jobs in foreign countries. Could the member expand on that?

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, that is a great question from the member for Nickel Belt who has been a very strong advocate in the House for Canadian jobs.

What we have is a Conservative government that has overseen the greatest loss of our manufacturing capacity and manufacturing jobs in the nation's history, half a million manufacturing jobs lost. The government seems completely incapable of putting in place an industrial policy that allows Canadian resources to fuel Canadian jobs.

What we have now through the softwood lumber sellout is exports of raw logs, exports of raw bitumen, exports of our raw resources and loss of Canadian jobs. It is unprecedented and that is how irresponsible the Conservative government is.

Mr. Colin Mayes (Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands.

Okanagan—Shuswap happens to be in British Columbia. I would like members to know that. The member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley would lead the House to believe that there are no safety regulations and no oversight of marine traffic on the B.C. coast. My presentation will dispel this false perception.

Transport Canada is the lead federal department responsible for ship-source pollution. The department uses a number of measures to prevent ship-source spills, including regulations, enforcement of regulations through its inspection regime and surveillance, just to name a few.

While oil tankers have been transiting safely along British Columbia's coast for many years, Transport Canada ensures operators comply with the latest in vessel construction standards such as double hulling requirements for tankers, the International Safety Management code and mandatory port state control inspections if visiting a Canadian port. It ensures that they carry onboard shipboard oil pollution emergency plans and maintain an arrangement with a certified response organization in Canada in case of a pollution incident or threat of a pollution incident.

The 2001 Canada Shipping Act and its associated regulations and standards demand that the vessel owners operate well constructed and maintained vessels, crew those vessels with professional certified seafarers, have a safety management system onboard and maintain an appropriate level of preparedness at all times.

Transport Canada recognizes that because of the international nature of shipping, action to improve safety and pollution prevention in marine operations is most effectively carried out at an international level through the IMO. Global standards established at the IMO are prescribed in regulations under the 2001 Canada Shipping Act and apply to all vessels operating in waters under Canadian jurisdiction. In certain cases, stricter environment controls than the global standards may be required and implemented in our domestic regulations.

The provisions in annex I of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, also known as MARPOL, have been incorporated into Canadian legislation through the regulations for the prevention of pollution from ships and for dangerous chemicals under the Canada Shipping Act, 2001. Transport Canada establishes regulations under the act and also under the Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act. Canadian ships must be built, maintained and operated according to regulations that help to prevent accidents and oil spills at sea.

Transport Canada's ship inspections are also an important means to prevent spills from ships. The department's marine safety inspectors board and inspect foreign ships at Canadian ports regularly. Those that do not meet safety standards are detained until their deficiencies have been corrected.

As per an International Maritime Organization agreement, Transport Canada has established regulations and standards requiring tankers to have double hulls, following international focus on mitigating the risk of oil pollution in the event of a tanker running aground.

These requirements are based on tanker tonnage, the year built and a phase-in schedule. As of January 1, 2010, all tankers except those less than 5,000 dead-weight tonnes built before July 1993 must be of double-hulled construction.

In addition to the double-hull requirements, under Canada's port state control program, Transport Canada inspects foreign ships and that includes tankers in Canadian ports.

The international port state control agreement requires Transport Canada to inspect 25% of all foreign vessels visiting Canadian ports by way of a port state control inspection.

• (1255)

Transport Canada also has a national policy that requires each region to inspect 100% of all tankers coming into ports on their first visit and at least once a year thereafter.

In the past five years, Transport Canada inspected 390 tankers and 1,600 other vessels in the ports of Vancouver, Prince Rupert and Kitimat.

Aerial surveillance by Transport Canada over all Canadian waters allows for detection of pollution from ships. Under the national aerial surveillance program, crews help to enforce domestic and international laws and gather evidence against polluters so that charges can be laid under the regulations. Regular aerial surveillance is a widely recognized and effective deterrent that reduces oil discharges in our waters, because potential polluters are aware that Canada has heightened surveillance.

Business of Supply

During the last two years, crews observed some 11,000 vessels, more than 100 pollution sightings, of which approximately 20 were from ships, and just over 8,000 litres of oil on the ocean surface, a significant decrease compared to the two previous years. Three marine polluters were prosecuted in fiscal year 2008-09 as a result of the evidence gathered under the national aerial surveillance program. This demonstrates Transport Canada's commitment to the prevention of ship-source pollution.

In the Arctic, enforcement occurs through aerial surveillance reports from government ships and reporting through the long-range identification and tracking system, which automatically transmits and identifies the positions of vessels to authorities. Larger ships that intend to enter Canada's northern waters must report their position under the northern Canada vessel traffic services zones regulations.

Transport Canada works with pilotage authorities across Canada, which are responsible for providing safe, reliable and efficient marine pilotage services at ports in all geographic areas of the country. On the west coast, the Pacific Pilotage Authority is responsible for British Columbia's coastal waters, including the Fraser River. The authority also has five compulsory pilotage areas in place, where vessels must use certified pilots.

The prevention of oil spills is a priority of Transport Canada. Regulations, standards and programs demonstrate Transport Canada's commitment to prevention as well as preparedness and response capabilities in the unlikely event of a spill.

• (1300)

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, I guess there are two fundamental questions here. The government keeps talking about how there are enough safety mechanisms in place that people should rest assured. We know, and they point to the Canadian Coast Guard as the group that is responsible for oil spills from tankers, which is true. That is the authoritative body that has to clean up the mess if any of these things spill. We hope that never happens, but we know that in the oil and gas industry accidents do happen from time to time. The consequences can be quite striking.

The question to my colleague is this. He has put his faith in the regulations, his government and the Coast Guard's ability to respond. We know from an internal audit from the Coast Guard this very year, and I am quoting here:

The Canadian Coast Guard lacks the training, equipment and management systems to fulfill its duties to respond to offshore pollution incidents such as oil spills....

This is an internal audit that was done by the Coast Guard on its own ability to handle oil spills.

Business of Supply

We know that during the gulf disaster, the BP spill, the Canadian Coast Guard from the east coast sent down several kilometres of oil booms, which represented half of all the oil booms on our east coast. That shocked Canadians because the total was a little less than three kilometres' worth of oil booms. What was used in the gulf to try to contain that disaster was many, many times more than we have in total in Canada.

My question is this. The hon. member is trying to relieve the concern of the people of British Columbia, three-quarters of whom have said this is a bad idea. All the municipalities of the UBCM said this is a bad idea and the first nations have consistently said this is a bad idea, but the Conservatives are saying they know better. They are saying this is a great idea. This should be permitted.

The fact of the matter is that right now on our books one can ship super oil tankers off British Columbia's coast, and the Coast Guard is not able to respond. I would like the hon. member to respond to that one statement of fact. Where, then, does he put his faith regarding an oil spill happening from one of these super tankers, which are three times the size of the *Exxon Valdez*? On what does his faith rely?

Mr. Colin Mayes: Madam Speaker, the member is missing the point that there are more than 475,000 vessel movements per year off the west coast and the tankers only account for about 0.3% of that traffic.

The fact is that currently today, off the west coast of British Columbia, 25% of all the crude needs for the United States is flowing from Alaska to the continental United States via tanker traffic, and there have not been any problems whatsoever. I would question whether the context of what the member stated, with regard to the comments from the Coast Guard, really reflects the debate we are having right now over preparedness for the oil tanker movement.

Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP): Madam Speaker, I noticed that when the hon. member started his speech, he talked about laws and regulations. I want to use an analogy that my dad used on me. I was born and raised on a farm, and when I wanted something and he did not want that, he used to tell me, "You can argue with me until the cows come home. You are still not going to win".

I want to use this analogy on the laws and regulations. We can make laws and regulations until the cows come home and we are still going to have accidents. It does not matter how we regulate it, we are going to have accidents such as the *Exxon Valdez* and the disasters in the Gulf of Mexico, China, South Korea, Spain and Norway.

My question for the hon. member is this. Why would we not refine our bitumens right here in Canada where we could create real, well-paying Canadian jobs?

• (1305)

Mr. Colin Mayes: Madam Speaker, just from the fact that we have not had any problems with the traffic that I mentioned earlier, obviously the regulations are working.

There is always going to be risk to life, but the fact is that we cannot shut down the economy. We cannot deny jobs to people by shutting the economy down because we think there might be a risk.

Obviously the Government of Canada, through Transport Canada, has provided the regulations to assure Canadians that we are doing everything possible to mitigate any risk of the traffic going down the B.C. coast.

Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am happy to be here this morning to address this issue. I am excited when I hear the NDP members defending the jobs in the oil sands. They want to talk about the importance of the jobs in processing and the refining. We know that is being done in Canada, so those jobs are important. However, supporting those jobs also means supporting the jobs of production and supporting the oil sands as they are doing their production.

It is exciting this morning to hear the NDP members finally coming to their senses and realizing the oil sands are a very important part of the Canadian economy and to hear them supporting the oil sands as enthusiastically as they are.

I am pleased to talk about our government's commitment to the safe, responsible development and transportation of Canada's natural resources. Canadians know they can take comfort in the fact that we currently have in place very strong environmental laws, policies and standards for resource development and transportation.

We appreciate the fact that the residents of British Columbia have concerns with respect to the potential environmental impacts of oil tanker traffic off of the northern British Columbia coast. Canadians need to be and should be assured that we already have measures in place to mitigate such risks and have, as our utmost priority, the protection of the public, the communities and the environment. In fact, these measures have been in place for decades.

It was interesting yesterday when I heard the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley at his press conference. He said, "This issue arises every 15 years or so". He is right about that. We are wondering why, at this time, he would raise it again.

A couple of articles in the media this fall talked about the fact that a lot of U.S. money was being spent here by various environmental organizations. In fact, one of those foundations has funded at least 36 campaign organizations across the United States and Canada. Charities based in California and New York have granted \$15 million since 2003, specifically for campaigns against the Alberta oil, against oil tanker traffic and pipelines through British Columbia.

I hate to question the motivations of my colleague across the way, but we need to take a look at where some of the NDP's direction is coming from on this issue.

We know the voluntary tanker routing measure, known as the tanker exclusion zone, is in place off the west coast of British Columbia. The current restriction on tanker traffic, which is voluntary one, was negotiated between Canada and the United States in 1980s.

Business of Supply

Under this agreement, tankers carrying crude oil southbound from Alaska voluntarily agreed to travel to ports on the U.S. west coast by taking a route on the Pacific Ocean side of the Haida Gwaii islands in Vancouver Island, thereby maintaining a safe distance, a minimum of 25 miles, from the coast.

However, under federal and provincial laws, tankers have always been free to travel to and from ports in British Columbia. Nevertheless this voluntary approach has been effective in keeping tankers bearing Alaskan crude oil off the British Columbia coast. We intend to keep it that way.

I noted in the media last weekend that some Liberal members of Parliament were now advocating for a ban on tanker traffic. Last weekend's *Calgary Sun* mentioned that the members for Vancouver South and Vancouver Centre were "joining the call for an oil tanker ban that would prevent the vessels from travelling through B.C.'s coastal waters to the ports of Kitimat and Prince Rupert". I guess they have changed their mind. As I mentioned, this voluntary exclusion zone has been in place since the 1980s and both of those members were part of the previous government.

In all the years they were here and in government, they never brought forward this policy as one that they wanted to change. The reason the previous government did not change the policy was it served Canadians and it served British Columbians well.

The question then would be, why do those Liberal members oppose it now? Could it be that they are playing some sort of political games with British Columbians?

As members know and Canadians need to realize currently petroleum tankers routinely and safely import and export crude oil and petroleum products through British Columbia ports. For example, and I did not know this until I received this information, the port of Vancouver handles more than five million tonnes of crude oil and petroleum products annually and all types of ships use the Douglas channel to reach Kitimat including tankers.

The only restriction we have in the B.C. offshore is the offshore moratorium on oil and gas exploration development. That moratorium has been in place since the 1970s, when Pierre Trudeau was prime minister, and it applies to offshore oil and gas activity, but does not apply to tanker traffic.

• (1310)

Seeing as how the voluntary exclusion on tanker traffic and the moratorium on offshore oil and gas activity have been effective in ensuring the safety of the public, communities and the environment, our government is not considering changes at this time. Why are the Liberals now opposing some of Pierre Trudeau's policies?

It is important for Canadians to understand that while this motion does not directly mention the proposed Enbridge northern gateway pipeline project, the ban on bulk tankers would effectively shut down this project before any public hearings or independent reviews could take place. Is that the real reason for today's discussion in the House?

The motion could also have some unintended consequences that have not been examined. I am not sure that the authors understand them. It could impact existing tanker traffic, the crucial supply of

fuel to northern remote communities and prohibit future projects that would benefit local economies.

We on this side of the House do not think the motion is the responsible approach to resource development and transportation issues.

When it comes to federal energy transportation matters, decisions must be made with the greatest care and only after a thorough examination of all factors. For example, to ensure pipeline safety, all aspects of federal oil and gas pipelines, including safety and security, are regulated by the National Energy Board. This regulation covers the full life cycle of oil and gas pipelines from approval and operations to abandonment.

Proposals for projects to develop pipelines are subject to extensive environmental and regulatory review and permits are only granted once the environmental issues and first nations issues are considered.

Since May 27 of this year, the proposed Enbridge northern gateway pipeline project has been the subject of an application to the National Energy Board. It has been referred by the government to a joint review panel. The joint review panel, which is independent of government, is charged with reviewing the project pursuant to the environmental assessment and regulatory review requirements that are found in the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act and the National Energy Board Act.

This is the highest level of environmental assessment scrutiny. All issues, including marine shipping issues, will be examined. The panel has received the Enbridge gateway application and is already engaging the public on certain questions.

When the panel determines that an application is ready for public hearings, it will start an open and transparent public review process where any citizen can participate. Participants' funding will be available to facilitate a complete analysis. Approval is not automatic and the outcome should not be taken for granted by anyone.

If the government concludes that the project will cause adverse environmental affects that cannot be justified, the project will not be allowed to proceed. We have made such decisions in the past, but only after a fair hearing has taken place. That is why we are committed to letting this review process go forward.

It is simply a reality that we must responsibly and realistically look at options to ensure we have a sustainable and secure supply of energy now and into the future. The International Energy Agency estimates that 20 years from now, even under the most optimistic scenario for the adoption of alternative fuel sources, fossil fuels will still provide almost 70% of the world's energy demand.

Business of Supply

While there is no such thing as zero risk, the safest and most efficient way to deliver these resources is by pipeline. That is why, when there are proposals for new pipelines or extensions of pipelines, all issues and viewpoints are considered. This is certainly the case with respect to the Enbridge northern gateway pipeline. As I mentioned earlier, we have referred this to a joint review panel, the most stringent level of review possible.

Our government will not pretend difficult decisions will not have to be. Instead, we will continue to do the work that is necessary to ensure that the best decisions are made. We will ensure that independent and scientific review form the basis of those decisions.

• (1315)

Hon. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Lib.): Madam Speaker, will the hon. member approach the interim Minister of the Environment and ask him to do the following: first, put a price on carbon; second, develop an integrated partnership with the private sector, universities and provincial governments to come up with an integrated plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and, third, develop and adhere to objectives and targets for marine protected environments?

Canada is a laggard in terms of identifying marine protected areas. This is crucially important for my constituents in Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca as well as constituents of those other MPs who live in British Columbia.

Would the member ask the Minister of the Environment to adopt these three initiatives?

Mr. David Anderson: Mr. Speaker, while that is not directly on topic today, I will respond to it. Our government has moved very responsibly and very quickly in terms of these areas. We work not only with universities, but other levels of government across Canada to develop new technologies, new ways of saving energy, conserving energy, protecting the environment, and we have been very successful at that. Our eco-energy programs are well known both for homes and small businesses, where we have encouraged people to change their footprint and to improve their energy efficiency. That has been very popular. People want to live more cleanly these days and they will continue to do that.

In terms of the protected areas, our government, and particularly the former minister of the environment, has been very aggressive about putting new areas into protected status, into parks as well. We will continue to do that. We will look after the environment. We also want to work with industry and other levels of government to ensure we have a strong economy as well.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, to be clear for my colleague who stands on the opposite side of this question about supertankers off of B.C.'s north coast, the Union of B.C. Municipalities voted, without dissension, that there must be a supertanker ban put in place legislatively. That was from the mayors and councillors representing communities across British Columbia. The first nations leadership in B.C. has also said this as well as every environment group and an increasing number of businesses.

When the government says it does not believe that a legislative tanker ban is important, it is standing offside of all these groups. The government is saying that it knows better than all these other groups.

Every time British Columbians are asked, the people who would be most directly impacted from any kind of accident, whether it be a supertanker or a pipeline, the minimum of three-quarters of B.C. residents say, "No thanks. The risk outweighs the benefit".

I have a clear question for my colleague from the west. When a western province, from all its leaders and communities, has so clearly said that it wants the government to respect and listen to its opinions on this, that it knows its coast and waters and knows the risk and the peril of supertankers in those waters, would he at least bend his ear and consider that maybe all these folks are right and his government is wrong?

Mr. David Anderson: Madam Speaker, I do not think we need to take lectures from the members across the way about representing our constituents. I will bring a couple of illustrations into this. On Bill C-300, the mining bill that would be so damaging to Canadian industry, Canadian economy and Canadian jobs, and the NDP members fought against that.

The free trade agreements, particularly the one with Colombia, which our western Canadian farmers desperately needed for their special crops, the NDP members fought and fought against it and took as long as they could to see that stop.

The long gun registry is another example. Since coming here, I do not think I have ever seen anything that was handled as cynically as the NDP handled the long gun registry, allowing a few of their members to vote with us so the others could oppose it and ensure the bill was defeated.

Another example would be the economic action plan. Yesterday the leader of the NDP begged us to increase, improve, expand and continue our economic stimulus plan after he had opposed it at every turn.

When it comes to listening to Canadians, we will not take any lessons from the New Democratic Party. We have the environmental assessment process in place for these projects so everyone gets a chance to participate and government can make the best decision.

• (1320)

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Burnaby—Douglas.

I just listened to the Conservative member say that he would not take any lessons from the NDP, and that is fine because we sort of expected that. However, at the heart of this debate today is whether the Conservative government will take any lessons from the people of B.C. and actually listen to the people of B.C.

Business of Supply

I want to thank the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley for bringing forward this excellent motion that would ensure there is legislation to ban bulk oil tanker traffic in the Dixon Entrance. This is something that the member, along with other members of our caucus, has worked on diligently and passionately. There has been broad public discourse in our province over this issue. I thank and congratulate the member for the fine work that he has done.

I would also like to give recognition to Catherine Bell, a former member of this House for Vancouver Island North and who will again be a member of this House. In 2008, Catherine Bell brought forward Bill C-571 and introduced legislation to ban tanker traffic in this same area. We are very appreciative of the work that Catherine Bell did on this issue. She is still working on this issue. It is of key interest to people in Vancouver Island North. We know she will be back here to represent those folks very soon.

This motion is very straightforward. When we look at what is at risk here in terms of one of the most pristine, beautiful parts of our planet, our country and certainly in British Columbia, the thought of these massive supertankers carrying this oil from the Enbridge pipeline and the tar sands through this very ecologically and historically sensitive and beautiful area is something that nobody in British Columbia can contemplate. The risks are so high that there is obviously nothing more to be said than that we need to have a legislative ban to make it abundantly clear that this is not acceptable in terms of the risk to our environment and to our local communities.

The motion today does present a very clear choice. When one begins to look at the people who have weighed in on this issue, poll after poll has consistently supported a ban on tanker traffic by as much as 80%. We know the proposed pipeline by Enbridge crosses the territory of more than 50 first nations. That is massive.

We know that coastal first nations made a very important declaration on banning tanker traffic on their traditional territory in March 2010. The Union of B.C. Municipalities, representing many communities, large and small, also passed a resolution at their convention in October. The First Nations Summit Chiefs Assembly passed a resolution also in October. The list goes on and on.

I do believe that part of the debate today is whether the Conservative government is listening to the people of British Columbia. The government was elected by saying that it would be accountable to British Columbians, that we would not experience western alienation and that the people of British Columbia counted.

What has the government done time after time? Let us just think of issues like the HST. I do not remember one Conservative member standing up and saying anything in defence of his or her constituents and how he or she felt about the HST. The Conservatives all ran for cover. They tried to pass it off on the Gordon Campbell Liberals and we saw what happened to him.

That was one example of where the Conservative members of Parliament from British Columbia refused to listen to their constituents in B.C. Let us look at Insite in my community. There has been a groundswell of support for life-saving measures for people who are facing addiction and overdoses. The board of trade, the local police, city council, the Premier of B.C., all supported

Insite, along with the local community and, most important, the people who use the facility.

What did the government do? It is taking it all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada. It is fighting it every step of the way.

We could look at the destaffing of lighthouses in B.C., where small coastal communities are dependent on this very important service and the staffing of lighthouses, they are now facing another uphill battle in terms of the future of those lighthouses and the staffing that has been there.

● (1325)

We could name issue after issue on which the Conservatives have abandon the people of British Columbia. However, on the issue of supertankers going through this very sensitive area in B.C. is probably the most significant thing that has happened to date. I have to say that Conservative members should be ashamed of themselves for ignoring all of the opinions and strong feelings out there about what this motion means.

The government can go ahead and ignore the NDP, we can deal with that and we will fight tooth and nail in this Parliament, but if the government votes against this motion, then it is a clear indication of how it feels about the people in their local communities.

I was very proud recently to host a public forum with two of my colleagues from Burnaby—Douglas and Burnaby—New Westminster on the issue of tanker traffic. We had a full house with leaders from industry, the Marine Pilots' Association, environmental activists from the Western Canada Wilderness Committee and a number of excellent speakers. I know all of us heard the concerns from folks in Burnaby and in east Vancouver and how strongly they feel about these issues.

This is more than the supertankers. As we know, this is linked to the growth in the tar sands. I think it is well-known that if this pipeline goes ahead and these tankers are allowed to operate, it will lead to a massive growth of the tar sands by at least 30%. That has been raised in the debate here today. It throws into question the whole future of the tar sands and why it is that we are so hell bent on exporting this raw bitumen to other countries and using this pipeline. At least, as a first priority, we should have a made in Canada energy policy that respects our domestic markets and serves our local markets, instead of shipping out raw resources, notwithstanding the environmental damage that will take place.

I strongly support this motion today. It will be an environmental travesty if we allow these proposals to go ahead. As legislators, we should take a clear stand and position to say that there should be a ban on these supertankers through this area of northern B.C. That is what we are here to do. We are here to represent our constituents. We are here to make decisions that respect the future of our environment. I cannot think of a more important thing that we have to do.

Business of Supply

If we are not willing to take this on and recognize that there is a public interest at stake here, then we are abdicating our responsibility. If we only listen to the statements by the captains of industry about what they see as future profits and export markets, then we are not getting the full picture. I believe that the people in our communities, our constituents, are demanding that we, as legislators, bring a balanced and fair view to the decisions we make. The environment is part of that. The social impact is part of that. The impact on first nations is part of that.

Organizations, like the Union of B.C. Municipalities, the First Nations Summit, the labour organizations and many others, have supported this ban. They have come to this conclusion because they are looking at the full picture. They are looking at the impact on the environment. They are looking at the impact on future generations and the image of what a spill would look like in that area of British Columbia, which is something that none of us want to even contemplate.

I urge my colleagues to support this very important motion today. We will be watching very closely to what every member of the Conservative Party for British Columbia does on this motion. We want to know if they have been listening to their constituents to uphold the future of our province, our environment and to ensure we do not go through a scenario of disaster, which will surely result unless we pass this motion.

• (1330)

Hon. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we share the same province and our constituents have spoken loudly about their concerns over the environment and the government's lack of action in dealing with some of the major environmental challenges we have seen.

My colleague mentioned the first nations situation and how they must be consulted as partners in addressing these challenges. Could she tell us how the government could do a better job of engaging first nations to ensure their needs and the needs of non-first nations people are met and we have sustainable development in the future for British Columbia?

The engagement between environmental and human security are two halves of the same whole and, unfortunately, the government is missing the boat on this. China and other countries are vaulting ahead and we do not seem to have a plan. As I mentioned before, even the United States has an active partnership that it has developed with the private sector and other partners.

The government has an opportunity to develop these innovative partnerships to deal with the environmental challenges before us. How does my colleague believe it needs to do a better job to achieve these objectives?

Ms. Libby Davies: Madam Speaker, we must respect the traditions and territories of first nations. More than 50 first nations will be impacted in a very negative way by this pipeline and any disaster or spill that might happen. The fact that first nations have come out so strongly and in such a united way with one voice and working with many other partners and allies is a strong indication that the government not only has to be at the table in terms of working out land use, development and plans, but it needs to be done

in a way that is respectful of the history and traditions of first nations communities. We have not seen that.

What is taking place with this Enbridge proposal flies in the face and contradicts many of the principles we have heard around working in partnership with first nations. From that point of view, it is a test of what the government says and what it actually does. This motion brings that to the forefront.

The government has an opportunity here to do something in a meaningful way by engaging in consultation, or it can ignore what first nations are saying and only listen to the captains of industry who basically just want to export more and see the tar sands grow more.

Mr. Mark Warawa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague across the way talked about action on the environment. As she well knows, this government is one of action and we have a continental harmonized approach to tackling the fight against climate change with aggressive targets of a 17% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2020. She also knows that emissions have already started to go down under this government.

Last night, we saw her and all the members of the NDP vote against a federal sustainable development act. We also know that in committee they are opposing and actually trying to change the definition of "sustainable development". We have seen them in action voting against sustainable development last night and also in committee. Why does she not care about ensuring her actions match her words?

Ms. Libby Davies: Madam Speaker, I would note that the parliamentary secretary neglected to mention one other action his government has taken, which is to kill the great climate change bill that was in the Senate, using an unelected, undemocratic body to kill a very progressive, forward-looking bill. It is sad that he would neglect to mention that action.

The fact is that the NDP has a superb record on bringing forward concrete proposals around climate change. We have been the strongest opponents in this House in terms of challenging the government on its lack of accountability on climate change. Our bill passed, not once but twice, through the House of Commons and then was killed in the Senate. Need I say more in terms of where the government is at?

It is heading into the next round of negotiations in Cancun and it has no plans. The one thing we had as a ray of hope, the government killed it off.

• (1335)

Mr. Bill Siksay (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to participate in this debate on an NDP motion today, which says that:

...the government should immediately propose legislation to ban bulk oil tanker traffic in the Dixon Entrance, Hecate Strait and Queen Charlotte Sound as a way to protect the West Coast's unique and diverse ocean ecosystem, to preserve the marine resources which sustain the community and regional economies of British Columbia, and to honour the extensive First Nations rights and title in the area.

This is a very important and timely motion. Many people in British Columbia have recently become mobilized. People have been mobilized on this issue for decades, but recently the Enbridge proposal to put a pipeline through northern British Columbia, from the Alberta tar sands to the north coast of British Columbia, to allow supertanker traffic out of the north coast of British Columbia has mobilized people to call into question the judgment that would see this kind of proposal go forward.

People are hot to trot on this issue, to put it mildly. It is something that is incredibly concerning and there is huge support for ensuring a ban on tanker traffic on the north coast of British Columbia. Polls have shown that over 80% of British Columbians support a ban on tanker traffic on the north coast of British Columbia.

We know that there are very significant features of the north coast that are significant in terms of the ecology of this planet. The Great Bear Rainforest is the largest intact coastal, temperate rainforest in the world, and the government and others have worked to preserve that area. Unfortunately, all it would take is one tanker accident to undo that work and to damage, perhaps irreparably, that rainforest. This is one area that a legislative tanker ban would continue to protect.

We also know that the ecotourism industry is growing in British Columbia and certainly in the north coast. We know that it is a \$2.6 billion industry at this point and there is lots of potential for expansion of that industry.

We know too that the kind of support that has been exhibited in British Columbia is extensive. The Union of B.C. Municipalities in October, without dissent, passed a motion calling for a ban on tanker traffic on the north coast.

We also know that B.C. first nations have been very involved in this, that their territories are directly impacted by this proposal and would be directly impacted by any kind of tanker accident on the north coast. They have been incredibly outspoken and united in their opposition to tanker traffic on the north coast. The Coastal First Nations made a statement in March 2010. The Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs and the First Nations Summit have spoken out clearly on this issue. Just minutes ago, the Fraser First Nations, who represent 61 indigenous communities along the Fraser River, signed on to their Fraser declaration opposing the Enbridge pipeline and the tanker traffic on the north coast. There is absolute unanimity among first nations in British Columbia on this issue, and it is growing daily, as we have seen today.

There are many concerns about what an accident on the north coast would mean. We have seen that on the west coast of North America before. The *Exxon Valdez* is a terrible example of what could happen, with 11 million gallons of crude oil spilling in Alaskan waters. We know that it killed 2,800 sea otters, 250,000 birds, 22 orcas, 300 harbour seals, 250 bald eagles, 1.9 million salmon and 12.9 billion herring, so it was a significant accident and it caused incredible long range damage to the west coast.

We keep hearing that there is an Alaskan tanker exclusion zone, that tankers cannot come within 150 miles of the coast of Haida Gwaii, and yes, there are in place north-south restrictions, but what we are talking about now is opening the door to east-west transport

Business of Supply

in and out of ports on the north coast of British Columbia. This is a completely different proposition, so responding to questions about a north coast tanker ban by saying that there is this exclusion zone really completely misses the point and does not deal with the need for a legislative ban on tanker traffic on the north coast of British Columbia.

● (1340)

Why is it necessary? Environment Canada tells us that it predicts, every year, 100 small oil spills, 10 moderate oil spills and 1 major oil spill, based on current levels of tanker traffic in Canada.

Given the unique difficulties of navigating the north coast of British Columbia, the unique difficulties of cleaning up a spill that happened in those waters, this has to be a concern.

In my own constituency, people are concerned as well. I think the issues on the south coast are somewhat different because there already is existing tanker traffic on the south coast, and a lot of that is based in my constituency of Burnaby—Douglas.

Because of the concerns that folks on the south coast and in Burnaby have about this, I hosted, with my colleagues from Burnaby—New Westminster and Vancouver East, a forum on oil and water transportation issues back on November 10. We invited a range of people to speak to this issue.

Kinder Morgan, which represents the existing pipeline from Alberta to the coast, which has its terminus in my riding, did not participate in our panel. However, it did send representatives to attend the meeting. Port Metro Vancouver, as well, sent representatives to attend the meeting and be available should there be questions.

The panel included folks from Dogwood Initiative, Andrea MacDonald was the representative of Dogwood Initiative. We had Ben West from the Wilderness Committee and Terry Engler from the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, Local 400. We had the Pacific Pilotage Authority. Captain Kevin Obermeyer, its president and CEO, was its representative. Captain Stephen Roy Brown, the president of the Chamber of Shipping, was also on our panel.

Those folks all presented about the key issues that are related to the transportation of oil on the south coast and out of Port Metro Vancouver, out of Burnaby—Douglas, in fact.

Burrard Inlet forms the northern boundary of Burnaby—Douglas, of my riding. It is, as I said, the terminus of the existing pipeline from Alberta's oil fields to the west coast. Kinder Morgan owns and operates that, and that facility is located in the riding.

Burnaby—Douglas is also home to the Chevron refinery, the only refinery on Canada's west coast.

Business of Supply

Burnaby—Douglas used to be the home of a Shell refinery and Gulf refinery, as well. Those have since wound down. However, Shell and Petro-Canada still have distribution facilities in Burnaby—Douglas.

The oil and gas industry is a significant industry in my constituency. It would be wrong for me to ignore the fact that people are concerned about their jobs in this industry, in my riding. They do recognize that this industry does provide good, family-supporting union jobs, and that they produce and distribute products that we all still use. That raises the question of the job impact. It also raises the question of how we change our lifestyle and our dependence on fossil fuels.

We know, too, that products that are produced in Burnaby and that are piped to Burnaby are also shipped up the coast of British Columbia to coastal communities, to power vehicles, to actually power electricity production in some communities, so that this is still a necessary requirement for those communities and something that has to be maintained.

We also need to consider, though, how we change the fuel consumption habits in those communities, how we can help those communities change their dependence on fossil fuels and shift to alternative energy sources.

We also know that some of the products that come through the pipeline to Burnaby are shipped to the northwest United States for both further refining and distribution. Recently, products are being shipped to Asia, more oil and crude oil is being shipped to China, in particular, and the potential for raw bitumen exports to Asia also continues to come up.

There is concern about oil spills in my community. We have seen a major pipeline accident in July 2007, where oil spewed over a neighbourhood for almost half an hour while it could not be shut down after an excavator broke the Kinder Morgan pipeline. That has people in my constituency very concerned about the safety of pipelines, given that they go through residential neighbourhoods, given that they go through wilderness areas, as well, in British Columbia.

People in the riding have concerns about the navigation of supertankers and large oil tankers into Port Metro Vancouver and under the Iron Workers Memorial Second Narrows Bridge.

● (1345)

There is concern about pilots. There is concern about what happens if a ship loses power. There is concern about the clearance from the bottom of the harbour and what it would mean if a tanker ran aground. There is also concern about spill response capacity. We know that Burrard Clean Operations, the organization that has major responsibility in Port Metro Vancouver, has a 10,000 tonne cleanup capacity, but we also know that many of the tankers that come in and out of the harbour carry 110,000 tonnes of oil products. We also have heard recently that the Coast Guard's capacity to respond to an oil spill is also in question after a recent audit.

There are lots of questions that arise for people on the south coast as well, questions about risk management, questions about how we want to tie into the further development of the tar sands, and these are all issues that need to be addressed both on the north coast and—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): Questions and comments, the hon. member for Burnaby—New Westminster.

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Burnaby—Douglas for his comments on this important motion. The member is renowned as one of the strongest constituency members of Parliament in the country. He has a long history of serving the previous member of Parliament. In the last six and a half years he has been absolutely phenomenal in providing that constituency service and support in the constituency. He runs an operation that is really a template for all of us as members of Parliament.

The member hosted, as he mentioned earlier, that public meeting around the issue of this possible extension of monster tankers off the B.C. coast. I would like him to speak very specifically about what kind of feedback he had from the residents of Burnaby—Douglas at that meeting, how people feel in his riding. We heard earlier that the Conservatives were saying do not listen to British Columbians. They certainly do not seem to care about British Columbians' opinions on the softwood lumber sellout or the HST. I guess the question is are they going to listen to British Columbians on monster tankers? To what extent are people in his riding concerned about the Conservative plan to push monster tankers on the B.C. coast?

Mr. Bill Siksay: Madam Speaker, as the member knows because he was at that meeting, people are very concerned about the whole question of tanker traffic and oil tanker traffic on the coast. They are concerned from the point of view of what it means to the explosive and expanded development of the tar sands and the sustainability of that kind of oil development. But they are also concerned about what it means to transport bitumen, crude oil and other petroleum products through a pipeline across British Columbia through wilderness areas and through residential and urban areas. They have had the very dramatic experience of what results when there is an accident and accidents happen. Enbridge had a very serious pipeline accident in the American Midwest in the not too recent past. These are very serious issues and accidents can happen. Almost inevitably accidents happen, so people are concerned about the safety of the pipeline.

People are also concerned about what happens when that oil is transported out of Burrard Inlet. They have seen what happens when there is a spill in our local harbour in Burrard Inlet. They saw that after the pipeline accident where a lot of that oil that spewed from the pipeline when it was broken ended up in the harbour, in Burrard Inlet. They saw the damage that caused. They have seen smaller oil spills resulting from ordinary tanker traffic in and out of the harbour, which has caused problems for wildlife and problems for recreational use around the harbour area. They have seen the kinds of issues that arise and the kinds of problems that we have with managing the industry that we have now.

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People are not taking a ridiculous position on this. They realize that they still use those products. They realize that jobs are part of all of this, so they know it is not necessarily an easy solution on the south coast where we demand these products, where we need these jobs, but they believe that there are alternatives to further expanding the tar sands, to further expanding and enabling the use of fossil fuels. They want a government that hears them on that. They do not have that now. They do not have a government that listens to them when it comes to their concerns, the overwhelming concerns of British Columbians, about tanker traffic on the north coast and their concerns about how that existing traffic is managed on the south coast.

They do not have a government that is willing to listen to them and to take action on those things. That is why we have brought this motion forward today, to say that we need a legislated ban on supertanker traffic on the north coast. That is something that needs to be written down so that it is taken into consideration so that the policy is in place and there is no backing away from it. The support for that position is so widespread in British Columbia, municipal politicians without dissent agree with that. Incredible organizations and coalitions of first nations have come together, almost unprecedented, to support a ban on this and to oppose the Enbridge pipeline through northern British Columbia.

Something is happening. The Conservatives had better listen to it or they are going to hear it from British Columbians.

● (1350)

Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to present some of my thoughts on the issue of the NDP's opposition day motion.

This is a commitment that has long been held by the Liberal Party of Canada. In fact, it is the heritage of Prime Minister Trudeau from back in 1972 that the Liberals are still supporting. We are very pleased that the NDP members are in support of this also.

I have been listening to the debate. That eight out of ten British Columbians feel very strongly that there should be a ban on supertanker traffic along the north coast is a very key point.

Let us look at what is behind the fact that British Columbians feel so strongly about this. I think it is simple and we can never lose sight of this context. That is, if there are 200-plus supertankers in that area and something goes wrong, and it seems that something always will, we cannot undo it. We can never reverse it. There is no turning back. The government can spend billions but we can never go back to the way it was. Nor can we ever reverse the public anger and the public sense of betrayal should there be an accident. That is the key point.

If the government, as it seems to be doing, is determined to support a project that would entail hundreds of crude oil supertankers in these vulnerable and dangerous waters and the worse should happen, the world will be changed forever. British Columbia's coastline will be changed forever and the world will have changed for the worst. That is the key issue. That is the crux of why so many British Columbians are clear that it is not worth that risk.

We mentioned that eight out of ten British Columbians support this ban. There was a poll by an independent polling agency that asked:

Since 1972, the Canadian federal government has banned oil tankers from transporting crude oil through B.C.'s inside passage to protect the coast from oil spills. Now, Ottawa is considering allowing oil tankers to transport crude oil through our coastal waters. In your opinion, should we ban or allow oil tanker traffic in B.C.'s inside coastal waters?

Over 80% of respondents said to ban it. Just 15% said to allow it. That is a very clear indication of the will of British Columbians.

As other members have pointed out, this is across the spectrum. Communities right across British Columbia support a ban. First nations support a ban. In fact, 61 indigenous communities that have claimed territory in the Fraser Basin which actually represents about two-thirds of the land mass of British Columbia have just signed a declaration. They are concerned about the impact of tanker traffic and potential spills on the salmon's ocean migration routes and rightly so, because there is no going back should there be a major spill.

I have been in that area of British Columbia. I have had the privilege to work in inlets on the coast. I have had the privilege to be in boats and small planes, and to recreate in that area, as do many thousands of British Columbians and tourists. People come from outside our province and our country to experience what is considered to be an international jewel, the mid and north coast of British Columbia.

● (1355)

I have walked in the Khutzeymateen Grizzly Bear Sanctuary amid the grasses and the estuarial waters where grizzly bears come to feed on the returning salmon. To picture that area covered with black, tarry goo is unimaginable. Modelling of a spill from a tanker in the inland north Pacific coastal waters suggests that the spill could affect the ecology, the coastline and plants and animals that depend on it from the tip of Vancouver Island to well north of Prince Rupert, depending on the time of year and weather conditions.

Do we want to risk that? Does the government want to risk that? The government is speaking in favour of that, but the people of British Columbia and first nations are against it. The government has a choice either to listen or not to listen to the people of British Columbia.

It could risk changing the coastline of B.C. forever. These tankers are far larger than the *Exxon Valdez*. That oil spill happened over 20 years ago and the oil has not gone away. The impact on wildlife is ongoing. Some species have never recovered. We risk losing more wildlife should the government continue to push forward.

The Conservative government has adopted its usual tactic of sowing confusion through deceit in its response to questions that I have put forward since visiting the Gulf of Mexico last May. I have received an array of responses to my questions as to whether the government will continue to respect the ban on tanker traffic in the inland north coast waters as governments have done since 1972. The responses from the government have been designed to confuse this protection with the protection on the exterior coast of Haida Gwaii and with drilling moratoria. This was a separate moratorium.

Statements by Members

The government is using its usual tactic to deceive and confuse. That is exactly why the Liberals have taken a stand. That is why in June, the Leader of the Opposition said that the Liberals would put a permanent ban in place to ensure the continued protection of this precious area.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): The hon. member will have 12 minutes left for her comments after question period.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

SPECIAL OLYMPICS WORLD SUMMER GAMES

Mr. LaVar Payne (Medicine Hat, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to congratulate my constituent, Christine Sullivan, who will be competing in power lifting at the 2011 Special Olympics World Summer Games in Athens, Greece.

Christine is from my riding of Medicine Hat, and she and 108 other athletes are proudly representing Canada. In Greece they will promote the fundamental principles and values of the Olympics. These athletes show us that no matter what the obstacle, through hard work and dedication they can achieve athletic excellence. They are an inspiration to us all.

The 2010 Winter Olympics were a resounding success. There we saw the Olympic spirit as we watched our athletes uphold the values of friendship, respect and excellence.

I am certain that Christine and her fellow athletes will continue to make Canada proud. Sportsmanship is a commendable goal and these athletes are given the opportunity to be role models and teach our kids valuable lessons. The real winners in sports are those who know how to persevere and to behave with dignity.

Let us all unite behind the red and white jerseys of our Special Olympics athletes.

* * *

• (1400)

MENTAL HEALTH

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Newton—North Delta, Lib.): Madam Speaker, mental health is something that impacts all Canadians, either directly or indirectly.

Dr. Shimi Kang is a young woman who has spent many years as one of Canada's leading experts on youth and women's mental health and addictions.

She founded Canada's largest program for youth with mental health and substance use disorders, and created the youth, culture and mental health fund to address awareness and stigma in diverse and immigrant populations.

She is making a real difference by creating awareness across all communities.

I stand today to commend Dr. Kang for her work and wish her luck in her candidacy as one of Canada's Top 40 Under 40.

[*Translation*]

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mrs. Josée Beaudin (Saint-Lambert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in 1992, the United Nations General Assembly declared December 3 to be the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. According to the World Health Organization, approximately 650 million people throughout the world have a mental or physical disability that affects their daily lives.

The International Day of Persons with Disabilities provides an opportunity to gain a greater understanding of how having a disability affects people's lives. This day also serves as an opportunity to increase awareness among the public and private sectors of the concrete benefits of integrating these individuals into our economic and social system. Today, the public and private sectors are encouraged to find innovative solutions to effective integration.

I would like to emphasize the importance and relevance of this day on which we all have the opportunity—together—to transform words into actions. We all have a role to play in making equal opportunity a reality, thus ensuring that people with disabilities are truly able to participate in our society.

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[*English*]

MINING INDUSTRY

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today I am standing on behalf of the people of my riding and the people of Manitoba who are saying that Vale's plan to close the smelter and the refinery in Thompson is unacceptable.

Many Manitobans are critical not only of Vale but of the federal government. How can this government justify giving Vale \$1 billion to strip over 600 jobs from Manitoba and eliminate our major processing capacity?

Did the federal government know that Vale was planning to cut our jobs when it gave Vale our money? Did it even ask? Where were the Manitoba Conservative members of Parliament? Is it just a coincidence that all this took place during the debate over foreign takeovers and potash in Saskatchewan?

One thing is clear: Vale's announcement is an attack on the people of Manitoba. The government talks about job creation. How about working to keep our jobs?

The government must be at the table. It is time for the government to stop standing up for Vale and to start standing up for the people of Thompson and Manitoba.

RENFREW COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the students and teachers of Renfrew County District School Board are saying goodbye to Mr. Roy Reiche.

Roy served the students and parents of Renfrew County for 15 years as the elected trustee for Laurentian Valley and North Algona Wilberforce townships as well as being the board chairman for three terms.

Renfrew County's population is spread out in pockets over a wide geographical area. Our residents, particularly in the rural areas, face a number of challenges when it comes to the delivery of services. This fact is apparent when it comes to education and the need to provide the same opportunities for our students as students receive in areas where they have access to more resources.

Roy operated on the basis that one puts the students first. This has meant fighting for education dollars when necessary and using the resources one has in a responsible fashion. It is a lot of hard work with many tough decisions. For his time on the board of education, Roy will be remembered as a class act.

I appreciate being given this opportunity, on behalf of the people of Renfrew County, to publicly thank Roy for his years of public service on the board of education. May he enjoy his retirement.

* * *

• (1405)

POLAND

Mr. Andrew Kania (Brampton West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on November 11, 2010, Poles everywhere celebrated the 92nd anniversary of the independence of Poland.

Poland and its people are used to enduring hardship. In the 18th century, Poland was one of the largest and most powerful countries in Europe. However, Poland collapsed in 1795 and its territory was then partitioned. Thus, for 123 years, Poland was erased from the world maps.

However, the Polish people, language and culture persevered, and in 1918, the Second Polish Republic was created. However, Poland's suffering continued with its subsequent invasion by Nazi Germany in 1939, which led to the deaths of more than six million of its citizens.

Even with Poland's liberation from Nazi Germany, its suffering continued under communism until the efforts of Polish Pope the Venerable John Paul II and the Solidarity trade union eventually led to the collapse of communism not only in Poland, but in the Soviet Union itself and all of eastern Europe.

This resulted in the creation of the Third Republic of Poland, a free and democratic country, part of both NATO and the European Union.

As a proud first-generation Polish Canadian, I understand the significance of this celebration, and I wish to express my best wishes to Poles everywhere.

*Statements by Members***INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY**

Mr. John Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise in the House today to mark the important International Day for the Abolition of Slavery.

In his statement today, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon noted that slavery continues through:

serfdom, debt bondage and forced and bonded labor; trafficking in women and children, domestic slavery and forced prostitution...; sexual slavery, forced marriage and the sale of wives; child labour and child servitude

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize one crusader against slavery within this House, our own member for Kildonan—St. Paul.

Earlier today, Brian McConaghy of Ratanak International, an organization devoted to helping to free people in Cambodia from slavery, presented the member for Kildonan—St. Paul with an award for her efforts to raise awareness about the continuing problem of slavery in Canada.

I hope all in this House can join me in standing to congratulate the member for Kildonan—St. Paul on her efforts to eradicate slavery on this important day.

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[Translation]

MARC CÉRÉ

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of all of my Bloc Québécois colleagues, I would like to congratulate Marc Céré, a firefighter and the head of the fire prevention division at the Salaberry-de-Valleyfield fire station. He won the Fleur de Lys award at the 45th annual symposium of the Association des techniciens en prévention-incendie du Québec. Mr. Céré has distinguished himself through his quality work and his commitment to fire prevention.

I am proud to pay tribute to him for his exemplary work ethic and the passion he brings to his work in my riding. Mr. Céré's strength of character, courage and experience make him an example to others.

I encourage him to continue his invaluable service. Mr. Céré and his team work to raise public awareness of the material and psychological damage caused by fire. He encourages people to always act responsibly in order to significantly reduce the number of fires.

Well done, Mr. Céré. You have every reason to be proud of your excellent work.

* * *

[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Hon. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call attention to a program that will bring Canada's air force into the next generation of fighter capability and Canada's aerospace industry into the next generation of high technology.

Statements by Members

Along with that will come tens of thousands of high-tech, high-paying jobs for Canadians with the overall positive impact on the economy that will benefit all Canadians.

Unfortunately, the Liberals do not want to know the truth and they are so determined to remain ignorant of the facts that they scuttled an approved defence committee trip to Lockheed Martin in Fort Worth to get a close-up look at the aircraft and the program.

The truth is that the Liberals do not want to know the truth, because the truth would belie their irresponsible efforts to rewrite history, rob the Canadian Forces of a critical capability for the next 40 years and rob Canadians of the jobs they need.

The Liberals need to stop their wilful irresponsibility on this issue. We have seen this B-grade movie once already with the Sea King. The implications are even more serious with the F-35 program, and the Liberals simply need to stop their nonsense and get with the program for the good of Canadians and the good of our country.

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[Translation]

EDMUNDSTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

Mr. Jean-Claude D'Amours (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on November 26, I attended an appreciation night for the Edmundston fire department.

The Liberal Party of Canada and I recognize that firefighters and volunteer firefighters are very important to our communities. Thanks to their work, people can have the security and peace of mind that they would not have without the presence and dedication of firefighters.

That evening, several firefighters were recognized for their years of service with the Edmundston fire department: Marc Doiron, 20 years; Donald Lebel, 25 years; Mario Rossignol, 25 years; Réginal Pelletier, 25 years; and André Grandmaison, 25 years with the Municipality of Edmundston.

I would like to sincerely congratulate all of you for the work you have done for so many years. Your courage and determination are an inspiration to us all.

On behalf of all of the people of Madawaska—Restigouche, thank you for what you do for our community.

Once again, congratulations, and keep up the good work.

* * *

●(1410)

[English]

PARTNERS FOR YOUTH INC.

Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the roles and responsibility of men are crucial to end violence against women. Involving men and boys is fundamental and we should reach out to them at a younger age.

Partners For Youth Inc. is a New Brunswick project funded by Status of Women Canada. It involves 12 male and female student leaders, to engage in a venture that will create community action plans to help achieve a zero tolerance environment for dating

violence. Participants will acquire skills and facilitation and will be empowered to become educators and role models for their peers. This initiative aims to help young people exhibit healthy dating attitudes while acting as leaders in their communities.

Partners for Youth Inc. is another example of how to involve men in ending violence against women. Working together, we can protect the safety and security of women and girls.

* * *

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to join with my colleagues as we remember the tragic events of December 6, 1989, at École Polytechnique. Since that time, policy makers have put forward legislative initiatives, educational campaigns, statistical gathering efforts and funding programs to combat violence against women.

This work is to be commended, but the Government of Canada must do more. All Canadian women have the right to live in safe communities without the fear or threat of violence. We know aboriginal women in Canada face staggering levels of violence. We therefore have an obligation to stop that violence through prevention.

It is time to move from mourning to action. Ending violence against women requires leadership at the federal level with protection for women who report abuse, strong gun control, access to affordable housing and support for survivors.

Violence against women is an obstacle to the achievement of equality. Today, while we mourn the loss of our sisters, we also resolve to do all that we can to ensure that all women can live in safety.

* * *

DEFENCE OF HONG KONG

Mr. Greg Kerr (West Nova, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this year marks the 69th anniversary of the defence of Hong Kong. It was in December 1941 that nearly 2,000 Canadians found themselves unexpectedly in a devastating conflict. Many of those who survived were taken as prisoners of war. Despite the incredible courage and perseverance of these men and women, in the end, more than 1,000 Canadians were either killed or injured.

Although this loss was devastating and claimed many lives, it also displayed the great Canadian spirit. These men and women were not victorious in defeating the enemy but were certainly victorious in proudly showing the Canadian grit and determination to the world.

We must always remember not only their sacrifices, but also the pride with which they represented our nation. We honour their legacy by caring for the World War II veterans who are still with us and all those who came after them.

Our government is here for veterans and here for Canada.

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[Translation]

FIREARMS REGISTRY

Ms. Nicole Demers (Laval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on December 5, it will be 15 years since Bill C-68, An Act respecting firearms and other weapons, received royal assent. Unfortunately it took the death of 14 young female students in Quebec for the federal government to pass tougher gun control legislation.

This legislation allowed for the creation of the firearms registry, a vital tool in fighting violence against women. A number of people and organizations, including victims' parents, various police forces and women's groups, have demonstrated to us that the registry is useful and necessary for public safety. Over the years, it has been proven that the registry is indispensable to law enforcement both in finding weapons and in preventing violent crime.

It is unfortunate that the Conservatives are trying to abolish the registry at all costs. The firearms registry is working, and it is important to maintain it.

* * *

[English]

FIREARMS REGISTRY

Hon. Maria Minna (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this Sunday marks the 15th anniversary of Canada's premier gun control legislation, the Firearms Act, created and implemented by the previous Liberal government on December 5, 1995. Since its creation, everyone but this ideological government agrees that it is needed in this country.

• (1415)

[Translation]

Despite the government's repeated attempts to dismiss the positive effects of the firearms registry during its campaign to abolish the registry against the will of the police, victims, women's groups and in fact the majority of Canadians, the facts speak for themselves.

[English]

The newest Conservative member, the member for Vaughan, the former OPP Commissioner, has said that keeping the registry, as the majority of parliamentarians have decided, is a "done deal".

Perhaps the member will encourage his new boss to listen to him and move on.

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PRISON FARMS

Mr. Russ Hiebert (South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Liberal public safety critic took some time away from debating Canada's fragile economic recovery

Oral Questions

to instead advocate for the rights of criminals. We could not disagree more with the misguided priorities of the Liberal Party.

While we share Canadians' focus on jobs and the economy, the Liberals focus on programs for prisoners. Less than 1% of the released offenders who participated in the program eventually found employment in a related sector, yet the member for Ajax—Pickering continually refers to the program as one of the most effective rehabilitation programs in the country.

One per cent may be good enough for the Liberal public safety critic, but not for us. It is time that the Liberal Party started paying some attention to jobs and the economy, the priorities of law-abiding Canadians.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

PENSIONS

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in October the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development wrote a long memo promoting her cuts to the guaranteed income supplement. When the Liberal MP for Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte blew the whistle, the minister put her cuts under review. However, yesterday the Prime Minister contradicted the minister. In full damage control, he claimed GIS cuts were cancelled.

Is there any review? Have all GIS cuts been fully cancelled, retroactively? Why was the minister still promoting her hare-brained scheme just a few days ago?

Hon. John Baird (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it will not come as any surprise to the member for Wascana or anyone else that I do not share his characterization in the run-up to his question.

The Prime Minister spoke very clearly yesterday that we would continue to support seniors and that the initiative was cancelled.

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, under the Conservative government, poverty among senior citizens has jumped by 25%. Veterans are forced to hold protest rallies to fight for their pensions. Conservative senators right now are killing the pensions of Nortel workers who suffer from Parkinson's disease and other long-term disabilities, and those members over there laugh. In 30 days those pensioners will be destitute.

Why such carnage wreaked on the elderly and disabled, while Conservatives lavish billions of dollars on the richest corporations and stealth aircraft?

Oral Questions

Hon. John Baird (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the global economic downturn has had real consequences for every country in the world, not just Canada. Canada was the last country to go into those uncertain economic times. We are very proud we are the first country to see the light at the end of the tunnel.

We have seen the creation of a substantial number of jobs, more than 420,000 net new jobs. We are pleased with that.

We are always concerned about seniors. This is why every budget we have brought forward supports seniors. We have done an incredibly important job. One of the most important issues for seniors is health care. This government has increased funding by 30%, where the previous government cut it by \$25 billion.

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government increased funding for health care by \$43 billion.

The Conservatives broke their promise never to tax income trusts, but they did that in their first budget, thus swiping \$25 billion from the retirement savings of two million innocent seniors. They have delivered nothing to fix the public pension system, so two-thirds of Canadians still have no significant retirement savings.

However, Conservatives spend 30% more on a bloated Prime Minister's Office and some ministers are bloating themselves with 200% increases in expenditures. Why so self-indulgent?

Hon. John Baird (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I remember a lot of very strong words and strong speeches from the Liberal member for Toronto Centre back in the early 1990s, when the Liberal government of the day gutted the public health care system. I believed the hon. member for Toronto Centre then and I believe him now when I look back at those great words.

Our government has really led by example. We have reduced spending in the offices of ministers. We made an incredible cut in the use of military aircraft for political actors. We have also cut polling. We have also cut spending on hospitality and travel. We have a good record in that regard.

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• (1420)

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Hon. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister needs an intervention. His cabinet ministers are consumed with power struggles, costing Canadians millions of dollars. He is wasting billions of dollars on whims like untendered military contracts and opulent three day summits. The Prime Minister is so incredibly out of touch he has lost count of his own government's financial scandals. Meanwhile, he calls our affordable family care plan reckless, a plan that would better the lives of over 650,000 Canadian families.

When will the government wake up?

Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we certainly sympathize with and support Canadians who care for family members such as an elderly parent or an ill child. That is why we have taken significant action to

help them. For the first time in history, 2.6 million self-employed Canadians have access to compassionate care benefits. We have also extended the number of different family members and others who can access compassionate care benefits.

We are taking specific action with respect to this area.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this government is out of touch with the values and priorities of Canadians. It wants to award a \$16 billion contract without any public tendering process, without any price guarantee and without any job guarantees, when the competition is proposing 100% regional economic spinoffs. In the meantime, struggling families are being told that their demands for family care are too much.

Who does this Conservative government work for? Who?

[*English*]

Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and to the Minister of Labour, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have taken specific action in various ways to help families, particularly those that have been hardest hit by the current recession. In fact, we have done a number of tax reductions that have allowed an average family of four to have \$3,000 more in their pockets.

We have done things, whereas the Liberal Party and the member made promises from time to time but never delivered anything that can be seen.

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[*Translation*]

AFGHANISTAN

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the media have revealed that an elite unit of the Canadian army is suspected of having committed war crimes in Afghanistan. These allegations have been the subject of internal investigations at the Department of National Defence for several months.

Was the Minister of National Defence informed by his department that investigations were under way regarding allegations of war crimes committed by members of the elite JTF2 commando unit in Afghanistan?

[*English*]

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to be very clear. Members of the Canadian Forces, including the special forces, do very difficult and demanding jobs and they are doing so with the firm knowledge of their obligation under the laws of armed conflict. They do so with the greatest of integrity, with the greatest Canadian pressure that they recognize fully those obligations.

In fact, there were allegations, allegations that have now been investigated, one of which has been deemed to result in no charges. A second investigation continues. With respect to that investigation, we have to preserve evidence, comply with the independence of the process, and we will await the results.

[Translation]

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, what is troubling is that these investigations have been going on for months, the minister was aware and did not inform anyone, and the defence committee had no idea.

Is the government not deliberately hiding information in order to protect some individuals in the Canadian Forces who are tarnishing the image of all soldiers, who deserve our full respect?

[English]

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I just mentioned, there were in fact allegations that stemmed from a Canadian Forces member himself. The original investigation resulted in no charges.

The second investigation, which is ongoing as part of the National Investigation Service, will respect the rules of evidence. These investigations are very complex. They often involve many witnesses. They involve respect for the rule of law.

The board of inquiry, an administrative review of these matters, is also ongoing.

I think the member opposite would be the first to get on his feet to complain if there were any involvement by a minister.

• (1425)

[Translation]

Mr. Jean Dorion (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the government refuses to tell us how many children have been transferred to the Afghan secret service. Yet it can tell us that they are being held in special detention centres and that 280 monitoring visits have taken place. The Minister of Foreign Affairs cannot know all of these details and, at the same time, not know how many children Canada has transferred.

The question is simple: how many children have been handed over to the Afghan secret service?

Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday and for the past few days, I have taken the time to describe to the member the procedure followed in the case of people under 18 who are captured while attempting to injure, shoot or kill a Canadian soldier. They are taken into custody, and we have provisions in place for doing so. I want to reassure my hon. colleague. These measures are in accordance with international conventions.

Mr. Jean Dorion (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, BQ): Mr. Speaker, how many children?

Also, contrary to the government news release announcing the extension of the mission in Afghanistan, the Minister of Foreign Affairs confirmed that Canadian soldiers will be deployed outside Kabul. Although the Conservatives promised to end the combat mission, we now learn that soldiers will still be in combat zones.

Oral Questions

How can the government justify this falsehood?

Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in our policy we clearly indicated that we would respect the decision made in March of 2008 to end our commitment in Kandahar and withdraw our combat troops. They will be redeployed in order to help provide training to the Afghan army so that the Afghan army will eventually be able to assume responsibility for security in that country.

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[English]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, earlier this week, I wrote to the Prime Minister asking him if he would invite Burmese democratic activist Aung San Suu Kyi to Canada. As members will recall, we extended Canadian citizenship to her on an honorary basis and I would like to know whether the government would extend an official invitation so she could come here to receive it.

[Translation]

Does the government intend to follow through on the initiative we took and invite the Burmese political activist Aung San Suu Kyi to Canada to receive her citizenship?

[English]

Hon. John Baird (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government, and I think all Canadians, are incredibly pleased that Aung San Suu Kyi has finally been released from house arrest in Burma. Canada has taken very strong sanctions against this repressive regime.

The leader of the NDP has been a good advocate on this file and the government is certainly pleased to continue to work with him on this important issue.

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[Translation]

AFGHANISTAN

Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on another topic, Ambassador Crosbie is well respected and his assessment of Hamid Karzai's Afghan government is no doubt based on fact. The Prime Minister himself confirmed that Afghanistan does not deserve a penny because it is so corrupt.

If this is what the Prime Minister truly believes and if the Canadian ambassador agrees, then can the Conservatives explain why they think it is a good idea to provide such a corrupt government with an army of 300,000 soldiers?

Oral Questions

Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our ambassadors and high commissioners are sent abroad to represent the interests of the Canadian government. The Government of Canada will continue to express its concerns about governance in Afghanistan. I was with the Prime Minister and the Minister of National Defence when the Prime Minister raised this issue with President Karzai a few weeks ago in Lisbon. Our ultimate goal is to leave Afghanistan to the Afghans, as a safer, more secure country that provides refuge to those who want peace.

• (1430)

[English]

Hon. Jack Layton (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the ambassador is just telling the truth about the Karzai administration. Hamid Karzai's administration is corrupt. His brother, Kandahar governor Ahmed Wali Karzai, is even worse. He is now implicated in drug trafficking and after being bribed, he freed top Taliban fighters.

Ambassador Crosbie urged Canada to oppose Karzai's attempts to take control of the electoral law and stop the power grab. Why are the Conservatives training 300,000 soldiers for these guys? I do not get it.

Hon. Lawrence Cannon (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first let me point out that the governor of Kandahar is Governor Wesa. He is a Canadian and he is not the brother-in-law or the stepbrother of President Karzai.

Both the Government of Afghanistan and the Government of Canada agree that corruption is one of the major challenges facing Afghanistan. Our government raises concerns regarding issues of democracy, human rights, as well as the rule of law directly with the Afghan authorities and we expect our ambassadors to do exactly that.

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JUSTICE

Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in 1982 Canada enacted the Constitution Act, 1982, whose centrepiece is the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which has had a transformative effect on the protection of the rule of law and on the protection of our rights. Yet the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke has referred to it as “this deeply flawed Trudeau Charter of Rights”.

I would like to ask the Minister of Justice, whose responsibility includes the protection of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, whether the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke is speaking for the minister and for the government.

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, no group of individuals has more respect for human rights in our country than the Conservative Party. That commitment goes right back to John Diefenbaker's Bill of Rights and beyond that. We are very proud of our record.

Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since the minister has not answered the first question, maybe he will answer the second.

I regret to note that Julian Fantino has spoken of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which governs this Parliament and which protects the rights and freedoms of all Canadians, as giving “great advantage to criminals”. The charter not only protects all of our legal rights; it protects also freedom of religion, expression, equality rights, aboriginal rights and minority language rights.

I would like to ask the Minister of Justice, whose responsibility is the protection of all rights for all Canadians, whether he agrees with these deeply flawed views of the charter.

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I had better inform the individual that the byelection is over and Mr. Fantino has won and he is certainly going to be welcomed into the House. There is no group of individuals over the course of Canadian history that has had a better record for standing up for human rights than the Conservative Party of Canada and its predecessors. I am very proud to be part of that tradition.

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RELEASE OF DOCUMENTS BY WIKILEAKS

Hon. Dan McTeague (Pickering—Scarborough East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's mentor and former chief of staff, Tom Flanagan, made headlines around the world when he called for the targeted assassination of the WikiLeaks founder, Julian Assange. In England, *The Guardian* newspaper says that the Canadian Prime Minister's senior adviser has issued a fatwa against Mr. Assange. Netherlands' *De Telegraaf* is reporting the same.

Will the Prime Minister denounce the remarks of his mentor and clearly state that the Government of Canada does not, in fact, favour the covert assassination of anyone whatsoever?

Hon. John Baird (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I said yesterday in response to the question that was directed to me by the New Democratic Party, this individual is no longer an adviser to the Prime Minister and has not been for some time. I would not share the view, and I disagree with him. That would be the view of the government.

Hon. Dan McTeague (Pickering—Scarborough East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Tom Flanagan was not the only adviser to the Prime Minister to call for the assassination of Mr. Assange.

Ezra Levant, the Prime Minister's war room director in the last election, the man who gave up the party nomination in Calgary Southwest for the Prime Minister, and the communications director for the Canadian Alliance, questioned in an op-ed, “Why is Assange still alive” and why has President Obama not ordered a hit on him yet.

Why will the Prime Minister not rise in his place right now and denounce these outrageous statements by two of his closest political advisers?

• (1435)

Hon. John Baird (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was watching television a few moments ago and the Prime Minister is in Mississauga, so it would be very hard for him to stand here.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

AFGHANISTAN

Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the agreement covering the ad hoc committee of parliamentarians reviewing the Afghan detainee documents states that committee members are to have access to all of the documents outlined in the order passed by the House of Commons on December 10, 2009.

Given the recent allegations concerning the elite commando unit, will the Minister of Justice promise to hand over the documents on that unit to the ad hoc committee as a priority?

[English]

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his question and his co-operation in this area. There is a process that has been agreed to, by which documents are to be made available, and certainly within that agreement the committee members are entitled to prioritize which documents they want to see.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the ad hoc committee needs to see all of the documents concerning war crimes allegations involving this commando unit. It is the government's responsibility, and the minister acknowledges this, to make all documents available to the ad hoc committee so that it can do its work.

Can the Minister of Justice assure us that these documents will be handed over to the ad hoc committee by December 17, 2010?

[English]

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, again, all documents will be made available as expeditiously as possible, and the hon. member can count on that.

* * *

[Translation]

COPYRIGHT

Mrs. Carole Lavallée (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Canadian Heritage says that he is working with Quebec minister Christine St-Pierre on improving Bill C-32 on copyright. Ms. St-Pierre believes that the education sector must pay copyright fees, private copying must be modernized, and Internet service providers must be made accountable. Passing Bill C-32 without these substantial amendments would result in enormous losses for Quebec creators.

Did the Minister of Canadian Heritage respond favourably to the minister's three concerns when he met with her?

Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are always talking with the other governments. I had a meeting with Ms. St-Pierre this week to discuss the bill. She supports the key elements of our bill. For example, our Bill C-32 will make piracy illegal in Canada and protect artists across Canada from what is destroying their ability to earn a good living with their creations. That is very important and a key part of Bill C-32.

Why is the Bloc Québécois opposed to a bill that makes piracy illegal in Canada? That is the real question.

Mrs. Carole Lavallée (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the minister did not answer my question. Does he agree with these three points? We all agree that piracy should be illegal. It is all in how you do it. Artists must be compensated.

The education sector currently pays \$40 million a year to authors. Bill C-32 is cutting off this compensation. Royalties paid to artists are not gifts; they are their income, their pay.

Does the minister agree with the Quebec minister of culture that the education sector should set an example for our children by teaching them to respect our creators and their works and pay them?

Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our responsibility is to respect creators throughout Canada. The first thing we must do as a parliament is ensure that piracy is illegal in Canada. That is the first thing we must do.

Our Bill C-32 on copyright makes piracy illegal in Canada and also imposes international Internet treaties. That is key. It is the beginning of a real dialogue for our artists. It is a key component of our bill C-32 and, for that reason, we have strong support from artists, creators and everyone across Canada for an effective and responsible bill, one that does not slap a new tax on consumers.

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[English]

INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms. Siobhan Coady (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a report from the PBO on infrastructure stimulus spending says that many communities expressed concern on its effectiveness in creating employment and adding economic value. The government spent \$50 million advertising the plan and electronically tracked 8,500 action plan signs. The impact of the stimulus fund on jobs is in question, but not the location of the signs. Why are this Conservative government's priorities focused more on itself than on Canadian families?

Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada's economic action plan is expected to create or maintain 220,000 jobs by the end of 2010. This does not even count the 260,000 Canadians who have benefited from participating in work sharing. Where do these numbers come from on the 220,000? From the University of Toronto, the Conference Board of Canada and the National Bank Financial Group among others.

Why is it that the Parliamentary Budget Officer, who is supposed to report accurately to Parliament, cannot agree with any other experts in this country?

Oral Questions

•(1440)

Ms. Siobhan Coady (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the fact is that there are 350,000 more unemployed in this country. For months, the Liberal Party has been saying that the only thing the Conservatives' arbitrary March 31 construction deadline is doing is driving inflation in the construction sector. That means taxpayers have to pay more. Now the PBO report shows that almost a third of the towns and cities have actually seen that inflation happening.

Why do the Conservatives ignore all the warning signs and drive up costs to taxpayers? Why did they not announce the extension months ago?

Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our partners, the provinces and the municipalities, have done a terrific job. Nearly 90% of these infrastructure projects will be completed by the deadline. We are talking about more than 20,000 projects across the country. That is why so many jobs have been created across Canada. Nearly 90% will be completed on time. One more construction season will be allowed for the rest of them to be completed because we are being fair, reasonable and flexible.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the government heads into climate change talks next week, it has given us the worst possible policy. It is bad on the environment and bad on jobs. The eco-energy home retrofit program was one of the few meeting its greenhouse gas reduction targets. What did the government do? It cancelled the program.

In Nova Scotia, the number of households getting energy audits for retrofits has plummeted 85%, 10,000 fewer than last year. All across Canada, hundreds of small businesses are being closed and thousands of seniors are being left in the cold draught of their uninsulated homes.

How does the government explain why it broke its promise and is letting them and the country down so badly?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as we have always maintained, we will manage our energy programs responsibly. In the Speech from the Throne, we announced our plans to conduct a full review of all programs in order to come up with a series of new, optimal programs. The idea is to make the best possible investments in order to achieve greater energy efficiency. An additional \$300 million will be invested before the end of the fiscal year for the follow-up to the ecoenergy retrofit program.

[*English*]

Mr. Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is very simple. The government is so under-committed to reducing global warming that it is cancelling the programs that are working.

In Oakville, two young entrepreneurs founded Ontario eco-Energy Advisors in good faith, to create jobs and help the environment. After the Conservatives shut down the program, they had to lay off

two-thirds of their employees. In Orillia, Wayne Rowbotham of EnerTest has had to do the very same thing.

Canadians across the country want to do their part, but the government has pulled the rug out from under them. Will the government now reinstate funding for the home retrofit program, or will it head to Cancun with an even more embarrassing record?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is somewhat ironic that, in response to the question asked by the previous member, we heard that Canada's economic action plan has not created any jobs, when we know it has created jobs. Now the member is trying to say the opposite. One thing is certain: we will have a series of optimal programs from an investment standpoint. We must manage taxpayers' money the best we can and achieve greater energy efficiency. That is our commitment and that is what we are going to do.

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[*English*]

JUSTICE

Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today the Ontario Court of Appeal rendered a decision to stay the Ontario Superior Court decision on the Bedford prostitution challenge that struck down this country's key prostitution laws. This means that these laws remain in effect until April 29, 2011, or until the appeal is heard by the Ontario Court of Appeal.

Could the Minister of Justice please comment on today's ruling?

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is correct. We are pleased that the Ontario Court of Appeal has stayed the decision.

Our government believes that prostitution and the criminal activity that surrounds it is harmful to both communities and vulnerable persons in our society, especially women.

Canadians can count on this Conservative government to continue to fight to ensure the law protects the health, safety and security of all Canadians and the well-being of our communities.

* * *

•(1445)

[*Translation*]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Prime Minister misled Canadians when he said in the House that "...Canada's economy has recouped almost all of the jobs lost during the recession."

This is the reality: in October 2008, unemployment was at 6.2%, but it was at 7.9% in October 2010. Right now, there are 211,000 fewer full-time, permanent jobs than there were before the recession, and there are 400,000 more unemployed people.

Oral Questions

When will they start telling Canadians the truth?

[English]

Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, since the end of the recession, that is since the end of the second quarter in 2009, the end of July 2009, the overall job creation has been 430,000 net new jobs in Canada.

This is more than the total number of jobs lost during the three quarters of recession that we suffered through.

Mr. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is creating part-time jobs. We need a full-time government creating jobs.

[Translation]

The Parliamentary Budget Officer is telling Canadians the truth. His report confirms that the federal government has not met its job creation target; we need another quarter of a million jobs annually. It is about time the government understood that it needs to extend the deadline, but this delay will cost a fortune.

When will the government focus on creating sustainable, full-time jobs? Is that not the goal?

[English]

Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I have already indicated to the House today, leading independent private assessors, forecasters and analysts have looked at this, including the University of Toronto, the Conference Board of Canada, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the National Bank Financial Group.

They all came to the conclusion that we have created or maintained about 220,000 jobs as a result, strictly, of the economic action plan. Of course, we have had economic growth as well in the past five quarters, resulting in nearly 430,000 total net new jobs in Canada since the end of the recession.

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[Translation]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Robert Bouchard (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, after a declaration in 2009 that the plan to disband Bagotville's 439 Squadron was fiction, new documents obtained under the Access to Information Act show that there is a plan to disband it that will lead to the loss of 44 jobs.

Will the Minister of National Defence admit that the plan to disband Bagotville's 439 Squadron was not fiction and that it is part of a clear plan that will penalize Bagotville?

[English]

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it remains a piece of fiction until I say otherwise. When we have an announcement to make on Bagotville, as with any other base in the country, I am sure the hon. member will hear about it. I am sure he will be interested in it. However, he does not believe in the Canadian Forces. He does not believe in the country.

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Bouchard (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative government can deny this all it wants,

but there are five official documents and a number of emails that mention the disbanding of 439 Squadron. A document dated March 2009 even provides a date of 2012 for the disbanding.

Does the minister not think that this is a lot of evidence and that he should clear up any doubts about the disbanding of Bagotville's 439 Squadron?

[English]

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I just said that it was fictional. There are no plans to close Bagotville and no plans to make changes there.

In fact, the regional minister was with me when we recently announced our plans to base many of the new F-35 aircraft there, which will be a tremendous addition to the Canadian Forces air force. I know the member himself is supportive of this program. I just wish I could get members of the Liberal Party to support a program that it began back in the 1990s.

* * *

[Translation]

TASEKO MINES LIMITED

Hon. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let the government issue a call for tenders and then we will see.

The Taseko affair is within the purview of the following five departments: Environment, Natural Resources, Indian and Northern Affairs, Fisheries and Oceans, and Finance.

My question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. I know that she is a woman of integrity and that she will rise to answer this question. When did she sign off on rejecting the Taseko project? Who in her office knew about it? Did government officials speak to her about Taseko and the Fish Lake situation? Did her office provide information about this matter to the RCMP?

● (1450)

[English]

Hon. John Baird (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to tell the member for Bourassa that I do share his view that the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans is a woman of great integrity.

The government rejected this project based on the publicly available environmental assessment which said that it would do irreparable harm to the environment. We did the right thing for the environment.

[Translation]

Hon. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are talking about the possibility of insider trading. Under section 382.1 (1) of the Criminal Code, such action would be liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 10 years. Government employees are concerned. They have raised a flag. I do not know what the Conservatives have to hide.

Oral Questions

My question is for the Minister of Finance. Did his officials speak to him about this situation and what does he intend to do about it? This is a problem that affects everyone. As a result of the Taseko Mines affair, thousands of shareholders lost money. Someone pulled a fast one. What does he know about the situation?

[English]

Hon. John Baird (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think the Liberal Party has changed its position. The member for Bourassa talked about the possibility and yesterday the member for Ajax—Pickering came to the conclusion that in fact it was a fact, which of course it is not.

If the member opposite has any evidence to back up the claims and the speculation in which he is engaging, I would encourage him to table it before the House.

If the Liberal Party will not table this information before the House after question period, what does it have to hide?

* * *

TAXATION

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, tax lawyers are happy today. According to reports, CRA plans to relax its standards for tax cheaters who voluntarily come forward. They expect the government will let their clients off the hook for tax evasions over 10 years old.

We could call it the Mulroney option. We should all be so lucky.

Will the Conservatives finally get serious about prosecuting tax evaders, or are they planning to agree with the tax lawyers and let people get away with hiding millions under beach blankets in the Cayman Islands?

[Translation]

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services and to the Minister of National Revenue, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government is working to fight tax evasion, and I hope we will achieve some concrete results in the near future.

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, did they not understand? According to some reports, Canada Revenue Agency is about to change the rules for tax evaders. The Conservatives are about to turn a blind eye to tax evasions over 10 years old. The vast majority of Canadians pay their taxes and contribute equitably to our society.

Why should we let those who shirk their responsibilities off the hook? When will the government bring in stricter laws to stop the scourge of tax evasion, like the use of tax havens in Switzerland and the Caribbean?

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services and to the Minister of National Revenue, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government is taking very serious steps to recover the funds that honest, hard-working Canadians deserve. Last year we recovered over \$1 billion in unpaid taxes. This is just one more example of what this government has accomplished, unlike the Liberals and NDP who have always failed.

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians know that for strong economic management we need to have a strong Conservative government.

Our government responded to the worst economic downturn since World War II with a comprehensive economic action plan. Over the past two years, this plan has been at work protecting Canadian jobs and helping our economy recover as one of the strongest in the world.

Canadians know that the recovery is fragile. Would the Minister of Finance please update the House on what the Conservative government is doing to support the recovery?

Hon. Jim Flaherty (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have always said that we would be fair, reasonable and flexible. Nearly 90% of the infrastructure projects across the country, more than 20,000 of them, will be completed on time by the end of March.

We have begun planning for the next phase of the economic action plan. It is becoming clear, though, that some projects, a relatively small number, will not be finished on time for various good reasons.

Therefore, we have extended the deadline through another full construction season to help create jobs and ensure these projects are completed.

* * *

● (1455)

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in 2005, the Conservatives promised to compensate anyone affected by Agent Orange at CFB Gagetown. Once in power, the Prime Minister broke this promise and compensated only those who survived until the very date they took power.

The Minister of Veterans Affairs now plans to return \$33 million of the promised \$96 million to the government coffers.

Will the minister instead confirm that every cent will go to victims and their families?

Mr. Greg Kerr (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, all of these concerns have been raised and reviewed very carefully by both the government and certainly by the minister. It is our full intention to take care of all of those who have been impacted by Agent Orange and we will follow through on that.

* * *

[Translation]

AGRICULTURE

Ms. France Bonsant (Compton—Stanstead, BQ): Mr. Speaker, producers attending the UPA convention called on the federal government to hold consultations concerning risk management programs for agriculture. Producers agree that needs vary from region to region and from crop to crop. The existing program, AgriFlexibility, does not take risk management into account.

Oral Questions

Can the minister assure producers that risk management will be included in the program and that the program will be improved in the next agricultural policy framework?

[*English*]

Mr. Pierre Lemieux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the member well knows, we have a full suite of business risk management programs to support our farmers. We have agri-invest, agri-stability, agri-insurance, agri-recovery. All of these programs are delivering to our farmers. We put farmers first.

* * *

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay—Superior North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, most countries either regulate cellphone locks or they ban them outright. Canada does neither.

The government lets big telecom routinely lock all Canadian cellphones. This limits consumer choice and market competition. It means higher prices and worse service.

Will the minister compel wireless companies to unlock our cellphones and give Canadians the fairness we deserve?

Hon. James Moore (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the very thing the member is asking this government to do is in our copyright bill, Bill C-32. Unfortunately, his party is voting against Bill C-32.

Therefore, if he is asking our government to take an action in favour of the policy he has asked for, why does he not actually join us in doing what he says he should be doing?

* * *

[*Translation*]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Bernard Génèreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, two years ago, the world faced the worst economic recession in over a generation. Canadians were concerned about their financial situations. The government took stock of the situation and developed Canada's economic action plan to ensure that our country would be among the least hard hit and emerge with one of the strongest economies. Our plan led to the creation of over 430,000 jobs.

Can the Minister of State for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec tell the House what the government is doing to ensure the country's ongoing economic recovery?

Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of State (Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec), CPC): Mr. Speaker, as we have always said, we have been fair, equitable and reasonable throughout this process. We expect 90% of the projects to be completed by March 31, 2011.

I would remind the House that the Bloc voted against the economic action plan. We will continue to carry out the plan. Our various partners provided information indicating that some of the projects would not be completed in time. We have therefore extended the program for one full construction season. Thanks to our

government's efforts and together with our partners, the work will be completed.

* * *

[*English*]

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, qualification criteria for the Agent Orange ex gratia payment were so strict that many veterans who needed the assistance did not qualify.

Instead of coming to their aid, the Conservative government spent nearly \$8 million fighting them. Thirty-three million dollars would go a long way to meeting the needs of widows.

Will the minister confirm that all \$96 million will go to victims?

Mr. Greg Kerr (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, we are moving on this and there is more detail to follow. I know the hon. member will be patient enough to listen.

I would remind her that this was the only government that acted to deal with the victims of Agent Orange. The previous Liberal government refused to even look at the issue. Therefore, it is a bit hypocritical being critical of what we are doing today.

* * *

● (1500)

CANADIAN FORCES

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP): Mr. Speaker, at the veterans affairs committee the other day, Pierre Daigle, the DND ombudsman, cited his serious concerns about a lack of a national database for operational stress injuries for our Canadian Forces. Without this vital information, many programs may not be available for our injured soldiers and their families.

My question is for the Minister of National Defence. When will the national database for this important segment come up and how soon can the minister announce that the program will be here?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his praise for the \$130 million in Canadian Forces health information system that we now have online. The next phase is about to begin, incorporating some of the lessons learned from this important new system to help health care providers in the Canadian Forces secure and share information and coordinate appropriate care.

The final rollout on the bases is expected by 2012. Already we have received much positive feedback from the users of this system. This is a tremendous investment in help for the Canadian Forces. No doubt the efficiency and delivery of care to members of the Canadian Forces will continue to improve under this government.

Points of Order

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Ms. Diane Bourgeois (Terrebonne—Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, while the government is asking people to tighten their belts, it seems that there is no limit to the government's eccentricities when it comes to polling. Over the past five years, the government has blown \$100 million on all kinds of polls. The government says they allow it to better target its programs. However, it cancelled the mandatory long form census, which is a reliable, non-partisan tool.

Before it asks people to make more sacrifices, will the government drastically reduce its spending on polls?

Hon. Stockwell Day (President of the Treasury Board and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the numbers are very clear. In each category, in comparison with the previous Liberal government—it is very expensive, as it was for them—we have reduced spending on polls by 66%.

* * *

[English]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the government House leader. Could he please tell the House what the remaining business is for this week, and what is the business for the forthcoming week? In particular, when is the last opposition day of this supply period? We still do not know when that is scheduled for. Obviously it falls on the official opposition, because it is scheduled technically for next week, but we would like to know precisely when it is so that we can amply prepare for it, and of course, have Canadians able to follow it, in anticipation of that day.

Hon. John Baird (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we will continue today with the opposition day motion by our friends from the New Democratic Party. Pursuant to an order made earlier today, the vote on the NDP motion will be deferred until the end of government orders on Tuesday.

Tomorrow we will consider a great bill proposed by the Minister of Justice, Bill C-22, protecting children from online sexual exploitation. The Minister of Justice has another great bill, Bill C-54, protecting children from sexual predators, which we will then debate. We will then move to Bill C-33, the safer railways act, on which the Minister of State for Transport has done a lot of very good work. Next is Bill C-21, the standing up for victims of white collar crime act, which is another strong justice bill brought forward by the Attorney General of Canada.

Next week we will continue with business from Friday.

I am pleased to report that there are ongoing constructive, and even harmonious, discussions among the parties, so the list of business that I mentioned may change.

Next week, each and every day we will be debating great bills that will do great things for Canada.

Also I will return to the House at a later time to designate the last allotted day.

[Translation]

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTIONS

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, during question period, when I was questioning the government, the member for Northumberland—Quinte West shouted that I was supporting the Taliban. It is the duty of the opposition to ask questions without being heckled in this way by members. I ask the member to withdraw his remarks.

● (1505)

[English]

Mr. Rick Norlock (Northumberland—Quinte West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I did not say that the hon. member supported the Taliban. I said that I wished he cared more about the Canadian armed forces and the 152 members of the Canadian Forces, as he does. I did not say that he supported the Taliban.

[Translation]

Mr. Gilles Duceppe: Mr. Speaker, the word “Taliban” was repeated three times. I am asking him to act in a civilized manner and to withdraw his remarks about me.

[English]

Hon. John Baird (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I in fact did not hear the interventions that were said.

I know we disagree on many issues with the leader of the Bloc Québécois, but let me be very clear: I certainly do not believe that he supports the Taliban.

[Translation]

The Speaker: Based on the comments made, the Speaker will examine the blues. If I determine that such a word was used, I will return to the House to give my ruling on this point.

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to add something about the Bloc leader's point of order. You should listen to the recording of those near his desk. It is important that you listen to what was said from that desk in particular.

[English]

Hon. Gordon O'Connor (Minister of State and Chief Government Whip, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I just spoke to the member involved.

According to him, he does not recall ever saying those words. We will have to wait and see if any of these words have been recorded elsewhere.

If he said those words, he will apologize. If he did not say those words, he will not apologize.

[Translation]

The Speaker: I have already said that I will look at the House of Commons blues in order to provide a ruling on this point.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—WEST COAST OIL TANKER TRAFFIC

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Vancouver Quadra has the floor for the 12 minutes remaining in the time allotted for her speech.

Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege of speaking in support of the opposition day motion.

It has been a long-term Liberal stance to listen to British Columbians and to stand up for the protection of the Pacific north coast from supertankers, and that continues today. I have been outlining the Liberal Party leader's announcement in June on oceans, the Pacific, the Arctic and our east coast oceans, including a commitment to formalize the ban on supertanker traffic around the Queen Charlotte Islands.

What I want to touch on now is the business rationale. We have heard a lot from across the aisle about business issues and the importance for business of a pipeline into the middle of the north coast to bring crude oil that would fill several hundred supertankers a year.

I want to actually take a look at that piece by piece. What we really have here is not a choice between business and the environment, but between sustainable and unsustainable economic development. Sustainable economic development is something that the Liberal Party is strongly in favour of.

What are the job implications of a ban on supertanker traffic? A year and a half ago, the gateway pipeline proposal by Enbridge, with its accompanying oil tankers, claimed that 200 permanent jobs would be created by that pipeline. That was later raised to 1,100 permanent jobs, of which 650 would be in British Columbia.

Are jobs a rationale to open up our north coast to supertanker traffic? In fact, 56,000 people count on jobs in that area of our coast. These are jobs in tourism, whale watching and the fisheries, and even aquaculture jobs, that are at risk. So an oil tanker spill could have an impact on 56,000 jobs in the area.

That is why we actually have dozens and dozens of businesses that support this ban, because the expansion of the sustainable economic development on the coast that is so important for our first nations, for community members and for business investment is being threatened. That expansion is threatened with the uncertainty of having a flow of tanker traffic through those waters and the risks.

Those risks are not just to the 27 species of marine mammals, the 120 species of marine birds, the 2,500 individual salmon runs and the iconic species such as the spirit bear, the sea otters, humpback whales, and so many others that would be at risk from a spill.

We need to recall that the *Exxon Valdez* crude oil spill was 11 million gallons. The supertankers that would be going through our very dangerous rocky, and in some cases, shallow inlets and thousands of islands on the north coast are far larger. So we could be

Government Orders

risking tens of millions of gallons of crude oil being spilled, and risking 56,000 jobs, for a possible 650 jobs.

Another argument that has been made is that this pipeline and the tanker traffic that would be required to carry that oil is needed to increase oil exports. In fact, the latest research from the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers shows that the major pipelines that are carrying Alberta oil sands oil to the United States have been at 80% capacity. Clearly, there is a major amount of expansion that could happen with the existing pipelines.

● (1510)

In addition, a new pipeline is being proposed. That is the Keystone XL pipeline, which would increase capacity yet another 18%. Of course, another debate is whether the oil sands volume should be increased. My personal view is that we need to slow down that expansion until we can demonstrate that it is an environmentally appropriate industry, and there have been many questions to that effect.

There is pipeline capacity. It is cheaper and easier to sell this oil to the United States. The U.S. buyers will buy all the oil that can be produced, so this ban is not a constraint to the increase of oil exports. The pipelines already can handle that.

Another business argument is that the pipeline and the tankers are needed to diversify our markets. There are already six to 10 tankers a year taking Alberta oil sands oil to China, which is not very much. There is supply to fill far more than that, but there really is not market demand for it. It is far more expensive for China to buy oil that has not only come across Canada in a pipeline, but then has to be handled, put into a tanker, cross an enormous distance, be unloaded, and so on. Those are extra costs and crude oil has a commodity price set by world markets. Clearly it is easier and cheaper for this to be sold into the United States. There is not very much demand from Asia and there are other routes that could supply that demand should it surface.

The members opposite will use a lot of terms such as “double hull”, “extra pilots”, “extra regulations”, “safety” and “economic”. In fact, the big issue is whether it is worth taking the risk of a massive crude oil spill on the coast of British Columbia. That iconic wilderness area is internationally recognized as a precious asset and will only become more precious over time. Is it worth risking that for economic arguments?

Clearly the economic arguments are very weak and the risk is not worth taking, because if something goes wrong, and we can almost guarantee that at some point something will go wrong, we could never undo it. We could never bring our coast back to the way it is today. It is simply not worth the risk.

The Liberals have taken a leadership role on this since 1972. We continue to do that with our commitment expressed by the Liberal Party leader.

Government Orders

I will take a moment to point out that the Conservative government's instincts on economic issues have been very poor. Its instinct is to support big oil over the environment with respect to our coastal inland waters. Its instincts on the economy have led to trade deficits, the scale of which we have not seen in decades in Canada, and record high deficit and debt. Unemployment is still up 2%, higher than it was pre-recession. Full-time jobs have not been recovered. Truckloads of borrowed stimulus money, which our parliamentary budget officer has analyzed, created far fewer jobs than one would expect from that amount of spending and creating that amount of debt.

The government's record and its instincts on the economy and business are actually very dubious and have had very poor results. It does not support the business community for the government to see itself as a cheerleader of business, over the environment and over the will of British Columbians and Canadians. Business is not asking for that.

The oil industry wants clarity from the government. It wants certainty from the government with respect to greenhouse gases and the regulation of the oil sands and the oil sector, in relation to the impact on water, air and climate, and it is simply not getting that because the government sees its job as being a cheerleader and picking big oil over other interests. In fact, it has been lobbying in the United States, in California, and Europe to have those countries weaken their own structures and regulations to reduce greenhouse gases, and that is shameful.

● (1515)

When the environment minister was at the climate conference in Bali, the government's primary public international event, instead of being the person on the podium, it was representatives of big oil on behalf of Canada's big announcement. Where was the minister? I was there so I am speaking from personal experience. The minister was skulking in the back of the room in a t-shirt and shorts during Canada's primary announcement. That is the same minister who perhaps plans to go to Cancun.

I would tell the minister to stay home. It would be better for Canada, better for the rest of the world and better for the environment if the minister were to stay home. The record is showing—

● (1520)

Mr. Mark Warawa: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would ask for your clarification as to whether the member is actually speaking to the topic before this House. She is rambling on with irrelevant facts. She well knows that this government is committed to a cleaner environment and doing what we can without international partners but I believe she is off topic.

The Speaker: I must say, I have not followed every word of the member's remarks but I have noticed that the latest discussion was about Cancun, which is a conference on the environment, as I recall, and I think the motion before us has something to do with the environment. Perhaps the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra can clarify her position for the benefit of the parliamentary secretary and the rest of the House.

Ms. Joyce Murray: Mr. Speaker, there is a direct link between the government's cheerleading of big oil over the environment with

respect to its undermining of climate conferences and with respect to its position to confuse the public around its support for a pipeline that will require massive supertankers of crude oil in our pristine inland waters. There is a clear connection there.

We just learned today that Canada once again is cheerleading to undermine the only international legal agreement to reduce greenhouse gases that exists in the world today. It is shameful.

The government has a duty to consult first nations and that duty was set out in Delgamuukw and subsequent decisions to consult and to accommodate. It is not consulting with the first nations. It is ploughing ahead with a plan and the first nations are saying no. British Columbians are saying no. We want the Conservative government to listen. I expect to see that kind of respect for British Columbians in the future.

Mr. Mark Warawa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that the member was not on topic because the environment is such an important issue. As we well know, the Liberals did not get it done. Their own leader has asked why they did not get it done. Maybe it is because they do not do their homework.

I have a question for the member that is specific to the topic before us. Could she tell me how many tankers travel on the west coast each year? I will give her the answer. There are 475,000 vessel movements per year on the west coast. How many tankers have been involved in shipping accidents on the west coast since 2003? There have been five.

Now I have answered two of her three questions. My last question for her is this. What is the only major spill on the west coast that has occurred? Hopefully, she knows that.

Ms. Joyce Murray: Mr. Speaker, the ban on tanker traffic in the Hecate Strait, the Dixon Entrance and the Queen Charlotte Sound areas have absolutely nothing to do with existing traffic on the coast. They are to protect that area from a massive increase in crude oil supertanker traffic.

The Liberals accept that there is a need to deliver diesel to remote communities. We hope that some day they will be able to be on solar, wind and other kinds of power, but at this point there is traffic and that will not in any way be affected by the ban that is being committed to today.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to correct a bit of what is spinning out of the Liberal policy shop. This debate did not start six months ago when the Liberal leader decided that this was a good idea. It started in 1972 when the NDP Barrett government in British Columbia urged the federal government to institute a ban on supertanker traffic off the north coast. The then federal government acquiesced but never wrote anything down, which is a real shame, because here we are, almost 40 years later, looking for a ban.

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The government says that the coast guard is in charge of any spill cleanups on the coast and so Canadians should feel assured. The coast guard audited itself and said, “The audit paints a sobering picture of an agency that will play a key role”. It also indicated that it was unable to respond to major spills in our ocean environment.

It is no wonder the first nations of British Columbia, including the Fraser groups today, the B.C. summit, the UBCN, every major group in British Columbia is calling for what we are calling for today, which is a legislative ban on tanker traffic. Seventy-five per cent of British Columbians, when asked, said that they wanted a legislative ban.

We are trying to find out, outside of the oil and gas companies, who is resisting this ban. We know the former Campbell government in Victoria is urging this to happen, as is the Conservative government here in Ottawa, but outside of those two groups, nobody is left.

I wonder if my hon. colleague understands why the Conservatives from British Columbia in particular are still pumping this project down the throats of British Columbians? Why do they say that the inherent risks in running supertankers off our north coast and the very poor benefits are in British Columbia's interests?

• (1525)

Ms. Joyce Murray: Mr. Speaker, the former Liberal prime minister, Pierre Trudeau, made a clear commitment to this and it has been carried on by governments since. Former Liberal minister David Anderson was a strong proponent for a ban on tanker traffic. Most people and most businesses in British Columbia and almost every first nations are clear that the economic benefits are few.

The member asked if the coast guard has the capability to handle a spill. We can never go back. If there is a major spill, it will not matter who is there to clean it up. We cannot clean it up on these wild coastal waters. It will be everywhere and it will be a disaster that will change the coastline forever.

Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and for the Canadian Wheat Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am getting a little tired of the Liberal inconsistency here today. The member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca asked a question during my speech about our commitment to environmental issues. He never mentioned anything about the raw sewage being dumped into his own harbour.

The member for Vancouver Quadra has also been very inconsistent. She has not mentioned here today that she has been a friend of oil and gas development in the past. In 2005, in the *New Westminster Record*, she said that she was a proponent of the development of oil and gas expansion as long as it was done in a sustainable, environmental and management approach. She said, “We make sure we do it with the sound science and protect the ecosystem as we go along”. There is certainly the assumption there that she does support oil and gas development. We certainly would not know that today.

I am just wondering why she is flip-flopping. Does she really think that her voters are naive enough to continue to support her when she keeps flip-flopping on her position?

Ms. Joyce Murray: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member opposite pointing out that I am in favour of sustainable economic development and always have been. As a business owner who had many employees and as someone who worked on the coast, sustainable economic development is a priority for me. However, sustainable includes being economically sustainable, environmentally sustainable, as well as socially sustainable. People on the coast are saying that this is not on. The environmental risk is huge and could never be reversed.

The economics of the parliamentary secretary's project are weak. Oil producers are not calling for it because they have alternative markets and routes for their crude oil. There is no rationale for this. It is simply mind-boggling that Conservative MPs from British Columbia are standing up for something that is completely counter to what their constituents and many of their businesses are calling for.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley for explaining how complicated this issue is and how the tankers have to do 90° turns to get through the waterways that were virtually assured of having major accidents in the short run.

However, I also want to deal with the whole issue of pipelines. There have been established risks involving the pipelines over the years with numerous accidents. The usual cause is stress corrosion cracking where pipelines suddenly fail. We had a major explosion in Rapid City, Manitoba 10 or 12 years ago where it is a miracle that no one was killed.

The question really boils down to how we deal with this whole issue of pipelines that were built 30 or 40 years ago with very thin pipe in rural areas and now urban areas have developed around those areas. If those pipelines explode, we are talking about major loss of life.

Therefore, rather than looking to the future and building more of these pipelines, we should be going back and testing and replacing the old pipelines before we have a major disaster on our hands with a major loss of life.

I would like the member to answer that question.

• (1530)

Ms. Joyce Murray: Mr. Speaker, it is always important to prevent environmental disasters because it is far more cost-effective to prevent them than it is to clean them up. The motion and the Liberal commitment is about protecting the ocean and protecting the iconic species, the vulnerable species, the salmon. It is about protecting the jobs in communities up and down the coast of British Columbia that depend on there not being a black tide in their front yards.

That is something the Liberals have long been leaders in and we will continue to be leaders because it is just too important for the economy as well as the environment of British Columbia.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased today to rise to speak to this motion. I will be splitting my time with my neighbour, the member for Nickel Belt.

Government Orders

I thank the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley. He has been a great defender of the environment and his constituents in the House. Even before I was elected, I admired him from a distance. He has carried on the tradition of my old friend Jimmy Fulton, who I know is watching from above and cheering on the man who has taken over his portfolio of protecting this beautiful area of our country.

It is important to remind the House that the motion brought forward by my colleague from Skeena—Bulkley Valley is necessary because of the failure to act on an earlier motion tabled by our party, by myself, which was voted unanimously on by the House. That motion called for a review of current federal law and policy to deal with the safety environmental aspects of unconventional oil and gas development.

Clearly this is an unconventional oil and gas activity. We have not yet seen the piping of raw bitumen across the pristine area of northern British Columbia, through rocky, mountainous, river-laden terrain, through first nation territory. Nor have we witnessed, yet, the travails of large tanker traffic through rough seas.

In the interim, I would also like to compliment my colleague for referring to the natural resources committee the beginning process of moving on with this long-awaited review of whether the federal government was delivering on its responsibility to regulate and provide sound policy for the safe and environmentally sound development of unconventional resources in our country.

The motion deals with the specific aspect of unconventional oil and gas development. It deals with three parts. It deals with the front end, which is the fast pace that intensifies development of the oil sands for the shipment of bitumen to eastern countries, including China. It deals with the development of a pipeline through an extremely risky area, where many communities and first nations have raised strong objections. It then deals with the end result, which would be the movement of that bitumen into tankers and those tankers going through difficult waters.

The reason we tabled our earlier motion in May was we thought the country had signed on to the cautionary principle. Our country also believes in sound, economic development that does not put communities at greater risk. The whole idea was to allow Canada to benefit from the wake-up call of the disaster in the Gulf of Mexico.

What better opportunity than to put in place a proper protective regulatory regime in advance, with a sound plan for how we develop our resources in a way that will reduce, not increase, risks to Canadian communities and to our very valued environment.

Yet what we are doing is continuing with this fast paced, unregulated sector. We had three reviews on unconventional oil and gas, more specifically, on the development of the oil sands. One was a two-year review in which the Government of Canada participated. It was initiated by the Government of Alberta. A good number of recommendations were made with regard to improving the regulation of that sector.

The parliamentary committee on natural resources then led a review starting, I believe, in 2007, which made similar recommendations for action before we proceeded unchecked with the development of this resource.

Then the committee in which I have the fortune to participate, the parliamentary committee on environment and sustainable development, spent two years reviewing the development of this resource and a number of the members of the committee submitted lengthy reports documenting the recommendations made.

This is the time to be acting on the many recommendations that have been made from a broad array of experts in Canada, from first nation governments to leading scientists and technologists at universities in Canada to the Governments of the Northwest Territories and Alberta to federal agencies.

● (1535)

Instead we are leaving ourselves open to an unplanned development of our resources. We are simply sitting back, as legislative officers, waiting for someone to propose something. We can do more. As elected members, we can show leadership and provide that regime for which Canadians have asked.

We have heard concerns today relayed to us through their elected members. People across British Columbia are very concerned about the proposal for the tanker traffic. They are also very concerned about the development of the pipeline that would lead to this tanker traffic.

The questions I would like to put before the House is this. What are the risks posed by the pipeline? What is the risk to Alberta? What is the risk to British Columbia? Are adequate laws in place to regulate tanker traffic through this risky body of water, putting at risk significant areas, including west coast fisheries?

My colleague, the member for New Westminster—Coquitlam, has very thoughtfully tabled in the House a bill recommending improvements to the Canada Shipping Act to give expanded powers to the government to do exactly that, to better regulate and assert its powers and responsibilities to protect our oceans and the resources in those oceans on behalf of the people of Canada.

What are the capacities to respond to a spill or explosion? We have heard from a number of members of the House and we certainly have heard reference to the audit of coast guard capabilities. I can speak very personally to the capabilities of the federal government to respond to a significant spill.

I hope all the members have taken the time, because we have the Railway Safety Act coming before us as well, to take a look at the review of the Cheakamus spill and the Wabamun spill. Prosecutions arose out of that. Those reports by the rail safety board, by the respective provincial governments and the matters that came out of the government clearly said that the federal government had dropped the ball in respecting to these significant spills. Yet the Wabamun spill was less than a few miles from a main highway, only 40 miles from a major city, in the oil capital of Canada and it completely failed to contain a major spill of bunker sea, half of which remains on the bottom of Lake Wabamun.

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Where is the action on developing a framework for emergency response and spill response plans? Yes we know that we can stop the ships and the Coast Guard can demand to see the spiller response plan of the tanker. What good is this at that point? The tanker is already within our waters. Surely we should be standing back and conducting an overall review of whether that is adequate. Do we need stronger measures to prevent the kinds of incidents that have occurred along the Alaska coast.

People on the east coast have raised concerns about the lack of access to emergency response plans, that even in those cases where a company is required to develop an emergency and environmental response plan, they are not disclosed to the public.

Surely we need to be reviewing the system for the development and approval of these kinds of risky developments in Canada.

What about capabilities of foreign tankers? How will the government control what kind of emergency spill response equipment is contained on those tankers, or will the people of Canada be required to pay the cost of storage of the spill response equipment on shore? Can that even be adequate? Surely we should be standing back and taking a close look at whether it is even possible to respond and if so, who should pay and where should the liability be imposed.

Given the hints in cutbacks by the government and the fact that it turned down a sincere request by the city of Edmonton for support for an expo on activities to celebrate clean energy development in Canada, how can we expect the Coast Guard, which has already been cut back, to do the job? Will the government commit to major resources to beef up the ability of the Coast Guard not only on the west coast, but also in the high Arctic and on the east coast.

I can share with the House the statistics from Alberta on incidents on pipelines. In a 15 year period there were 8,000 releases. That is not very reassuring.

The members of our party have been repeatedly been calling for an open and transparent dialogue on a clean and sustainable energy strategy for Canada. I am pleased to say that the Alberta minister of energy just today advised me that he is supportive of our proposal and he called it a national energy strategy.

● (1540)

Mrs. Shelly Glover (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her thoughts on this issue. I do have a concern though. Jobs are fragile. We have just entered a period from a recession that is really providing some growth to our country. I am very concerned that the motion put forward by the NDP will in fact shut down the coastline and affect tens of thousands of jobs.

I am interested to know exactly what the NDP member suggests we do to export resources to other regions of the world? What will we do about providing these tens of thousands of jobs that will be lost if this motion passes?

Ms. Linda Duncan: Mr. Speaker, I welcome that question. In fact, members of our caucus and our leader met with representatives of the oil industry and the building trades. We said to them that we would like to have a strategy to provide jobs in Canada.

Why is the government trying to fast-track pipelines out of Alberta? Why is it not supporting a policy to refine and upgrade this bitumen in Alberta and in fact create those jobs? Instead it is creating some temporary construction jobs to build a pipeline, creating jobs on foreign tankers and creating a lot of jobs in eastern nations to refine the oil.

I am concerned about jobs. I would like to create a lot of jobs in the clean energy sector in Canada.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that government members still believe the pipelines that being proposed out of Alberta will be shipping oil or any sort of processed material at all. There are proposals from Husky just this week to put another \$1 billion into the tar sands, explicitly to ship out raw bitumen to other countries to process there, therefore shipping jobs out of the country at the same time. What will be left behind? The legacy of the tailings ponds from the tar sands.

The government tells us to essentially trust it and the oil companies when they ship this oil because they have plans in place. Government members were talking about the Coast Guard earlier and that it was in charge of any potential spill. We know audits from the Coast Guard are saying that it does not have the capacity. It is not us saying it. The Coast Guard is saying it cannot handle a major spill. It does not have the training and its equipment is old. Companies are telling us to trust them when they put their emergency response plans in place, supposedly, but then will not make them public.

If the government is for accountability and transparency, when we talk about such high risk projects, would it not then make sense to put into legislation, along with a ban on dangerous tanker traffic, the requirement for some of these things to be made public so the public can have a look at them and determine whether they are trustworthy and safe enough for their measures?

● (1545)

Ms. Linda Duncan: Mr. Speaker, these plans should be public. However, what should be public is this promised dialogue on clean energy between the United States and Canada.

This country signed on to two agreements. A more recent one was the U.S.-Canada Clean Energy Dialogue, in which the Government of Canada promises to dialogue with its citizens. Another one signed on to, more than 15 years ago, was a side agreement to NAFTA. In that document, Canada is committed to providing advance notice and opportunity to participate in any proposed policies.

The obligation and the commitment is already there. It is just simply not being lived up to, whether it is the capabilities of the Coast Guard to respond on any of our three coasts is adequate, or whether the kinds of policies we espouse at international negotiations are the kinds of policies we would like to espouse.

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Very clearly the government ran on a ticket of openness and transparency, grassroots decision-making. I look forward to the government delivering on that, including decisions on tankers on the west coast.

Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Edmonton—Strathcona not only for sharing her time with me, but also for sharing her space with me here.

I am pleased to participate in the debate on today's opposition day motion moved by my colleague from Skeena—Bulkley Valley.

I wanted to join this debate because I have a few comments to make from a slightly different perspective than those offered today by my New Democratic colleagues. We have heard their forceful and informative presentations on the severe environmental consequences of hundreds of oil supertankers sailing through sensitive marine ecosystems, threatening the livelihood and way of life our beautiful western coastal communities and first nations.

We have also heard that a moratorium is not good enough. We need legislation and we need it now. Let me explain why a moratorium is not good enough any more. The Conservative government's recent reinterpretation of the moratorium has meant that Methanex and Encana have been allowed to import condensate in tankers to the port of Kitimat.

Since 2006, over 30 tankers carrying condensate have been allowed to travel through the inside passage to Kitimat, B.C. For those who do not know, condensate is a highly flammable hydrocarbon used to thin the tar-like oil extracted from the tar sands. It is classified as a dangerous good by the federal government and is so toxic that it kills marine life on contact.

Allowing oil supertankers into the Dixon Entrance, Hecate Strait and Queen Charlotte Sound would jeopardize the \$1.7 billion Pacific coast fishery, the 13,000 commercial fisheries jobs, the approximate 10,000 jobs in the cruise ship and recreational tourism industry, and entire coastal cultures from the threat of oil spills.

For the record, Enbridge Inc. says its pipeline project, the northern gateway project, which will send 400,000 barrels of oil per day from Edmonton to Kitimat to be exported to Asia and the U.S. coast by tanker, will create approximately 200 long-term jobs across the entire route. To threaten tens of thousands of jobs for just 200 jobs, I do not know about my Conservative business-minded colleagues here in the House, but this makes absolutely no sense. As I have said, we need legislation to ban those tankers now.

As we have seen throughout this Parliament, New Democrats have even written the legislation and offered it up to the government to make it its own. I say to the government, if it is really interested in efficiencies, it should not reinvent the wheel, but turn Bill C-502 by my colleague from New Westminster—Coquitlam into a government bill. New Democrats would help the government pass it right away.

Canadians have repeatedly told us that as legislators we have a responsibility to future generations of Canadians to conserve our non-renewable energy resources now while developing sustainable renewable energy sources for the future.

We know the Conservative members have absolutely no commitment whatsoever to our environment, no matter what they say. Their actions, such as getting their unelected, unrepresented, undemocratic senators to kill, without debate, Bill C-311, the NDP's landmark environmental legislation, is all the proof we need of their dangerous backward thinking.

I will offer a different reason as to why the proposed northern gateway project which is dependent on a reversal of the moratorium on oil tankers is a bad idea.

● (1550)

Currently we produce more oil than we consume, exporting over 65% of it to the U.S., mostly as crude, unprocessed bitumen. The proposed Enbridge northern gateway pipeline would carry 525,000 barrels of crude oil daily from Alberta's tar sands to the port of Kitimat for shipment to Asia, via as many as 220 tankers each year. It would allow unprecedented tar sands expansion, some say by as much as 30%.

The pipeline would cross more than a thousand rivers and streams that make up some of the world's most productive wild salmon habitat, including the great Skeena and Fraser rivers, upon which many communities and first nations depend. The pipeline would also cross the territory of more than 50 first nations.

Here is an important fact. Current pipelines are already operating under capacity.

Instead of going west, we need a pipeline entirely located in Canada that brings oil from western Canada to the east. Instead of securing our energy supply and creating good-paying jobs in Canada, we currently have 36 pipeline projects under way or awaiting approval, none of which would send oil across Canada for Canadian consumption. In fact, for many Atlantic Canadians, Ontarians and Quebecers, Canadian-sourced oil comes to them after travelling through thousands of miles of pipelines in the United States.

This makes the need for the Enbridge northern gateway pipelines project and its associated tanker traffic highly questionable.

Further, there is already an existing pipeline and terminal in Burnaby, B.C. shipping tar sands oil to Asian markets.

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Here is some food for thought. In allowing more north-south or western pipelines, we are allowing, on a daily basis, millions of barrels of crude oil to be shipped out of Canada for processing in the U.S. Now Enbridge wants to ship another half a million barrels a day of unprocessed oil to Asia for processing. Allowing tanker traffic in the Dixon Entrance, Hecate Strait and Queen Charlotte Sound would essentially expand the number of foreign companies which now control and profit from the processing of crude Canadian oil. It begs the question, why is the government not creating the value-added jobs in Canada? Why are we creating these jobs overseas? Canada needs its own capacity to process oil and create value-added jobs in Canada before exporting it.

Is the government aware that Canada is virtually alone among oil-producing countries in not having the means to supply our own needs? Ontario and Quebec in particular are completely landlocked from oil supplies. The government likes to talk about how Canada is open for business and how we need to attract foreign investment in Canada, when in fact, the effect of all these pipelines is to guarantee long-term investment in foreign countries, not in Canada. The processing facilities are in the U.S.A. and Asia, not in Canada. The processing jobs are in the U.S.A. and Asia, not in Canada. I would love answers on how this foreign investment is good for Canadians. Should we not be securing these jobs for Canadians? After all, is this not Canadian oil?

Canada needs a comprehensive energy policy, one that places emphasis on securing renewable sources of energy, one that supports the creation of homegrown green technology, which could bring thousands of high-paying jobs for Canadians and one that ensures that all future energy projects are consistent with our national interests. This is where the government's priority should lie. Instead, the Conservative government continues to rely on dirty oil while supporting foreign efforts to ship processing jobs out of Canada.

We in the New Democratic Party say no to more pipelines that ship unprocessed bitumen out of Canada, no to super oil tankers plying through sensitive marine ecosystems, no to increased reliance on oil, and yes to focusing on securing our country's energy needs through investments in clean, renewable energy. We owe it to those who elected us. We owe it to our kids and our grandkids.

I urge all members to support this motion.

• (1555)

Mr. Mark Warawa (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened intently to my colleague across the way and he made some very interesting points. He said that we do not use all the oil we produce. What happens to it? It is exported. He acknowledged that, but does not want that to happen. What would be the result of that? It would kill Canadian jobs.

He would also like to see value added, which means reducing the oil and gas here. What would that do to greenhouse gas emissions? They would go up.

Yesterday, we saw every NDP member vote against the federal sustainable development bill. We have also seen the NDP in committee try to change the definition of "sustainable development" and remove the two pillars of jobs and social impact. They also did not want to hear from first nations.

My question—

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. It is important because the hon. member does not ever choose to mislead the House knowingly, but he said that the New Democrats voted against the federal sustainable development bill. That is not at all true. He knows that not to be true. I would encourage the member that if he is asking a question or making a speech, he stick explicitly to the facts and maybe even address the motion in front of us today. We are dealing with tankers off of B.C.'s west coast.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Mr. Speaker, if the member across the way looks at *Hansard* for December 1, he will see that every member of the NDP is recorded as voting against the federal sustainable development bill. What does that mean? The question is, why did they vote against it?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Order. The issue before the House today is the motion that has been brought forward by the NDP, not the issue of what was voted on yesterday. I appreciate that the hon. parliamentary secretary raised the issue in his question and that the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley raised a point of order disputing the facts.

At this point, the hon. parliamentary secretary has spoken.

I give the floor to the member for Nickel Belt to respond, dealing with today's motion.

Mr. Claude Gravelle: Mr. Speaker, I do not know where the hon. member from the government is getting his facts. We certainly did not vote against that. He can say whatever he wants about the way we voted on that, but it is not true.

Obviously he was not listening to what I was saying. We want to create jobs in Canada. He wants to create jobs in Asia and the U.S.A. We are talking about good-paying jobs. We could build a pipeline to Thompson where another foreign company is eliminating hundreds of jobs. We could build a refinery in Thompson and create good-paying Canadian jobs, instead of creating them in the U.S. and Asia.

• (1600)

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day this is going to be a dead deal in terms of the pipeline being built because the tanker traffic is just too risky, based on the route we are talking about, as the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley indicated before.

In addition, the government has changed the Marine Liability Act under Bill C-7, tripling the amount for victims' compensation from \$500 million to \$1.5 billion. Since insurance is the grease that runs business, when the underwriters for reinsurance companies in London, England, discover how risky this tanker route really is, they are going to refuse to insure these ships.

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As an example, for a number of years in Manitoba we had a problem getting ships into the port of Churchill. In that day, the premier and the cabinet had to go cap in hand to London, England to explain to the underwriters why insurance should not be denied. That is the only way we were able to get those ships through. When the underwriters find out how risky this route really is, how risky pipelines are, because pipeline accidents have been hidden over the years, the insurance industry itself will shut down this operation.

Mr. Claude Gravelle: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member was talking about underwriters and getting insurance for these tankers. If we were to refine our oil in Canada, creating good-paying Canadian jobs, we would not have to worry about the underwriters. Instead of having to underwrite these tankers to process the oil in the U.S.A. and Asia, creating jobs over there where it does not benefit our economy, we want to benefit the Canadian economy and create good-paying Canadian jobs.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I always welcome an opportunity to speak to environmental protection and conservation. I am particularly proud to be able to speak today concerning Canada's magnificent west coast.

I do not need to be convinced of the priority to protect its ocean ecosystem, preserve its marine resources, which sustain the economies of coastal communities, and honour first nations rights and titles in the process.

Conservation is the foundation of a strong environment, and Canada has a very proud record on conservation. We have taken action to protect nearly 100 million hectares of land, nearly 10% of Canada's land mass, and 4.6 million hectares of ocean.

We have the best national park system in the world and have grown it by 30% in just four years. We have established the Gwaii Haanas National Marine Conservation Area Reserve and Haida Heritage Site in respectful collaboration with the Haida Nation.

This is a remarkable achievement, one this House envisioned some 23 years ago when it passed a unanimous resolution supporting the protection of the lands and waters around Gwaii Haanas. It is a protected area that extends from the alpine tundra of the mountain-tops to the deep ocean beyond the continental shelf. This is a first in the world. It is a living legacy of lands and waters that will endure for generations to come. It is an example of the international leadership Canada is taking when it comes to conservation efforts.

This new national marine conservation area, it should be noted, will now be protected forever from oil and gas exploration and development, in part because of the foresight of the petroleum industry. The need to conserve the marine waters of Gwaii Haanas and the nearly 3,500 marine species found within this archipelago was recognized first by the petroleum industry. The four major oil companies who possessed third-party petroleum rights to much of the seabed in the Hecate Strait relinquished all of them in 1997 by working with the Nature Conservancy of Canada. It was a significant action on their part, which cleared the way for the establishment of this national marine conservation area.

We are taking significant steps to conserve lands and wildlife across Canada. We are doing that through funding programs and strong enforcement with new tools and fines, and we are doing it by

reviewing our legislation to make protection for species at risk stronger.

Protecting our lands and wildlife is everyone's responsibility. Many governments, organizations and individuals are involved and all of us are making important contributions. Together we are protecting, conserving and restoring our lands and wildlife.

With a well-articulated approach to national conservation, one with clear goals, ambitions and targets, we can do even better and together make Canada a world leader in conservation. Over the coming months we will be engaging all of our partners to establish a common approach for the development and implementation of a national conservation plan.

Protection of our environment is also essential. Canadians expect us to protect our environment, and Canada has a proud record on protection.

The Scott Islands is a group of five small islands off the northern tip of Vancouver Island, which supports more than two million breeding sea birds between March and September, the highest concentration of breeding sea birds in the eastern north Pacific. About 40% of the sea birds that breed in British Columbia nest there. The area also attracts between five million and ten million sea birds, which may travel thousands of miles across the Pacific to feed in the rich waters around the Scott Islands. The black-footed albatross is one of these long-distance travellers. It is listed as an endangered species, at risk of extinction.

Environment Canada is now working to establish the Scott Islands marine national wildlife area. We are doing this together with the Government of British Columbia, other federal government departments, first nations, regional governments and representatives from the marine transportation, energy, commercial fishing, marine conservation, sport fishing and tourism sectors. We are all working together to plan for this national wildlife marine area.

Environment Canada is actively contributing to an important initiative under the lead of the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, which is the Pacific north coast integrated management area. This is an area situated in British Columbia's central and north coast areas, encompassing 88,000 square kilometres.

Environment Canada officials are at the table with their counterparts from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Parks Canada, Transport Canada, the Province of British Columbia and representatives of the Coastal First Nations, North Coast Skeena First Nations Stewardship Society and Nanwakolas Council to find ways together to ensure a healthy, safe and prosperous ocean area by developing an integrated management plan for the area.

•(1605)

This groundbreaking collaborative process will provide opportunities to address concerns being raised in the House today with respect to safety and to safeguarding a unique ocean ecosystem while resolving tensions among potentially conflicting activity when it comes to protecting and conserving our environment, honouring first nation rights and title, and preserving the resources that have sustained communities along British Columbia's central and north coasts.

The Great Bear Rainforest is located just south of Kitimat, along the north coast of British Columbia. It is the largest tract of intact coastal temperate rainforest left protected. It comprises more than 30,000 square miles and is home to three kinds of bear, grizzly, black and the rare spirit bear, six million migratory birds, 3,000 genetically distinct salmon stocks and many species of plants unique to the region.

This government has contributed \$30 million to a not-for-profit fund for sustainable and community-based first nations economic development in the Great Bear Rainforest, as did the B.C. government. Known as the economic development fund, the total of \$60 million is being used to support conservation, sustainable job creation and business development initiatives for coastal first nations. This is an example of the Government of Canada's investment in sustainable development in the region.

Environment Canada's birds oiled at sea program covers the entire Pacific coast, including the Queen Charlotte Basin, Dixon Entrance and Hecate Strait areas, with similar program coverage in other parts of Canada.

In partnership with Transport Canada's national aerial surveillance program, we are engaged in compliance monitoring and enforcement with respect to chronic small-scale oil events associated with marine vessels.

The primary goal of this program is to assess the extent of and predict in space and time the risk of marine birds encountering oil pollution off the Pacific coast.

As well, this program models other impacts on marine ecosystems resulting from maritime activities, such as shipping and commercial fishing, and forms of pollution other than oil, such as plastic and other forms of anthropogenic marine debris.

Members of the opposition have introduced a motion asking the government to propose legislation to ban bulk oil tanker traffic in the Dixon Entrance, Hecate Strait and Queen Charlotte Sound as a way to protect the west coast's ocean ecosystem, to preserve the marine resources that sustain communities and regional economies of that area.

The Pacific coast is one of the most highly regulated jurisdictions in the world for tanker traffic. These laws and regulations promote the safe and secure use of Canada's waters and govern the safe transport of petroleum products to protect the marine and coastal environment.

With respect to coastal drilling, there has been a federal moratorium on oil and gas exploration activities off the coast of

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British Columbia since 1972. This moratorium, however, does not apply to tanker traffic.

Under federal law and in accordance with international conventions, crude oil and oil product tankers and barges are permitted to navigate in Canadian waters and to enter designated ports, including Kitimat, Prince Rupert, Vancouver and several minor ports.

Currently, southbound oil tankers carrying Alaskan crude oil to refineries on the U.S. west coast travel in shipping lanes off the coast of B.C. beyond what is known as the tanker exclusion zone. This zone is a voluntary measure agreed to by the U.S. and Canadian coast guards to enhance the safety of shipping along Canada's west coast. It prevents oil tankers from entering the inside passage or travelling close to the western coastlines of Haida Gwaii or Vancouver Island.

Petroleum shipments currently transiting the inner coast of British Columbia consist mainly of barges carrying oil products, such as gasoline, lubrication oil and diesel fuel to British Columbian ports and to Alaskan destinations.

Enbridge's proposal to construct and operate a new twin pipeline system and marine terminal on the north coast of B.C., at Kitimat, has been subject to considerable public debate, including concerns expressed by aboriginal communities.

Our government is well aware of the concerns with a possible increase in tanker traffic through a number of areas that the environment department and others have identified as having a very high importance to migratory birds, whale pods, Pacific salmon and coastal rainforests.

We are aware, too, of concerns of any harmful impacts on critical sectors of British Columbia's northern and coastal regional economies.

I want to assure the House that the proposed Enbridge northern gateway project is being assessed by the independent joint review panel mandated by the Minister of the Environment and the National Energy Board.

•(1610)

The panel will assess the environmental effects of the proposed project, and Environment Canada is fully engaged in this process.

The department is also participating in an assessment of vessel movements and safety relating to the proposed project under the technical review process of marine terminal systems and transshipment sites.

Environment Canada is fully aware of its responsibilities to ensure the honour of the Crown is met and its constitutional obligations fulfilled when we engage with first nations.

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Regarding aboriginal consultation for the joint review panel process, the federal Crown's duty to consult with aboriginal people is being co-ordinated by the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency. We are relying on the joint review panel process and the applicant's own consultation efforts to the extent possible to meet the Crown's duty to consult with aboriginal peoples.

Currently oil tankers and barges ply virtually all of British Columbia's coasts and rivers, including all major ports and the Fraser River. Fortunately, accidents involving vessels carrying petroleum products are extremely rare. Despite a global increase in the shipment of oil, both the number of incidents and the quantity of spilled oil has decreased steadily since the 1970s. Rest assured, the Government of Canada has a dedicated and funded regime in place for the prevention of, preparedness for, response to and recovery from marine oil spills.

The Canadian Coast Guard, together with other government departments such as Transport Canada and Environment Canada, form Canada's marine pollution preparedness and response system, a multi-agency approach that sees a network of federal, provincial, territorial, industry and international partners working collaboratively to prepare for and respond to marine pollution events.

Before concluding, I want to point out as well that Environment Canada has an important preventive role to play in producing reliable weather forecasts for all Canadians, particularly in areas where their livelihoods and safety are highly dependent on the weather. Environment Canada closely monitors weather conditions on British Columbia's north coast by observing and reporting on the weather directly from a number of locations in the area.

With support from the Canadian Coast Guard, Environment Canada maintains a network of moored weather buoys that report observations of real-time wind and wave conditions in Hecate Strait, Douglas Channel, Queen Charlotte Sound, Dixon Entrance and offshore right out to the Bowie Seamount. These stations regularly report some of the highest winds and waves in Canada.

A network of weather autostations in remote locations reports the weather every hour throughout coastal British Columbia. On Haida Gwaii and the north and central coasts, these stations can be relied on to provide valuable information for mariners and for marine forecasters. As well, many ships are equipped with weather equipment and can send weather reports directly from those ships.

The public, marine and aviation interests up and down British Columbia's north coast rely on Environment Canada's weather website, Weatheradio, and automated telephone service to receive daily forecasts and timely warning bulletins. The emergency management community along the north coast and Haida Gwaii has direct access to Environment Canada's warning preparedness meteorologists in the event of an emergency.

Prevention is critical to avoiding the kinds of incidents that lead to catastrophic consequences for our environment.

I hope I have put to rest any concerns that the opposition might have about this government's commitment to protecting Canada's natural environment, its biodiversity and the well-being and prosperity of Canadians, particularly those living and working in

communities along Canada's west coast. I believe our record speaks for itself.

When we consider the extent to which British Columbia relies on oil and oil products for its economy, supplying heating oil and diesel for generators to remote communities, providing airports with fuel for air travel and servicing an important economic sector in the import and export of petroleum products, we realize to what extent the transportation of oil is a necessary component of livelihoods and economy in British Columbia.

We must continue to proceed, as we are, to balance conservation and protection of the environment with attention to our regional economies, and we do so in partnership with those who are most affected by the decisions we take.

• (1615)

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): I need to make a correction, Mr. Speaker. The discussion here is about the transportation of bitumen, not oil.

This debate is a critical one for many reasons, including the control that we as Canadians ought to have not only over our resources but over good-paying, processing, value-added jobs in our own country. We are seeing a pattern here, a failure of the government to stand up for Canadians and the kinds of jobs that hold up our communities. Could the member explain that pattern?

More specifically, not only in terms of this discussion, could he tell Manitobans, people in his own province, why his government is failing to stand up for the good-paying jobs that are being taken away from them by one more foreign-owned company that is taking advantage of our resources? What does the member have to say to hard-working Manitobans who are losing their jobs?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): I want to remind all hon. members that the matter before the House today is the opposition day motion. The hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake.

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, this government takes the development of the oil sands and the possible future upgrading of bitumen very seriously. It still comes down to the fact that there will still be a need to move that upgraded product, whether it is bitumen or whether it is refined, into the marketplace. That means that it still has to go via pipelines to where that product is needed, whether it is to the United States, Europe, or Asia.

The reality is that Environment Canada is on top of this process, that this government supports those types of industrial roles that will be played out by the private sector. We are going to be there to regulate and ensure that it is done under a strong environmental platform that we already have established here in Canada and ensure that we meet all those environmental regulations.

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I find it a little rich that the NDP members are here today preaching about the environment and at the same time they want to create jobs, which plays completely against what is happening in Manitoba right now.

They are making a comment about what is happening by a foreign-owned mine in northern Manitoba. Yes, workers are being laid off but they are getting laid off because of environmental permitting that is about to expire on their smelter. If we can fix that smelter or extend the environmental permitting we can save those jobs.

• (1620)

Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have been listening this afternoon to the debate. I listened to the members of the opposition coalition talk about why they do not want tanker traffic off the west coast. One of the reasons they give is they want the bitumen to be upgraded in Canada.

I know from past experience with these members of the coalition that in fact if there were more upgrading in Canada they would be the first ones to be complaining about that happening. They would be speaking out against that happening. They cannot have it both ways.

I want to commend the member on his speech. It was a very important speech in this debate. It was an accurate speech and there were not very many today that had that kind of accuracy, so I thank him for that.

Does the member know there are about 475,000 vessels that move up and down the west coast each year and that about 1,500 of those are in fact tankers? Does the member know how many shipping incidents there have been off the west coast since 2003 that have resulted in pollution? Does the member know how many tankers that move through Canadian waters are inspected by Canadian inspectors?

These are tough questions for the member, but I think he can handle them.

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, I want to agree with the member on his comment about the NDP. I chair the environment committee. When we studied the oil sands it seemed to me that every time we had witnesses who were supporting the development of the oil sands the NDP was always opposed to it.

Now the NDP members are talking about how they want to have bitumen upgraded. That is going to create even more greenhouse gas emissions, which they think we produce way too much of. They want to shut down the oil sands because they want to get rid of all these greenhouse gas emissions, which really do not amount to that great a quantity of greenhouse gas emissions coming from Canada in our overall total GHG emissions.

It seems extremely hypocritical when I listen to them saying that they want to protect the environment, they want to create jobs and they want to refine oil, but everything that we do in the House, everything that we do in committee, they are always opposed to.

Yes, I realize that we have a lot of tanker traffic happening, mainly because we have this relationship with Alaska and the tanker zone that we have established. There are petroleum products moving

every day up and down the coastline to be upgraded as they hit refineries in the United States. We know that there has been a significant reduction in instances since 1970 of any major oil spills.

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when the member talks about the need to upgrade bitumen, regardless of where we do this in the world there will be greenhouse gas emissions.

If Canada thinks it is going to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by transferring the upgrading of bitumen to other countries, it is really a no-win situation in terms of greenhouse gases in the world. It is also a no-win situation for Canadian jobs, plus taxes, plus royalties, and the dollars that are involved in this are massive.

Does my hon. colleague really think that by transferring bitumen out of the country he is going to reduce the greenhouse gas profile of the tar sands? No.

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, there is no question that if the bitumen was upgraded in Canada under our regulations it would be done in a much more environmentally friendly way than what could possibly happen in other jurisdictions.

We are not saying that we are opposed to the upgrading of bitumen. The member for Western Arctic knows that the government supports the development of our natural resources and that we support the investment in the natural resources that we have in this country.

If those types of investments are going to be made here, our government will go through its fiduciary duty and ensure that those investments are being made along the rules and lines that we have in this country. Then it will also make sure that they fit into all the environmental regulations and plans of the government.

It is important when those opportunities present themselves that we capitalize on them. At the same time, it still requires that the product, after it has been refined or if it has gone out as bitumen, get to the final export market, and that means it still has to be transported down pipelines to either get to U.S. or Asian markets or even over to Europe.

• (1625)

Mr. Bruce Stanton (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened very carefully this afternoon to the speech by the member for Selkirk—Interlake.

I want to take this opportunity to thank him for his outstanding work on the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development. The committee does terrific work. I know the member is an excellent presiding officer of that committee.

I was intrigued by the opening comments of the member's speech this afternoon. He talked about some of the work the government was doing in the area of conservation, particularly, as he called it, the Gwaii Haanas National Marine Conservation Area. He talked about that briefly.

I wonder if the member could take a moment to expand on that kind of work and some of the other things that the government is doing with projects like that marine conservation area, particularly on the west coast?

Government Orders

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, we did have an opportunity earlier this year to actually deal with the act of establishing the Gwaii Haanas National Marine Conservation Area and ensuring that all the players at the table, including the Province of British Columbia and the Gwaii Haanas first nation, had all of their issues met.

We are working, after we go through the appropriate process, towards turning that into a park. Now that we have the agreement in place, we do have the Council of the Haida Nation and the Government of Canada, through the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and the Minister of the Environment, working together.

This is a very beautiful area, a large archipelago of islands. There has to be management board that oversees all that. We are going to continue to work to make sure that that reserve gets all the attention it needs, all the resources from Parks Canada, and that we continue to work to protect that area and expand all other future marine reserves and lands to go into the park system.

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the debate on a subject that I believe needs much more debate than what we were able to accomplish here today. Judging by many of the comments that were made by my colleagues from the Conservative Party, they should be taking a good primary course on the development of the tar sands to understand how these tar sands actually are constituted and what these tar sands mean as they are developed.

Mr. Speaker, having said that, I will be sharing my time with the member for New Westminster—Coquitlam. He is an excellent new member of Parliament who understands completely the ecological system of the west coast, and I trust he will carry that message forward here today.

In 2007, in response to her constituents, environmental groups such as the Dogwood Initiative and the Western Canada Wilderness Committee, the member for Victoria, who unfortunately cannot make a speech here today, tabled a motion to ban tanker traffic in the Dixon Entrance, Hecate Strait and Queen Charlotte Sound. I remember her telling me how shocked she had been when paddling in Prince William Sound, years after the *Exxon Valdez* disaster, she saw there were still remnants of crude oil gummed onto the rocks.

When introducing her motion in 2007, she said that it was time to end the ambiguity, that there was a simple fix to make certain this would never happen again, and that was to formalize the moratoria.

That is what we are here for today.

My purpose here today is to talk about an area of concern that I have. I live downstream from the development of the Athabasca tar sands. I have lived there most of my life. I share with many other community members the concerns that we have over the rampant expansion of these tar sands. Having said that, I recognize the importance of this resource to Canada. I recognize that this resource will be there and producing bitumen for 100 years. That is what is going to happen. That is the nature of the Athabasca tar sands.

We have to face up to that and try to make those tar sands the very best for Canada that we can. That is our purpose as well, when we stand in this Parliament as the New Democratic Party. We have had the opportunity on many occasions to tell the House that. Our opposition to bad management of the tar sands is just that. Let us get

on to good management of the tar sands and we will solve some of the issues that we have with that, and we will protect my constituents living downstream from those same tar sands.

Right now the tar sands are at about 1.4 million barrels a day. They are expecting that this will rise by the middle of the next decade to almost three million barrels a day. Those barrels of bitumen need upgrading. Every single one of those barrels needs a very complex process, requiring expensive installations in the order of billions of dollars to make that happen.

In this world right now, we are considering exporting that bitumen from Canada with the net value per barrel, confirmed to me today by the CAPP, Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, representative in our meeting, in the neighbourhood of \$20 to \$30 a barrel. That is the value to the Canadian economy for every single barrel that is upgraded in this country.

When we talk about shipping a million barrels a day of bitumen out of this country, we are talking about a net loss to the Canadian economy every year of \$10 billion. If the Conservative government cannot understand the nature of that impact on our economy, then I do not know where it thinks it has some kind of hold on the economy. It does not, if it does not understand that this is not the proper thing to do for Canada, to export bitumen out of this country.

Why is the government exporting the bitumen? Why does it want to export it down to the Gulf of Mexico? It is because the U.S. right now is in a political battle with Venezuela, and the heavy oil that was brought from Venezuela to the Gulf of Mexico is no longer something that the U.S. desires. It is not something Venezuelans want to do for the U.S. if we have a problem there.

● (1630)

These large upgraders in the Gulf of Mexico region are now a cheap alternative for the multinational companies to bring our bitumen from the tar sands down to the Gulf of Mexico and upgrade it there. That is what is driving that move, not value for the Canadian economy.

When we think of exporting bitumen to China, what will happen in China? China will set up upgraders there at a cost of billions of dollars. We will establish a supply link that delivers raw bitumen with huge investments at the other end and huge pressure on us to continue to make that the staple of that industry, moving raw bitumen.

This is not something we can just pick up and give up. What are we going to do for the years we are going to establish another? Will China stand around while we build another upgrader so that in the future the bitumen is not available for its upgrader? No. Once we build a pipeline to the west coast and start shipping bitumen, Canadians will be struck with that for 100 years. That is the future we will see for our children, which is not appropriate.

What we need to think about is what we use our bitumen for? Right now in Canada conventional oil is declining in production. According to Natural Resources Canada, 1.5 million barrels a day was the total in 2006. It is predicting it down to about 750,000 barrels by 2020. Canada will have a less secure oil supply. Transferring bitumen out of the country will not help Canada's energy security.

Government Orders

Right now we are importing one million barrels of oil a day from the Middle East. The oil is put in a tanker in the Middle East and it is sent over to Canada. We put the raw bitumen in the tanker and we send it over to China. Is there some consistency to what we do as Canadians? Is there any sense in what we are proposing for ourselves? For five years I have been standing in Parliament asking and pleading with the government to develop a national energy strategy that can deliver for Canadians. Instead, we get action like this.

The government is continuing to allow multinational oil companies to set the tune for the direction and future of Canadians. What a disgrace. Why does the government not get onboard with most of the industry in this country, most of the Canadian companies, the chief executives who have come out for a national energy strategy and do the work for Canadians and produce a national energy strategy? If it were to do that, it would realize very quickly that a good Canadian company like Enbridge, in the absence of any direction from the federal government, is moving ahead with a project that is not in Canada's interests. When will that happen? When will the government wake up, smell the roses and get on with a national energy strategy so all of these issues can be properly debated and properly put in context for Canadians?

It would deliver jobs and energy security for Canadians. Those are real things that Canadians want but the government is not delivering on them. It is blindly going along with every whimsical project that will change the nature of our country without doing its homework. It is a disgrace. This sort of debate, which we had to plead for and had to use up our opposition day for, should be an intelligent, careful debate with industry and stakeholders across the country so we can come to some conclusions about the nature of our energy supply.

• (1635)

If the government does not do that, it should be thrown out at the next election because it is really doing nothing for Canadians.

Hon. John Duncan (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians and Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do agree with one thing the member said. It would be nice if we had some intelligent debate in this place because we are certainly not getting it from the NDP.

I would like to remind people that, in its policy manual, the NDP said that it would like to improve the public sector's role as a wealth creator and major provider of jobs. NDP members want a command economy that is completely out of step with the modern world. The other thing they are very good at is wedge politics and fear-mongering.

The *Exxon Valdez* is how the member started his speech. The *Exxon Valdez* was a single hull tanker. There has been no double hull tanker in the world that has had a spill in the last 50 years.

I would like to hear the member comment on those observations.

Mr. Dennis Bevington: Mr. Speaker, I am glad the hon. member across the way is reading NDP policy documents. Perhaps some of the telephone calls that he listens to as well could give him some insight into the NDP.

Nonetheless, we have just gone through a process in this country to stand up for our potash industry in a very serious fashion. The government did that as well under pressure from industry and the provinces all across this country. It did the right thing in the end by realizing that our resources are precious and must be protected. When we develop resources, we must develop them for the best possible outcome for Canadians.

• (1640)

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member for Western Arctic has been working long and hard on a Canadian energy strategy. He brings a lot of expertise to the table from his many years of work as a municipal councillor and as a consultant in this area. I appreciate his input and contribution to the debate.

The government has said that it will not take action to reduce greenhouse gases in this country until China steps up to the plate. However, the ludicrous thing is that the government is promoting the export of our raw bitumen to China for processing. If that bitumen were processed in Canada, if the government stepped up to the plate and required the strongest possible environmental controls and controls on greenhouse gases, we could ensure that the bitumen would be upgraded appropriately. However, by shipping the bitumen to China, we cannot control the kind of process they will follow or the environmental measures they will look at.

The Conservatives cannot have it both ways. If they want to ship our bitumen to Asian countries, then they should not complain about the fact that their pollution is rising. Which way do they want to have it?

I would like to have the member's opinion on that.

Mr. Dennis Bevington: Mr. Speaker, it is interesting when we consider the idea of exporting raw bitumen to China. We create a system that we cannot get out of. If this were an upgrading process with synthetic oil produced and that went into a tanker, we could put that to any destination in the world. By doing it the way this company has proposed, we have limited ourselves to a specific market. That is not a good idea in any case. The job loss is so incredible it baffles the mind. When we mention the kind of job loss that comes with moving this product out in the fashion it is, every group that I have talked to across the country asks why we are doing it.

Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in support of the motion to ban the transportation of oil by supertankers off British Columbia's north coast.

We must take action now to protect British Columbia's magnificent coastline and coastal waters, its diversity of fish species, abundance of mammals and the coastal communities that depend on a healthy fishing industry and profitable ecotourism sector.

On March 26 of this year, I introduced Bill C-502, a private member's bill that would amend the Canada Shipping Act to prohibit the transportation of oil in supertankers in the Dixon Entrance, Hecate Strait and Queen Charlotte Sound.

Government Orders

It would also allow the governor in council, on the recommendation of the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, to designate other areas of the sea in which transportation of oil by oil tankers is prohibited. British Columbians have been very clear on this issue: 80% want to see a permanent oil tanker ban on B.C.'s north coast.

I would like to acknowledge some of my colleagues who have done quite a bit of work on this topic: the member for Vancouver Kingsway, the member for Victoria and the member for Winnipeg Centre, just to name a few.

My colleague from Vancouver Kingsway drafted and introduced similar legislation to what I have proposed. My colleague from Victoria has also introduced legislation, as has my hon. colleague from Winnipeg Centre. Both have worked hard in the past to protect this incredible area of the B.C. coast.

I would like to acknowledge the work of my hon. colleague from the north coast whose riding this falls within, the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley. We know of his tireless efforts working toward a progressive change in this area. He knows better than any in this House how devastating an oil spill in this area would be to these coastal communities.

In October of this year, the Union of British Columbia Municipalities voted in favour of a resolution to petition the federal government to enshrine in legislation a permanent ban on oil tanker traffic in Dixon Entrance, Hecate Strait and Queen Charlotte Sound. In its resolution it states:

...a crude oil spill will have devastating and long lasting effects on the Pacific North Coast area that is recognized for its unique and diverse ocean ecosystems, which provide critical marine habitat and marine resources that sustain the social, cultural, environmental and economic health of coastal communities, including First Nations communities.

B.C.'s first nations have been vocal in their opposition to this proposed oil tanker traffic through their traditional territories. In March of this year, the Coastal First Nations, an alliance of first nations on the north coast and central coast, including Haida Gwaii, declared a ban on oil tanker traffic using their traditional laws.

In fact, today there was an historic announcement, which brought together 61 indigenous nations that have come together in an alliance to protect the Fraser River watershed and to declare their opposition to the proposed Enbridge northern gateway pipeline.

Signed in Williams Lake last week and published in a full-page ad in *The Globe and Mail* today, the Save the Fraser Gathering of Nations declaration is based on indigenous law and authority. It states:

...[we] will not allow the proposed Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipelines, or similar tar sands projects, to cross our lands, territories and watersheds, or the ocean migration routes of the Fraser River salmon.

The declaration is the second major first nations declaration banning tar sands pipelines from B.C. this year. It makes it clear that the nations see the federal review process for one project as a violation of their laws and rights under international law, including the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which Canada just recently signed.

●(1645)

First nations in this area have long advocated for sustainable employment opportunities for their members, along with proper environmental stewardship. They live in B.C.'s coastal temperate rainforest and are working hard to create a conservation-based economy, with emphasis on sustainable fisheries, forestry and ecotourism. Allowing more than 200 supertankers a year to enter these waters does not fit with their objectives.

I believe we need to be forward thinking. A ban on tanker traffic in this area makes economic sense. Our coastal communities have been hard hit over the years with a global recession, a downturn in commodity prices, a collapse of industrial forestry and a struggling fishery that, aside from this year, has faced some of the lowest annual returns in the past decade.

With that in mind, there is still renewed hope in coastal communities. Our wild salmon fishery experienced a record sockeye return this year. In British Columbia, our wild salmon are considered an icon species and an integral part of our identity and what it means to be west coast. As well, salmon are integral to the environment, our culture and our economy.

The waters off B.C.'s north coast are a significant salmon migration route, with millions of salmon that come from the more than 650 streams and rivers along the coast in this area. The impacts of an oil spill would be devastating. The commercial fishery on the north coast catches over \$100 million worth of fish annually. Over 2,500 residents along B.C.'s north coast work in the commercial fishery. The fish processing industry employs over 3,900 people.

The north coast fishery is a major economic driver in the region and for the province of British Columbia. Our coastal communities and fisheries simply cannot afford the risk of an oil spill. We all witnessed what happened with the *Exxon Valdez* spill in 1989 and the devastation that caused, including the complete collapse of pink salmon. We all witnessed the destruction of the shrimp and fishing grounds after the BP spill in the Gulf Coast.

We cannot allow even the possibility of a similar occurrence to the north coast fishery. Thousands of people's livelihoods rely upon us making the right decision to protect our fishery, and one way to do that is to legislate a ban on oil supertanker traffic.

The wild and rugged north coast is one of the most beautiful places on the planet. It is a place where the legendary kermode bear, more popularly known as the spirit bear, resides and is an intrinsic character in first nation mythology and culture. This elusive white bear can be spotted roaming around the dense forests gathering salmon and was even the mascot for the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics.

Government Orders

The magnificent beauty of this region has led it to become a world-renowned destination for ecotourism. The burgeoning tourism industry has been a major catalyst for employment, economic growth and opportunity in British Columbia. People from all over the world come to the north coast to witness the annual migration of the more than 20,000 grey whales that traverse the waters from Mexico to the Bering Sea.

B.C.'s north coast shoreline is dotted with sports fishing lodges as fishing enthusiasts flock to experience the natural environment, the world-famous fishing grounds and the wild ocean. People are often left awestruck after spending even a day kayaking, bear watching, or enjoying a guided trip that showcases the marine habitat. They come to photograph sea otters and bald eagles and to experience, in some cases, the untouched natural environment of the Pacific coast.

I suggest, if members have not done so already, that they take the opportunity to visit this incredible area one day soon. I am sure that they will come away with a much better understanding of the sheer beauty and raw nature of this area.

Eco and recreational tourism in this area has been a growth industry for some years now. Businesses in this region have worked hard to promote their location as a major tourist destination. As other resource-based jobs have taken a hit, tourism has provided a much needed economic boost, both in direct and indirect jobs.

According to the Living Oceans Society, there are approximately 10,000 jobs in the cruise ship and recreational tourism industry. This industry has provided jobs and economic spinoffs in a region that a decade ago faced significant unemployment and job loss.

The right thing to do for our economy is to protect and grow existing jobs on the north coast and legislate a ban on oil tanker traffic in this area immediately.

• (1650)

Mr. Mike Wallace (Burlington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member opposite's presentation and that of his colleague before him. I just have one question on which I need some clarification.

There was a discussion that Canada should do a better job of being in the refining business of raw bitumen before it gets on a supertanker and heads somewhere else. Does that mean that if that change happened, they would support the supertankers pulling up, taking on refined fuel, refined product, and shipping it to customers? Is it okay to have refined product on supertankers? Where do they think that fuel is going to go? Do they not think we need to be able to get it to customers so our businesses can survive?

Mr. Fin Donnelly: Mr. Speaker, the question here has to do with energy security. What we need to focus on is our domestic situation, Canada's energy security, and we need to move to protect our environment, which we so depend on, the environment that provides us with clean water, clean air, healthy soil and a stable climate, all the ingredients necessary to build healthy communities and continue strong, viable economies.

Why not upgrade and refine the bitumen from the tar sands on this continent, in our country, and use the royalties from this industry to fund a transition to a clean energy future and a greener economy? I know that is what Canadians want and I know my constituents in New Westminster, Coquitlam and Port Moody want to see this

happen. They want to see us get on with the job of making this transition, of protecting our environment and developing a clean energy economy.

• (1655)

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, one of the previous members raised a question to one of my colleagues, I believe it was the Minister of Indian Affairs, and advised that there are no issues with oil spills from tankers so why should we worry.

I would like to put to my colleague in the House in response that in May of this year, a double-hulled tanker spilled 2.9 million litres of crude off Singapore when it was hit by a freighter. This past January, 1.7 million litres were spilled in Texas after a collision with a barge, again a double-hulled crude freighter. In 1992, 76 million litres were spilled off the coast of northern Spain by an oil tanker.

In Alberta, it is reported by the energy board there that out of the 8,000 pipeline spills, a large proportion of them are due to external causes, where something else interacts with the pipeline.

I wonder if the member could speak to this issue where it appears that even where we have double-hulled freighters, which is not always the case, there can there be an amazingly large potential risk to the critical fishery off the west coast.

Mr. Fin Donnelly: Mr. Speaker, I know the hard work that my colleague does as environment critic for the New Democrats, raising issues such as this on a constant basis in the House, and I do appreciate the question.

On the issue of whether it is a single hull or a double hull, whether it the most reinforced pipelines that we could imagine, we are always going to face risk. The question then is, how do we mitigate that risk, and what kinds of factors do we consider when we make plans in terms of our energy security and our environment? I would suggest that we consider a full cost account of any and all new proposals that would threaten our environment and threaten jobs.

This threatens the health of our environment, just as it does our economy, and it threatens our way of life. I believe we need to start making the transition from this old world economy, this oil-based economy, to a new world economy based on clean, green jobs. That is something that I am working hard for and that I want to see happen in Canada.

Mr. Randy Kamp (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to participate in this debate about oil tanker traffic in coastal British Columbia, my home province.

This debate is important because it is about both economic development in B.C. and the protection of our beautiful coastal environment that we have been blessed with.

I would like to use my brief time to share with you some of the important work that our government has done to protect our oceans and the unique and biologically diverse marine ecosystems found on our Pacific coast.

Government Orders

Over the last few years we have put in place a number of mitigation, regulatory and protection measures that cover the treasured and spectacular ecosystems of our Pacific coast. Anyone who has been there can attest to this.

In the few minutes available to me, I want to explain how these actions demonstrate that our government continues to take action to protect the marine environment, while at the same time providing the opportunities needed to sustain our regional communities and their economies.

I will describe to the House how the measures already in place and the efforts under way make it unnecessary to bring about a legislated ban at this time on oil tanker traffic in this region as proposed by my colleagues from the NDP.

I want to assure this House that the Government of Canada is serious about the long-term protection of our oceans. We recognize that they have critical importance to all Canadians. They are a source of food, a means to mitigate the impacts of climate change and to improve our air quality, and are important for trade, commerce, adventure and discovery.

The ocean has shaped our customs, traditions and fisheries culture. They are an invaluable driver of the economy in coastal communities of British Columbia.

That is why in 2007 we announced a \$61.5 million investment over five years toward the health of the oceans initiative. The intent of this initiative is to enhance the protection of fragile marine environments and to counter pollution. It does this by strengthening pollution prevention at source. It will also increase our capacity to lessen the effects of pollution when and where it occurs.

We all know how important science is for decision-making. Therefore, under the health of the oceans initiative, we are also investing in science to better understand the oceans.

It is important to this government to ensure that we also work with our international partners.

This initiative enhances our ability to work with our partners in order to promote co-operation. Such co-operation will work towards the ultimate goal of ensuring healthy and prosperous oceans for the benefit of current and future generations of Canadians.

Central to this initiative is the development of a national network of marine protected areas in Canada and the establishment of new Oceans Act marine protected areas in our three oceans. This initiative complements the already substantial efforts in place in British Columbia to protect our bountiful oceans.

The figures speak for themselves. The total number of marine protected areas in place in British Columbia is 183, including 10 federal areas and 173 areas established by the Province of B.C. In fact, almost 2.8% of the marine area in the Pacific region is under some level of enhanced protection.

Oceans Act marine protected areas in British Columbia established by the Government of Canada include the Endeavour hydrothermal vents southwest of Vancouver Island and the Bowie seamount, located west of the Queen Charlotte Islands.

Hydrothermal venting systems such as those found at the Endeavour MPA host one of the highest levels of microbial diversity and animal abundance on earth. In fact, Endeavour is home to 12 species that do not exist anywhere else in the world.

The Bowie seamount marine protected area, a complex of three offshore submarine volcanoes located about 180 kilometres off the shores of Haida Gwaii, is also an area of unprecedented biological diversity and uniqueness.

The seamount at Bowie rise from a depth of 3,000 metres to within 24 metres of the surface, making it the shallowest seamount in Canada. To the Haida Nation, the indigenous people who played a key role in establishing the protected area, this area is called Sgaan Kinghlas, which means in their language, “supernatural being looking outward”.

Preserving important marine resources that sustain communities and regional economies is a priority for this government. That is why, on June 7 of this year, my former colleague Jim Prentice tabled an amendment to the Canada National Marine Conservation Areas Act to formally establish the Gwaii Haanas national marine conservation area reserve and Haida heritage site.

● (1700)

This area has lovingly been referred to as the Galapagos of the north and its protection was indeed a great moment in our history. In total, the combined existing park reserve and new national marine conservation area in Gwaii Haanas protects over 5,000 square kilometres of spectacular wilderness from alpine mountain tops to the deep sea beyond the continental shelf, a first for Canada, North America and even for the world.

This great milestone was as a result of a historic and outstanding collaborative partnership between the Government of Canada and the Haida Nation. Parks Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the Haida Nation will continue to share in the planning, operations and management of the area to ensure the future health of our oceans as well as sustainable fishing opportunities.

It is worth commenting briefly on the amount of time and energy devoted to an undertaking as historic as the Gwaii Haanas National Marine Conservation Area, both by the dedicated public servants and the committed leadership of the Haida Nation and specifically to the devotion of my former colleague, Jim Prentice.

As minister of the environment, Mr. Prentice made this project a priority and provided the leadership needed to bring it to fruition.

Guujaaw, the president of the Haida Nation, called the event “a true changing of the tides” and indeed it was.

In fact, if members have the opportunity to go to Haida Gwaii and meet with Guujaaw, they will find him to be a very interesting and impressive leader. He played a very key role in the development of this marine protected area and this national marine conservation area as well.

Additionally, other groups, such as the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society and the World Wildlife Federation of Canada, were involved in this and they applauded the move, which they said was reached after two decades of discussion.

Government Orders

In fact, Darcy Dobell, vice-president of the Pacific conservation with World Wildlife Federation Canada said of the announcement, "We're definitely excited about the designation. It's definitely a landmark for oceans management", and we believe it is.

It was an international landmark in oceans management and it was achieved under our Conservative government. As the environmental organizations said at the time, for decades there were discussions about protecting this area of our coast. However, it took the leadership of this government, of the Prime Minister and of our former colleague, Jim Prentice, to take those discussions and make them a reality. In so doing, they positioned Canada as true global leader in oceans management.

However, we are not stopping here.

On Oceans Day 2010, my colleague the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans announced a new area of interest for potential designation as a marine protected area under the Oceans Act, the Hecate Strait sponge reefs.

Sponge reefs of this size, over 1,000 square kilometres, have not been found elsewhere in the world. Made out of silica or glass, as most of us would call it, these reefs are extremely fragile and warrant the long-term protection a marine protected area designation would provide.

We are continuing to ensure protection of other ecologically important areas of the ocean by moving forward in implementing our health of the oceans initiative.

The Government of Canada is also working with provincial and territorial colleagues to establish a national network of marine protected areas, as I mentioned already. This is done through the developing of a national framework for Canada's network of marine protected areas, a process through which we can work together to plan and then implement these MPAs.

A network of marine protected areas strategically built and located has real and tangible benefits for our country. These MPAs can help restore and maintain a healthy marine environment and build in resilience or insurance against current or future stressors such as marine traffic, climate change, even habitat destruction and pollution.

Essentially what these marine protected areas provide are healthy oceans and good health helps us fight off malady.

Marine protected areas can improve the economy of coastal communities. They do so by providing conservation and tourism-related employment opportunities. Also, since the creation of marine protected areas can result in the size and abundance of fish, they can create spill over benefits to adjacent fishing grounds. This can translate into fisheries benefits over time, including higher catches, increased catch rates and reductions in fishing effort.

• (1705)

Marine protected areas can also contribute to the economic and socio-cultural well-being of coastal communities, including supporting subsistence and traditional harvesting of marine resources carried out by aboriginal peoples.

They can also contribute to climate change mitigation by protecting certain marine habitats that are especially good at absorbing carbon dioxide. Coastal habitats such as salt marshes, sea grasses and mangroves account for less than half of 1% of the world's seabed, but studies have shown that they can store up to 71% of the total amount of carbon found in ocean sediments.

Marine protected areas can also facilitate adaptation to climate change impacts through the protection of ecologically significant habitats as well as through protection of multiple sites of similar habitat types.

It is important to note that in addition to our emerging network of marine protected areas in British Columbia, there are also hundreds of other conservation measures in our toolbox, including fishery closures, marine mammal management areas, protected critical habitat for species at risk, first nations community conserved areas and coastal lands owned or managed by non-government organizations that contribute to the health of oceans. We cannot do it alone. We are in many partnerships that contribute to the health of our oceans.

The Government of Canada's efforts to protect our amazing and abundant oceans do not stop at the establishment of marine protected areas. Through the Pacific north coast integrated ocean management area planning initiative, which we call PNCIMA, covering British Columbia's central and north coast, we are engaging regulators, first nations, the marine shipping industry and a diversity of other interests to help understand and mitigate any potential environmental risks associated with shipping in British Columbia.

PNCIMA is one of five large ocean management areas in Canada. It is a collaborative partnership among the Government of Canada, coastal first nations and the province of B.C. The goal is to ensure a healthy, safe and prosperous ocean. Through this planning process, all interested parties will be engaged in an effort to develop an integrated oceans management plan by 2012. The entire area identified for the proposed ban is within PNCIMA.

Through the PNCIMA planning process, a balance will be struck between the conservation and protection of Canada's oceans and the sustainable development of its resources. This will generate economic prosperity for all Canadians, while ensuring a healthy and sustainable ocean.

We are committed to having an open and transparent process to discuss a range of issues within the PNCIMA process. It is at this forum where all views can be voiced and input provided to federal and provincial regulators.

This planning process will increase our ability to forecast and address future developments and needs, improve certainty and stability for industry, reduce conflict between user groups and improve the integration of multiple uses and coordination of new and existing processes.

Private Members' Business

The Government of Canada recognizes that healthy and resilient ecosystems are of fundamental importance if our oceans are to be capable of providing diverse economic opportunities and the generation of wealth for Canadians and coastal communities in particular.

Additionally, our government continues to provide our scientists with the resources they need to better manage our oceans. Under Canada's economic action plan, our government invested over \$30 million to upgrade DFO laboratories across the country. This included \$5.3 million to upgrades at the Pacific Biological Station in Nanaimo and \$2.9 million in improvements to the Institute for Oceans Sciences in Vancouver.

We are also partnering with others to better understand our oceans, for example, the venus and neptune programs through Ocean Networks Canada. These world-class projects, that established cabled ocean observatories, combine the expertise of government scientists with leading academics and non-governmental organizations and provide real time data on the health of our oceans. They are very interesting projects.

Therefore, I hope members would agree that our government is demonstrating through actions, not just words, that we are committed to the health of our oceans. In fact, with historic success like the Gwaii Haanas national marine conservation area reserve and Haida heritage site, we are leading the way around the world.

• (1710)

It is clear that with the multitude of mitigation, regulatory and protection measures, voluntary and otherwise, which are already in place and efforts under way, we do not need a legislated ban on oil tanker traffic in this region.

I know some of my opposition colleagues may say that an oil spill does not recognize the boundaries of a marine protected area. Marine protected areas are special places that have been designed to improve the resiliency of our oceans. They work in combination with a suite of other management measures and planning processes to provide an overall approach to managing our marine environment.

There is no one magic bullet, but we are working across government, with partners and Canadians, to ensure the protection of our marine resources in British Columbia and throughout this great land for today and the future.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): It being 5:15 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings. Pursuant to an order made earlier today, the question is deemed put and a recorded division deemed requested. The recorded division stands deferred until Tuesday, December 7, 2010, at the ordinary hour of daily adjournment.

[*English*]

Mr. David Sweet: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. If you were to seek it, I believe you would find unanimous consent to see the clock at 5:30 p.m.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): The House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1715)

[*Translation*]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill S-215, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (suicide bombings), as reported (without amendment) from the committee.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): There being no amendment motions at report stage, the House will now proceed without debate to the putting of the question on the motion to concur in the bill at report stage.

Mrs. Kelly Block (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, CPC) moved that the bill be concurred in at report stage.

(Motion agreed to)

[*English*]

Mrs. Kelly Block moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

She said: Madam Speaker, I wish to speak briefly in support to Bill S-215 for what I hope will be the last time.

The bill has a long history. Bill S-215 was preceded by four earlier versions, commencing as Bill S-43, which was introduced in 2005 by Senator Grafstein.

Today, after Senator Grafstein's retirement, Bill S-215 is sponsored in the other place by Senator Frum, and I have the privilege of sponsoring it in the House.

Bill S-215 is a short bill, but it has a very important purpose, and that is to denounce the barbaric practice of suicide bombing as a form of terrorism, an act which is contemptuous of the most fundamental values that Canadians hold dear, life, human dignity, liberty and security. The bill proposes to add a for greater certainty clause to the definition of terrorist activity.

By enacting this clause, Parliament would achieve three results. It would specifically denounce suicide bombing as a particularly heinous form of terrorist activity. It would help to educate Canadians that suicide bombings that are designed to kill or cause harm in the context of terrorist activity are acts of terrorism to be abhorred, not praised. Perhaps most important, Canada would show leadership to the world, since, to my knowledge, no other country has specifically referred to suicide bombing in their legal definitions of terrorism.

The bill has been carefully considered by both houses of Parliament and appropriate amendments have been made accordingly. It is time to pass the bill and I would strongly urge all members of the House to support its passage.

Private Members' Business

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member is absolutely correct. In my time in politics, I have never seen a bill that has been supported unanimously by all parties in an assembly but has taken five years to get to this stage. In June, we were dealing with the issue of pardons for Karla Homolka and we managed to unanimously pass measures within a day and a half in this House that dealt with the issue.

One of the important parts of this bill is that we are attempting to actually punish the organizers, teachers and sponsors of suicide bombing operations because, in my view, they are the real cowards. They will promote it, encourage families to get involved in it and finance it, and they will build the explosives but are not willing to put on the vest and carry out the act themselves.

Could the member explain briefly how this bill would serve to get at the organizers, teachers and sponsors?

• (1720)

Mrs. Kelly Block: Madam Speaker, the member is absolutely correct. This bill would enable prosecutors to prosecute those who seek to educate, train and encourage individuals to commit these heinous acts.

Mr. Jim Maloway: Madam Speaker, I think the member would probably agree with me that suicide bombing is already covered under the Criminal Code. In fact, by passing this bill we will not only be establishing ourselves as a leader, the first nation in the world to specifically deal with this as a Criminal Code issue, but this should give leadership, at least on the part of Canada, to other jurisdictions in the world to perhaps look at doing the same sort of measure.

While we have not had a history of suicide bombing in this country yet, it is possibly only a matter of time before we do. We could have looked at England 20 or 30 years ago. People would have been shocked if they had realized what the future of that sort of activity was to become in England. People would not have believed it in 1970, right? We saw all the different activity we had there.

Would the member please expand on whether she believes it is a possibility that those activities could come to Canada?

Mrs. Kelly Block: Madam Speaker, absolutely. I think 9/11 demonstrated to North America and to all the world that we could be very vulnerable in terms of these kinds of violent attacks. I do believe that by passing this bill we would be showing leadership to the world and that other jurisdictions would then follow our lead and be willing to pass similar legislation.

Mr. Brian Murphy (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise today with great pleasure to speak to Bill S-215.

The bill owes its origin to Senator Grafstein, who has since left the Senate and who has contributed so much to Canada in terms of its reputation abroad, internationally, through his great work on various United States-Canada committees and his great leadership in the Senate on issues of international human rights. What better way for us to honour his work than to talk about Bill S-215 today. Although he has left the Senate, his rather gravelly, loud and irresistibly strong voice can be heard in this chamber by echo today because this was his baby.

It is important for us to start out with a framework. These terrorism sections that were instituted in the Criminal Code, or passed into law in part II.1 Terrorism, came into effect in January 17, 2002. We were, as Canadians, reacting to the horror of 9/11. We were looking at the loopholes and in fact at the complete vacancy of legislation in this area and, as parliamentarians, we all came together and enacted section 83.01 and so on. It bears saying that the sections are quite complete. There are some three pages in the Criminal Code that define what a Canadian is, what an entity is, what a listed entity or scheduled terrorist entity is and what a terrorist activity is.

It is interesting that in that list of items that constitute terrorist activity is not the term "suicide bombing". So that is what this bill attempts to do. It would not create a new offence. It is not saying that there was nothing in the field before. It is saying that we had better identify suicide bombing by the specificity that we know in common parlance where it to be.

Why is the bill important then? A study completed in 2005, three years after this terrorism part of the code was enacted, conducted by Scott Atran, in the United States, declared that:

Suicide attack is the most virulent and horrifying form of terrorism in the world today. The mere rumour of an impending suicide attack can throw thousands of people into panic.

It is a growing phenomenon. In the 1980s, there might have been five suicide attacks per year. In the 1990s, there were on average 16 attacks per year. Then, in the five year period between 2000 and 2005, there were an average of 180 attacks each year. It is a growing problem.

There will be some disagreement, perhaps, maybe even in the courts, as to whether the current definition of "terrorist activity" catches "suicide bombing" any way and whether this is superfluous and, in terms of vagueness, not legal.

However, I think our language is something like a tree that grows with time. I think even though the term "suicide bombing" is not defined in the Criminal Code, it certainly is a common word or phrase that we all know it when we see it. It is such a recent growing phenomenon that we need to lay tracks in the Criminal Code to recognize it.

In addition to paying homage to Senator Grafstein, I also want to pay homage to another great Canadian, Justice Reuben Bromstein, who is now head of an organization called Canadians Against Suicide Bombing. Judge Bromstein said that this bill, if passed into law, would:

...help build and strengthen the consensus in Canadian society on this issue; it will serve as a clear deterrent for those among us who might not be committed to this consensus; and it offers an opportunity for Canada to take the lead and send a message to further international commitment [to outlaw suicide bombing].

Canada would be the first country to include a specific reference to suicide bombing in its criminal law. That would make us a leader in an era when Canada is finding its way in international relations, to say the least.

Justice Bromstein went on to state:

...that the term "suicide bombing" is in common parlance. ...[it] triggers an instantaneous response in your head. You do not have to describe it. People know what it means.

Private Members' Business

This should allay the concerns of all courts of this country that when they see a suicide bombing, they know it is included as a terrorist offence under section 83.01 of the Criminal Code which says that terrorism shall be attacked by the Canadian justice system.

• (1725)

I want to render homage, as well, to the government of the day and the justice ministers of the day who recognized that this was a clear and immediate need within the Criminal Code and acted with lightning speed compared to how we get criminal legislation and Criminal Code amendments done in this era of minority Parliaments.

I think we would all agree that this is a very important bill. We all want to listen to the importance of it, too, because it makes Canada a leader in defining what a suicide bomb is.

In homage, again, to justice ministers, to Senator Grafstein and Judge Bromstein who went on to say that passing this legislation would send a signal about our values domestically, that we are a mixed society and that we cannot justify martyrdom to legitimize it.

[Translation]

The concern has been raised that including this expression in the Criminal Code will mean that acts not usually considered to be terrorist acts will fall into that category in future. For example, someone who commits suicide by detonating a bomb in a vacant field will be labelled a terrorist.

When the bill was drafted, care was taken to avoid expanding the definition of what constitutes a terrorist attack; the current definition was fine-tuned. Thus, someone who commits suicide by detonating a bomb on vacant land will not be covered by the definition of suicide bombing.

• (1730)

[English]

The reaction from stakeholders has been positive. The RCMP approves of the amendment to the Criminal Code and feels that it would be very much a useful tool for it. It is not just senators, justice ministers, parliamentarians and the RCMP who agree with the bill. We also have words of encouragement from the legal profession and the legal teaching profession.

The dean of Osgoode Hall Law School, Patrick Monahan, who was very supportive of the legislation, had this to say in three points. First he said that Parliament should adopt the bill because it would signal Canada's unequivocal condemnation of suicide bombing as the most virulent and horrifying form of terrorism in the world today.

His second point was that the phenomenon of suicide bombing has risen dramatically, as I have said, since 2001. Thousands have been killed and tens of thousands have been wounded in these attacks. Suicide terror, which a decade ago was relatively rare, has become a global reality.

His third point was that there is ongoing debate over the motivations and the psychology of suicide bombers. Evidence suggests that suicide bombers regard martyrdom for the sake of global jihad as life's noblest cause. Today's suicide bombers are increasingly as willing and eager to die as they are to kill.

We, in a civilized society, need to really give that some clinical care and observation. A person who is willing to kill himself, equal to or more than others, to further his or her aim is indeed a very dangerous individual who can change our society. That is why we must support this bill and this amendment to the Criminal Code which grows on the good work done by previous parliamentarians in addressing terrorism.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean Dorion (Longueuil—Pierre-Boucher, BQ): Madam Speaker, Bill S-215, which has been introduced in the House under various titles since 2005, should have been passed back in 2005.

Incidentally, it is a shame that the Senate, where the bill languished for some time, did not heed the opinion expressed by the Barreau du Québec, which wrote to the Senate to point out that the French version of the bill referred to *attentat suicide*, suicide attack, whereas the English version referred to suicide bombing. "Attack" is a much broader term than "bombing". Other sorts of attacks could also be targeted by this kind of bill.

That being said, I believe that everyone in the House should vote in favour of this bill. I know that members of my party, the Bloc Québécois, will do so.

We never lose sight of the fact that, when the Conservative government introduces amendments to the Criminal Code, its main goal is not necessarily to reduce crime rates, but to gain an electoral advantage by pretending that the Conservatives are the only ones fighting crime. We know their tactics, but that should not prevent us from supporting valid measures.

Getting back to Bill S-215, I think it can be summarized as follows: it would include suicide bombings or suicide attacks in the definition of "terrorist activity" and crack down on those who organize such attacks. We must not forget that those who organize such terrorist activities, the instigators, come out unscathed in most cases and use other people, some of whom are mentally unstable and some of whom are women or children. The instigators come out relatively unscathed because they have not, so far, been considered the perpetrators of these acts.

Our support for the measure before us rests on the fact that the Bloc Québécois cares about keeping all Quebecers safe and protecting them from terrorist activities and suicide attacks in particular.

Suicide attacks carried out against civilian populations are barbaric and contrary to the values of the Quebec society we represent in the House and to the respect for life that all human beings should feel.

Terrorist attacks have been carried out again recently in various places around the globe and we need to bring in legislation before any such attacks happen on Canadian soil. Suicide attacks have become a more important weapon for terrorist organizations. We have seen many such examples in Afghanistan and Pakistan recently. How could we forget the recent suicide car-bomb attack on the Indian embassy in Afghanistan that killed 17 people and injured 63?

There have also been terrible attacks in Iraq that have killed hundreds and wounded hundreds more. Now there are reports that the Taliban is recruiting children to commit these attacks, thus turning them into kamikazes.

• (1735)

Even developed western nations are not safe from these attacks. Many will recall the terrible situation in France in 1986 when that country was forced to impose visa procedures for visitors from Canada, Brazil and a number of other countries. Not to mention the September 11, 2001, attacks in the United States, the terrible train attacks in Spain and the subway attacks in London, England. No country is safe.

Accordingly, it is extremely important that we pass this bill. It should have been passed five years ago. The members of my party will therefore vote in favour of this bill.

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): I just want to remind hon. members that there are no questions in this private member's debate, unless the hon. member for Mount Royal was rising on a point of order.

Hon. Irwin Cotler: Madam Speaker, I wanted to enter a certain response in terms of what was being said.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): I am afraid there is no time allocated for responses.

Hon. Irwin Cotler: Madam Speaker, it is just a point of clarification and I will tell you what it is, because my colleague from the Bloc just said that this should have been enacted in 2005. I just want to say, and it will take me one sentence, I felt at the time that we did not need—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): I am sorry—

Hon. Irwin Cotler: I just want to say that I support the legislation as it now stands.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): I appreciate that. I believe that is part of debate and there is no opportunity for debate at this time.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Windsor—Tecumseh.

• (1740)

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): Madam Speaker, I was actually prepared to give a moment of my time to my colleague from the Liberal Party given the amount of work he has done on this issue over the years, but he managed to usurp that time in any event. I really should not be making a joke as this is a very serious piece of legislation.

As I said earlier when I first saw this private member's bill, because we have seen it on a number of different occasions, I had some serious reservations from the perspective of whether this in fact would accomplish anything. In that sense, it seemed to me that the existing provisions within the Criminal Code, including the provisions under the Anti-terrorism Act which are part of the code now, would cover the eventuality of someone conducting himself or herself in such a way that it would amount to a suicide bombing. I suppose that was the lawyer in me coming out.

Private Members' Business

The real reason for passing this bill, and I believe my colleagues in the NDP are overwhelmingly, if not unanimously, in support of it at this point, should not be approached so much on a legalistic basis inasmuch as it is the power of the House to express its denunciation of the conduct that is entailed when someone contemplates or commits an act of suicide bombing.

We have heard from other speakers this evening and on other occasions of the prevalence of this tool. As far as I am aware, it has never been used in Canada but has been used quite widely in a number of countries around the world. Because of my contact with Sri Lanka, I think immediately of the use of it there repeatedly. In fact, there is a strong argument that it may have been the first time it was used certainly on a consistent basis by a rebel force in that country and used repeatedly to great sacrifice to that society with very many deaths and real tragedies. Of course we have seen its use in the Middle East on a number of different occasions. We have also seen it in parts of Asia. We have seen it used repeatedly now in Europe.

I am speaking now as a parent. Many suicide bombers are young people convinced oftentimes by other family members or organizations they become involved with that are led by people who are much older, much more mature, and I use that term advisedly, but certainly in age they are older than the suicide bombers. Because they are convinced of the validity of the ideology, sometimes religious based, they are convinced that they have an obligation to perform suicide attacks.

I say as a parent, it really is beyond my comprehension how adults, no matter how fanatical they are about the issue and the goal they are pursuing, can bring themselves to convince a young person, a teenager in some cases but oftentimes people in their early twenties, to take this conduct to the extreme of committing suicide and killing oftentimes many other people. It seems to me no matter what organization we belong to or goals we are pursuing, that we could never justify taking that route. Counselling a young person to perform that type of act is as reprehensible as one can imagine.

• (1745)

I speak both personally and on behalf of our caucus in saying that we support this legislation. This Parliament has a responsibility to express our outrage, and as I said earlier, our denunciation, of this conduct. This is our opportunity to perform that responsibility.

In terms of speaking to the rest of the country, we have to be clear that this provision by itself would not prevent suicide bombings. We have to be very clear on that. In my mind this piece of legislation has no deterrent value.

We can use this piece of legislation as a way for all of us to speak out against violence in general and this type of violence in particular. We can use it as a tool, an educational tool, a political tool, to say not only to the residents of Canada but to the rest of the world that this type of conduct is totally unacceptable, that we absolutely reject this type of conduct. This is a crime that calls for a determination of first degree murder. This conduct is as reprehensible as any conduct one could perform in our criminal justice system.

Private Members' Business

I have to say again, and I am saying this mostly to the rest of the world, that some people may have contemplated using this technique in Canada but it has never happened. I am speaking to the rest of the world, and those parts of the world in particular where this type of conduct is prevalent, that Canadians generally live in a peaceful way.

People in Canada come from all over the world. They have all sorts of faith backgrounds, ethnocultural backgrounds, ideological and philosophical backgrounds. In Canada, with very few exceptions, we have been able to live together in harmony and peace and with minimal violence. By passing this bill we would be saying to the rest of the world that it is possible to bring that kind of mix together, that broad multiculturalism that is Canada now. We would be saying to the rest of the world that it is possible to live in peace and harmony. We would be a model for the rest of the world. One way to do that is to pass this bill.

I am quite supportive of this legislation. I hope that the rest of Parliament will unanimously support it, get it through to royal assent, and get it on the books. We could then speak to the international community with one solid voice. We could unanimously say that this is where the House of Commons and Canada is coming from, that this is how we addressed this problem. We would be telling the rest of the world that we are the model to follow.

Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to enter for the record that when I was the minister of justice and attorney general of Canada in 2005, I was approached both by the then Senator Jeremiah Grafstein and by Justice Bromstein to enact what is now Bill S-215 as law. My response then, and I acknowledge it now, to both of them was, "Why should we be enacting a law to criminalize a terrorist act that is already criminal under our anti-terrorist law?"

Indeed, it appeared to me at the time that to seek to enact such a law would not only be duplicative of what already existed in the Criminal Code, but might send the wrong signal, as if this horrendous terrorist activity of suicide bombing was somehow not criminal under the law and that it was not as horrendous as I took it to be and regarded it then as already being criminal under the law.

Today, for the record, I support this legislation. I support it for the reasons given by my colleagues from all the parties, for the representations that were then made by Senator Grafstein and by Justice Bromstein, who attuned me as to why it should be enacted.

At this point, five years later, there are growing incidents of this horrific activity of suicide terrorism and a universalization of this phenomenon. The fact is, we are, as my colleague, Professor Dr. Walid Phares, put it with respect to anti-terrorism law and policy, "In a war of ideas with the terrorists".

Therefore, enacting such legislation is not only an important substantive act at this point, but an important symbolic act. It would send a message and state clearly and unequivocally that we regarded this as a barbarous act and crime against humanity. We in the House need to stand up, condemn it, enact it as law and take leadership internationally with respect to combatting this horrific form of terrorism. I regarded it as being criminal then, but this needs to be reaffirmed, reasserted and enacted as law now to give it specificity that it requires, as my colleagues have put it.

● (1750)

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to join with the previous speakers in support of the legislation and also take the opportunity to thank former senator Grafstein for his great work, not only on this issue but on a lot of other issues, when he was in the Senate. I had the privilege of meeting him when I was elected in 2008. I certainly do wish him well in his retirement. My only regret is we could not have passed the bill while he was still here.

The fact is, as the previous speaker pointed out, this type of activity is already covered in the Criminal Code, but he is absolutely correct that once we make the move, once we take the measure of passing the bill, getting it through the House and the Senate, we will be the first country in the world to have taken this action. It is very important that we do this. While suicide bombings have been going on for many years, and I will get to that in a few minutes, they are actually increasing in numbers.

For example, the number of attacks using suicide tactics has grown from an average of fewer than five per year during the 1980s to 180 per year between 2000 and 2005 and from 81 suicide attacks in 2001 to 460 in 2005. A number of years ago, Israel seemed to be one of the favourite targets of suicide bombers, but there are many other areas of the world where these types of attacks occur. We have attacks in Kenya, Lebanon, Pakistan and Bangladesh. There has been a lot of recent activity in the former Soviet Union.

We have to come to grips with this. We cannot just ignore the problem and think that somehow it will resolve itself and go away. We can say, at this point, that there have been no attacks in Canada, but we know this will not hold forever. We can look at England in 1970. When I was hitchhiking around Europe, there was no indication of any suicide attacks or bombings until the conflict in Ireland caused all kinds of activities in England. There was the bombing of subway. I believe Lord Mountbatten was killed when his boat was blown up. This type of activity knows no political boundaries. It can move very quickly. It can happen anywhere.

On the availability of the materials, I am told that Semtex, which is a very cheap explosive and I believe manufactured in Czechoslovakia, is widely available around the world and very easy to obtain. All one has to do is have cheap explosives available and people out there selling it to these terrorist organizations, combined with the fact that we have round-the-clock media. Twenty or thirty years ago, we did not have CNN on site around the world. It does not take a lot of imagination to know that a small terrorist organization that wants to get noticed and wants to get its message out there has a willing press that it can exploit. It has cheap explosives available.

Some organizations have the financial wherewithal to help buy the materials, train the suicide bombers and take care of the families. A lot of people are involved in suicide bombing, and that is what is very good about this bill.

● (1755)

We are dealing with the promoters, the teachers, the inspirers of this type of activity. They are the real problem. They are the real cowards. They do not strap on the explosives and blow themselves up. They stay in the background. They are the people who recruit these poor kids, finance the families, brainwash them and convince them that they are going to become martyrs. Then they get them to blow themselves up on the basis that their families will be taken care of.

It is about time we started to look into the financing of terrorism. It has taken the experience of 9/11 to finally have the American government make a concerted effort to look at terrorism financing and to start cracking the Swiss and other banking systems that have been the holders of banking secrecy, where this illegal drug money has been laundered for many years and where terrorism money is being laundered, as well.

It has taken a long time for us to react positively to this situation. However, we are seeing some successes with the effort to crack the system of terrorist money flowing around the world. I think that will be a positive thing, too. However, in some respects it is a losing battle, because already we are seeing an expansion of this type of activity.

I did want to indicate that this is something that has not just begun recently. I went back in history to look at some of the previous instances of terrorism. We had Dutch soldiers fighting for control of Taiwan in 1661, who used gun powder to blow themselves and their opponents up rather than being taken prisoner.

However, most of the examples in history involved military people in military situations. We did not have the situations of innocent men, women and children in supermarkets and restaurants experiencing people who are civilians themselves, young people strapped with explosives, walking into a market or a restaurant and detonating a bomb, blowing themselves and everybody else up.

In my view, this is a totally different situation from all the military examples throughout history that I could cite. There were the Japanese kamikaze pilots who we all learned about in school. Once

Private Members' Business

again, that was a military situation. That was soldiers of one nation fighting a war. They were paid to do their job. At the end of the day, it is an extreme measure, but they flew those bombers into the ships in a last ditch effort to save their country.

Once again, it is far and away a totally different situation than recruiting innocent people, brainwashing them and sending them out with explosives to kill more innocent people. That is an absolutely terrible situation. I do not see it getting any better over time.

When we look at the situation involving airplanes, who would have thought that the 9/11 attacks would have happened? In retrospect or hindsight, it is easy to see how this terror was done and to wonder why it was not done earlier.

Now we have a whole country, a whole world terrorized. Flyers are terrorized. We have tied ourselves up in knots, spending billions on security. At the end of the day, these terrorists have actually won. They have won something. They have managed to spread fear, and that is what their intention is.

We have taken a step here today. I applaud what the member has done. Let us just get this bill through both Houses.

● (1800)

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): I declare the motion carried.

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

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Denise Savoie): It being 6:03 p.m., the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:03 p.m.)

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