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Monday, March 30, 2015

—

Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, March 30, 2015

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1105)

[*English*]

CANADA SHIPPING ACT

The House resumed from December 2, 2014 consideration of the motion that Bill C-628, An Act to amend the Canada Shipping Act, 2001 and the National Energy Board Act (oil transportation and pipeline certificate), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: The hon. member for New Westminster—Coquitlam has seven minutes left to conclude his remarks.

Mr. Fin Donnelly (New Westminster—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, ten thousand individuals and organizations, including the provincial government of British Columbia and several first nations, wrote to or appeared before the joint review panel assessing the northern gateway project. Their opposition to the project was nearly unanimous.

I would like to mention my work as an MP to protect coastal communities, encourage sustainability, and protect the marine inland ecosystems. Early in my term, I introduced a bill to ban oil tankers off B.C.'s north coast. I also introduced a bill to protect wild salmon by transitioning west coast fish farms to closed containment. I also helped form an all-party oceans caucus to inform parliamentarians about issues threatening the health of Canada's oceans and of the opportunities to become a global leader in areas like ocean research. I also introduced a bill to ban the importation of shark fins to Canada, which was based on a UN report on the state of the world's oceans. It concluded that our oceans are under threat, with major stress from climate change in the form of ocean acidification, and that large predators like sharks are in serious decline.

I mention these initiatives because they relate directly to the work of my good friend, the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley, and specifically to the intent of the bill to protect our way of life on the west coast, not just for current generations, but for future generations as well.

The member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley came to my riding late last year. He spoke to a large gathering of my constituents about the impact that the Enbridge northern gateway project would have on the north coast if it were to go ahead. He was captivating from the start. He was informative and his stories were engaging. He presented alternatives to what the Conservatives are proposing. He spoke of the bill we are debating today and what could be expected with a New Democratic government. The people really appreciated his presentation, his thoughtful analysis, and his well-researched proposal. They liked it.

Energy pipelines and the environment are very much a concern to the people of British Columbia. Not only is there massive opposition to the Enbridge northern gateway pipeline, but there is also opposition to Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain pipeline proposal. My colleague from Burnaby—Douglas and the mayor of Burnaby, Derek Corrigan, and his council, have worked hard to expose the shortcomings of the project and the flawed NEB process. We know that over 100 people were arrested on Burnaby Mountain, clearly demonstrating their opposition to the pipeline proposal. I attended a rally in September at the Colony Farm Regional Park, in my riding, where people were very concerned about Kinder Morgan's proposal to use Colony Farm as a staging area for assembling of the pipes for the section of the proposed new pipeline. People were very opposed to this use of a public park.

I have provided background information to Bill C-628. I spoke of my own work relating to protecting B.C.'s west coast way of life. I should add that even before I was an MP, I was concerned about these issues. In 1995, and again in 2000, I swam the 1,400 km length of the Fraser River, one of the world's greatest salmon rivers, to raise awareness about the threats facing this great river system and to our way of life in British Columbia. Over 1.4 million people live within the Fraser River basin. A huge amount of the economy is generated within the basin. The health of the river, like the ocean on B.C.'s north coast, is critical to the health of our way of life on the west coast of Canada.

Private Members' Business

I am saying that the intent of Bill C-628 is to protect a way of life and to promote a sustainable way of life. It is certainly what motivates me to do the work that I do as a parliamentarian. It is why I became an MP, and it is why I am happy to support Bill C-628. I would like to thank my colleague for bringing it forward.

Before I conclude, I would like to provide a quote from Art Sterritt, the executive director of Coastal First Nations, who said, “for too long the concerns of our people and the majority of British Columbians have been ignored. The bill addresses some of our major concerns with Enbridge’s Northern Gateway Pipeline”.

What the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley is doing with this bill is not only listening to his constituents, but proposing solutions that make sense for west coast communities and a west coast way of life.

In conclusion, the Conservatives have brazenly tried to force the northern gateway pipeline and supertanker projects on to British Columbians and first nations. The New Democrats will continue to stand with B.C. and first nations to fight for a fairer process for all Canadians. This bill is a common sense initiative to put respect for communities, first nations, and the environment back into Canada’s energy conversation, and to make sure that Canadians are getting the full benefit of our energy development.

Canada’s Parliament has been mulling over protection for British Columbia’s north against oil tanker traffic for over a generation. It is time for MPs, especially those from British Columbia, to rise to the occasion and extend permanent protection for B.C.’s north coast.

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have been following this debate very closely, just as our government has been listening very carefully to what British Columbians, and indeed all Canadians, have been saying about economic development and environmental responsibility in this country.

I appreciate the opportunity to respond to the bill before us and to reiterate some of the points made so persuasively by some of my colleagues. I will also add that I find it ironic that this member is proposing such a bill after he and his party voted against our increased measures for pipeline safety. New Democrats voted against doubling the number of audits and increasing the number of inspections on pipelines. They voted against fining companies that break environmental regulations.

Our government is listening to Canadians, and the message we are hearing is very clear: Canadians want balance. They understand the importance of resource development, but not at any price. They understand that economic development and environmental protection go hand in hand, and so does our government.

Environmental protection is and always will be a priority for us. We have been clear that projects will only proceed if they are safe for Canadians and safe for the environment. That is precisely what our plan is, and that is what responsible resource development is all about. Grounded in sound science and world-class standards, that plan ensures that we can develop the energy of the structure we need in a way that protects the environment we all share.

As part of this effort, our government is strengthening marine, pipeline, and rail safety, resulting in stronger prevention, enhanced

preparedness and response, as well as improved liability and compensation in the highly unlikely event of an incident.

The members opposite may not be aware, but oil has been safely transported along Canada’s west coast since the 1930s, thanks to responsible players in the industry and effective preventive measures. In addition, 99.999% of oil transported on federally regulated pipelines between 2008 and 2013 was moved safely.

This outstanding track record should reassure Canadians, and especially British Columbians, that our energy resources can safely be exported overseas to create jobs and economic growth here at home. That said, even one incident is one too many. Our goal must always be zero major spills or accidents, and to achieve this our government has introduced stringent new safety standards for tankers, together with new navigational supports to better protect our coastal waters.

Put simply, Canada’s approach to marine regulations seeks to balance the safety of shipping and the protection of the marine environment with the need to encourage maritime commerce. In fact, we have nine acts of Parliament governing marine safety. These laws complement international regulations established by the International Maritime Organization, and that is before we factor in the tough new regulatory oversight and enforcement capabilities provided under Bill C-3, Safeguarding Canada’s Seas and Skies Act.

There is compulsory pilotage in British Columbia’s coastal waters. This means that a vessel must have an on-board pilot who is a navigator, certified to a specialized knowledge of local waters. In addition, Transport Canada has more than 300 inspectors who work every day to verify that ships meet Canada’s regulations and the international standards that Canada has adopted.

Within the international maritime community, Canada is highly respected as a country that provides a clear and consistent set of rules that promote safety and protect the environment. I would like to quote the British Columbia environment minister who spoke about our government’s plan and said the following:

I have a high degree of confidence that [the government is] serious about achieving the goals that we have in front of us and serious about the safety of our coast and the transportation of tankers up and down our coastline.

Canadians want a balanced approach to economic development. They support growth and want good jobs and long-term prosperity for themselves, their families, and their country. What Canadians might be surprised to learn is how important natural resource development is to our quality of life. Over the last five years, the oil and gas sector has contributed an average of \$25.1 billion in taxes, royalties, and fees to government. This money helps to support public pensions, provide health care, and build schools, hospitals, housing, and highways.

Private Members' Business

If we want to maintain our high standard of living and ensure governments have the funds to pay for a wide array of social programs, we need to seize the potential of new markets for our energy. That is something our government understands. It is something business understands, and it is something Canadians understand from coast to coast to coast.

● (1110)

Our focus then is on preventing incidents from happening, cleaning them up quickly in the unlikely event of their occurring, and protecting taxpayers from any cleanup or remediation costs. Under this government, it is polluters who will pay, not taxpayers.

We recently introduced the pipeline safety act, which would enshrine in law the principle of polluter pays. To ensure that pipeline companies can respond in the unlikely event of a major incident, they would be required to maintain the highest minimum financial resources in the world. For companies operating major oil pipelines, that amounts to \$1 billion, as well as holding sufficient cash on hand to respond quickly to incidents.

The pipeline safety act would also give the National Energy Board even greater authority so that it could strengthen incident prevention, preparedness, and response as well as liability and compensation.

With all of these efforts, we are seeking to foster greater public confidence in our country's ability to develop its resources and to do so responsibly. We know that building public confidence in major resource projects requires a whole-of-government approach. Our approach to promoting responsible resource development is a balanced approach, and it is the right way to go.

Bill C-628 is not a balanced approach. A ban on oil tankers would have a lasting negative impact on Canada. The NDP's anti-trade, anti-development agenda is clear. This bill would limit further diversifying our energy exports to countries other than the United States, which would severely impact our economy, jobs, and everything. Moreover, such a ban would be looked upon negatively by other countries, which view these waters as open for navigation, and banning a legitimate class of vessel would be contrary to the system that has served Canadians so well for decades.

Canadians want a balanced approach, and that is the path that this government is going to follow.

● (1115)

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise and participate in this debate on Bill C-628 and to bring a perspective from the east coast, one of Canada's other two coasts, as the member for Halifax West in Nova Scotia.

The bill calls for a ban on oil tanker traffic from the inland waters of Canada's Pacific north coast, which is a magnificent area that includes the Great Bear Rainforest, many species of wildlife, and runs of salmon. It is a magnificent area that is important to preserve and protect.

Coming from Halifax West as I do, I appreciate the strong desire that people have in British Columbia to protect coasts and coastal communities. I understand the concerns that many have with respect to the potential of supertankers, which are the very large crude carriers, or what are now called "VLCCs". They carry far more oil

than the *Exxon Valdez* carried when it went aground and leaked so much oil back in 1989. I think it is about eight times as much. People have very great concerns about tankers that huge travelling through such sensitive areas.

As I have said, I come from a coastal community, and we see the snow starting to melt in Nova Scotia. We have had an awful lot of snow this year. As my colleague says, I can dare to dream, but I am looking forward to the summer and kayaking along the coast of Newfoundland if I can get a little time away from the long campaign that we expect to start once the House rises.

I guess there is no surprise when we look at the situation and the position of the current government. First of all, it is difficult to understand why the Conservatives would not support the bill before us, but on the other hand, it should not be a surprise to anyone who has seen how the Conservative government has systematically dismantled so many critical environmental protections during what can only be described as a decade of devastation.

The proposed legislation closely resembles previous bills that have been brought forward to the House a number of times, the contents of which will be familiar to members. Of course, amendments to the Canada Shipping Act are the main focus of the bill before us. While much of this was in earlier legislation, there is one notable difference in Bill C-628, which is the addition of provisions to amend the National Energy Board Act to require the NEB to take into account certain factors before making a recommendation to the minister with regard to the issuance of a pipeline certificate. For example, one element of the bill asks the NEB to ensure that consultations on pipeline projects occur and to report on those consultations in its consideration of a project.

These consultations are more important than ever these days. I think we see today that even when the National Energy Board approves a project, it does not necessarily mean it is going ahead, because there is that question of social licence. One has to have a considerable amount of community support before moving forward with a natural resource project of any size. I think that is why it is so important that we develop greater confidence in the public in terms of the regulatory processes we have in this country as they relate to the approval of those projects and to environmental assessment.

Therefore, when the government has gutted the programs and the assessments in the way it has, it is a great concern. I look forward to discussing this aspect of Bill C-628. Hopefully when it goes to committee, as I hope it will, this aspect will get great discussion there as well.

Private Members' Business

However, the fact is that the government has undermined public trust around pipeline projects. In fact, I hope we hear more today from Conservative British Columbians, who will really share their views on this topic. I wonder if they will reflect on the fact that eight out of ten British Columbians are in favour of the kind of measures that are being proposed here and are opposed to ships carrying crude oil travelling through the waters we are talking about. That will be interesting.

● (1120)

Maybe they will explain why the government felt the need to change the National Energy Board process to further limit consultation about pipelines or to shorten the National Energy Board regulatory reviews to a maximum time limit of 15 months. The question is how this makes sense—that is, to limit the consultation of Canadians—when they are more engaged than ever before on these issues. Is it not a time to give them more opportunity to have a say?

We are not talking about foreign radicals, as was said by the Minister of Finance, who was or the Minister of Natural Resources at the time. That it is what members opposite want people to believe. In fact, National Energy Board officials testified recently before the natural resources committee, of which I am member, and said that the Canadian energy industry is in the midst of a “perfect storm”.

The NEB noted, in fact, that in March 2010, when the board released its Keystone XL decision, it was to relatively little fanfare, and there were only 29 intervenors in the process. We can contrast that with the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project, which has 400 intervenors and more than 1,300 commentators. Then there is the energy east application and the hearings related to that, where there are close to 2,300 application participants. We can see a great deal of public engagement these days, yet the government wants to cut that short.

When more and more Canadians are engaging in the debate about pipelines and pipeline safety, the Conservatives think they should have fewer and fewer opportunities to express their opinions. They are out of sync with Canadians on this, and certainly with British Columbians, as we can see from all the surveys that tell us about concerns British Columbians have on these topics. I think they are out of line.

In my province right now, the roads are in rough shape after the winter we have had. There are lots of potholes, and I am sure that more than one person over the course of this spring is going to have to pay for a wheel alignment to keep his or her vehicle going straight. Canadians are going to want a realignment of the Government of Canada as well, so that it is aligned with their priorities, views, and values, which the government clearly is not.

It makes no sense to cut this process short. That is a big part of the reason that there is so much mistrust of the government these days, and why there is so much mistrust of the processes that I have been talking about. Of course, the Conservatives have fed that mistrust by gutting elements of the Fisheries Act and the Navigable Waters Protection Act in their several omnibus bills, particularly Bill C-38.

As my party's critic for natural resources, I am keenly aware of how important, and at times how highly controversial, the issue of

pipelines has become for Canadians. Given the sustained interest on the subject of Bill C-628, the fact that we have had this issue come to us in various forms over the years, including in bills introduced by my colleague from Vancouver Quadra, and coupled with the Conservative government's rollbacks on environment protection in recent years, it is clear that additional study of the concepts raised in Bill C-628 is very much needed and warranted.

Many of my B.C. colleagues, including the sponsor of this legislation, have already spoken about how the bill would impact the west coast and how important it is to residents of northwestern British Columbia. Coming from Atlantic Canada, representing Halifax West, I can assure my friends on all sides that the folks on the east coast share the pride in maritime traditions and have a connection with the ocean similar to that of people in British Columbia.

Nova Scotia, for example, has 20 companies involved in our ocean research in areas like fisheries, aquaculture, offshore oil and gas, maritime security, and shipbuilding. There are many areas in which Atlantic Canadians are connected to our oceans, as British Columbians are. It is important to support this bill and send it to committee for further study.

● (1125)

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to speak in support of a very important bill, important not only for British British Columbians but for all Canadians from coast to coast to coast. At this stage, I want to acknowledge the work done by my colleague, the member of Parliament for Skeena—Bulkley Valley, not only for the B.C. coastline but for the communities that reside in the north. He is an example to us of how to do effective advocacy outreach, and then to try to push for those improvements in the House.

This should not be a partisan issue because this is all about protecting our coastline. Today, I am making a heart-felt appeal to my B.C. colleagues across the way to search deep in their hearts, do the right thing and support the bill. British Columbians, whether they live in Kelowna, in the Kootenays, in Kitimat or Surrey, all care very deeply about our beautiful coastline. However, we also care about the future of our industries in British Columbia. We care about the kind of country and environment we want to leave for our children.

If my colleagues across the way feel they cannot support this, I hope they will rise to their feet and use all their persuasive powers to have some of us change our mind because they feel they are right. Let them defend the position they have taken in not supporting the bill. I will wait for that.

Private Members' Business

This is a common sense bill. It is a bill that came from the people and has been brought here by the member of Parliament. It shows respect for communities, first nations and environment. It talks about having a truly different type of conversation. Instead of us and them, instead of saying that they can get the heck out of our country, instead of saying "it's our way or the highway", the bill proposes a pathway to meaningful dialogue that is respectful of all points of view, one that actually listens to the experts and the communities. It is a way to ensure that when we look at our energy development, we do it right, we do it in a way that will benefit our children for generations to come.

It is no surprise to many members who have been in the House for a long time that the issue of protection for the coastline has been around for over a decade. The bill would do bring closure to this. The law would provide permanent protection to B.C.'s north coast, permanent protection against oil tankers.

I do not know, Mr. Speaker, if you have ever had the privilege of visiting the beautiful coastline of British Columbia. In my previous job, I had the privilege to visit every community, even the ones where they had a one-room school. Travelling through British Columbia, visiting our coastline and our northern communities, we begin to see the close ties between are our land and the environment. However, we also see something else. I am not what I call a "gorilla kayaker"; I am a gentle kayaker but I am married to a gorilla kayaker. The Douglas Channel is narrow and inviting. Those waters are not suitable for supertankers.

When we look at our beautiful coastline in British Columbia, and I am sure people on the east coast feel exactly the same, we want to ensure it is protected. We are carrying on the proud tradition the NDP has had for the past number of years, dating back to 1972 when a previous member of Parliament for Skeena, Frank Howard, brought forward such a motion to ban tanker traffic. It is time to turn it in to law. We have talked long enough.

• (1130)

Some people will say that we oppose the Northern gateway pipeline because we do not want to see damage done to our rivers, lakes and coastline. People say that the NDP does not believe in resource development or growing jobs, but we are 100% committed to growing decent-paying jobs in Canada.

This is a novelty for some, but we support responsible management of our non-renewable resources, a transition to renewable resources of energy and increasing energy efficiency, and a process that respects communities and the environment. That is the kind of resource development the New Democratic members can support, do support and will continue to fight for.

We are not the only ones who have said that. The bill has also been endorsed by the Council of the Haida Nation, the Wet'suwet'en First Nation, and the city of Terrace.

I want to take us back to Kitimat. We are going to see so many tankers filled with diluted bitumen going through the Douglas Channel along B.C.'s northern coastline to Asia or California, through some of our most biologically diverse environment, 120 species of sea birds and 27 species of marine mammals, such as orca,

grey and humpback whales, as well as commercially important wild salmon, halibut and other fisheries.

The economic costs of a spill would be absolutely ginormous. The seafood sector in B.C. generates close to \$1.7 billion each year, while the wilderness tourism in B.C. generates more than \$1.55 billion in annual revenues. We are not talking over a lifetime; we are talking about one year.

We are talking over \$3.2 billion of revenue from the fishing and tourism industries. These sectors do not work in isolation. They provide decent-paying jobs, permanent sources of income for around 45,000 Canadians. If there is a spill, we put guaranteed revenue into jeopardy. Not only that, but we know the cost of an oil spill and of a cleanup. We also see the long-term impact on other industries.

We often hear people saying that spills are not really going to happen. Enbridge is doing its own research, and this is from its own data. Dr. Gerald Graham determined that the likelihood of a major oil spill was 14%. That is not negligible; that is a huge probability. That is 1.5 out of 100 tankers. Do we want to take that kind of a chance? Think about the number of tankers that will go through the channel each and every year.

The Alberta Federation of Labour has estimated 26,000 decent-paying jobs would be created and would help to boost the middle class if the amount Enbridge intended to export raw was upgraded and refined in Canada.

Over the next 50-year span, we are looking at 11,000 tankers going down the Douglas Channel. I appeal to my B.C. colleagues to please persuade their other colleagues to vote for the bill.

• (1135)

Hon. Ron Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the member of Parliament for Kelowna—Lake Country in beautiful British Columbia, I am pleased to speak to Bill C-628 and share how and why our government is committed to protecting the safety of Canadians and the safety of the environment. It is not either/or, but a balanced approach. We have taken significant action to strengthen the safety and security of Canada's energy transportation system, whether it be rail, pipeline or tanker safety.

Bill C-628 proposes to ban oil tankers off the coast of British Columbia. It is founded on perceived shortcomings of Canada's energy system that are simply not accurate.

Over the next few minutes, I would like to share with Canadians the broad range of concrete measures already in place and the new actions we are taking to build on Canada's strong world-class safety system. That is because members on this side of the House understand they are essential to achieving our goal of energy market diversification, which is itself crucial to ensuring ongoing job creation, economic growth and prosperity for Canadians.

Private Members' Business

I would like to explain why I believe it is so important that we diversify our energy markets.

In 2012, Canada produced over 3.38 million barrels of crude oil and almost 3.9 billion cubic feet of natural gas per day. All of that activity supported roughly 190,000 direct jobs and an additional 70,000 indirect jobs. Then there are revenues to federal, provincial and territorial governments from the oil and gas industry, which averaged approximately \$25 billion annually over the past five years. That money paid for everything from roads and bridges to schools, hospitals in communities from coast to coast to coast. These multi-billion numbers are not surprising given the oil and gas sector accounted for 7.5% of GDP in 2013, and \$83 billion of capital expenditures. Industry also represented \$117 billion in exports in 2013.

To say the energy sector plays a major role in our high standard of living is an understatement. I believe it fuels the high quality of life of Canadians.

However, it is not something we can take for granted. The reality is that the global energy landscape is undergoing a seismic shift, creating both new opportunities and new challenges for Canada. On the plus side, there is an enormous and growing appetite for our energy supply. Demand for Canadian oil is strongest in the rapidly growing markets of the Asia-Pacific region.

The International Energy Agency predicts that, by 2035, the world will need a third more energy than is being consumed today. Most of this increase is due to the need for energy in emerging economies. Canada can capably meet that need as Canadian oil and gas production through innovation and new technology is expected to grow dramatically over the same period.

If we want to maintain our high standard of living and ensure governments have the resource sector royalties to fund a wide array of social programs, we must diversify our energy markets to have the funds to proceed in this manner.

While it appears the NDP by bringing forward this bill does not appreciate how crucial this issue is to the lives and livelihoods of Canadians, I can assure members that other government leaders across Canada do.

At the 2014 Energy and Mines Ministers' Conference, federal, provincial and territorial ministers recognized that the continued advancement of energy infrastructure was fundamental to gaining access to new markets and generating economic growth. Ministers also reaffirmed the need to coordinate our efforts to reinforce the diversification of Canada's natural resources by ensuring the safe transport of resources by pipeline, marine and rail.

We understand and fully agree that public safety and environmental protection are necessary conditions for energy development to proceed.

As I said earlier, it is a balanced approach; it is not either/or. That is precisely what responsible resource development is all about. It sends a clear signal that our government is determined to protect public safety and the health of the environment, based on sound science and world-class standards.

Between 2000 and 2011, federally regulated pipelines boasted a safety record of over 99.999%. We are proud of the action we have taken to ensure Canada has a world-class regulatory framework and a means for the safest form of transportation of our energy products.

Our Government has introduced stringent new safety standards to prevent oil spills from happening and new navigational supports for tanker ships to better protect our coastal waters.

We have nine acts of Parliament governing marine safety, and that is before we factor in the tough new regulatory oversight and enforcement capabilities provided under Bill C-3, the Safeguarding Canada's Seas and Skies Act.

Thanks to tough legislation and technological innovations, there have been no spills from double-hulled tankers in Canadian waters. Nor have there ever been spills from tankers escorted by tugs with a local pilot aboard.

Especially important, we are ensuring that polluters, not taxpayers, will be responsible for costs in the unlikely event of a spill. We have brought in polluter pays legislation for both offshore and onshore, with billion dollar conditions for spill response and cleanup.

• (1140)

These measures underline that when it comes to transporting our natural resources, whether by pipeline, rail, or tanker, our government will never compromise on safety.

Our government has also given the independent National Energy Board the necessary resources to increase annual inspections of pipelines by 50%. The board has doubled the number of annual comprehensive safety audits to identify pipeline issues before incidents occur. Equally important, the National Energy Board now has the authority to impose substantial financial penalties on companies that do not comply with safety and environmental regulations. It can levy fines of up to \$100,000 a day for as long as the infractions are not addressed.

It is disappointing that the member who put forward the bill we are debating today and who purports to be in favour of improving safety voted against each and every one of the measures I just mentioned.

Canada's outstanding safety record should assure Canadians that our energy resources can be developed safely and can in turn create good jobs and economic growth here at home. Our government's approach to promoting responsible resource development is the right one.

I believe that Canadians simply cannot trust the New Democrats to protect our economy or our environment. They oppose every form of resource development. They vote against our legislation to increase pipeline safety measures. Then they propose this bill that would hurt the Canadian economy. Bill C-628 risks undoing all the good being achieved under our plan for responsible resource development and would come at a great cost to Canadians. For that reason, we cannot support this bill.

Private Members' Business

In closing, having spent the first 27 years of my life in Alberta, I understand the oil and gas economy and how important it is not only to Alberta but to all of Canada. Given my last 25-plus years calling beautiful British Columbia home, I understand the value of the energy industry and also tourism, the environment, safety, and the economy. They are all brought together. It is not either/or, as I have alluded to before.

As a father of three daughters and three grandsons, I want a future for our Canadian economy, for our community of Kelowna Lake Country, for British Columbia, and for all Canadians. I believe that if this bill is passed, it would take us backward and would not help create those jobs we want in the future.

This is Easter week, a week of hurt and a week of hope. My hope is that we will work together to manage our resources responsibly. We are called to be good stewards. We have abundant resources across Canada. However, this type of legislation would not help our industry and would not help to create jobs. We want to have a balanced approach. I believe that by working together, we can create jobs and grow the economy to achieve long-term prosperity and a good quality of life for all North Americans

• (1145)

Mr. Ryan Cleary (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I stand in support of Bill C-628, an act to amend the Canada Shipping Act, 2001 and the National Energy Board Act. My party, the New Democratic Party of Canada, has stood with first nations and communities across British Columbia in their opposition to the Enbridge northern gateway since day one. This bill would enshrine a crude oil tanker ban on British Columbia's north coast in law. It would set it in stone.

I have never been to B.C.'s north coast. In fact, I have only been to British Columbia once, to the city of Vancouver, two or three years ago. As members know, I represent St. John's South—Mount Pearl in Newfoundland and Labrador. As a representative of Canada's most easterly province, I am on my feet here today speaking about a bill impacting Canada's most westerly province, because we have a lot in common.

I hear about how beautiful, unique, and pristine British Columbia is, but I certainly could not conceive of B.C. being any more beautiful, unique, or pristine than Newfoundland and Labrador. There are similarities, but there are differences as well. I know those differences well.

British Columbia has had a moratorium on oil and gas drilling off its coast since 1959. That is 56 years. Oil and gas companies have been drilling off Newfoundland and Labrador for a dog's age. It has been for decades. There is a moratorium off B.C. and just the opposite off Newfoundland and Labrador, where oil companies have been filling their boots for years. While there is no offshore oil and gas industry off B.C., we have had one on the Grand Banks of Newfoundland since the 1990s. In fact, the first offshore oil project, Hibernia, and the construction of the project's gravity-based structure in the 1990s, saved Newfoundland and Labrador's economy.

At the same time as the Hibernia project was getting off the ground, our northern cod stocks were in complete collapse. The northern cod moratorium in 1992 was the biggest layoff in Canadian history to that point. It may well still be the biggest layoff in our

history. More than 30,000 people were thrown out of work immediately, and those were direct jobs.

Newfoundland and Labrador has done well through its oil industry. It has done very well. It has been a "have" province since November 2008, contributing more to the country than it gets back. Between 1949, when Canada joined our province, and 2008 it was a "have not" province. That hurt not just our economy but our psyche, too.

There are people who say that the oil industry has hurt Newfoundland and Labrador in certain ways and that there is too much emphasis on the non-renewable oil and gas industry and not enough attention to our greatest renewable industry, the fishery. Economic diversification also has not happened. The Newfoundland and Labrador government is facing a \$916-million deficit this year alone, because oil revenues are down so severely and there is nothing to pick up the slack. The Government of Canada has also turned away from the fishery, with constant cuts to fisheries science and research budgets, in general, and a broken management system. There are some lessons B.C. can learn from Newfoundland and Labrador.

This bill would stop the Enbridge northern gateway pipeline in its tracks. Enbridge proposes that supertankers the length of the Empire State Building thread their way through the needle that is the sensitive and difficult waters of the Douglas Channel and B.C.'s north coast. Over the project's 50-year lifespan, we are talking about 11,000 tanker trips. What are the odds of a devastating accident or catastrophe? Most British Columbians and first nations do not want to take that chance. That message has been heard loud and clear across Canada.

Back to Newfoundland, there is constant oil tanker traffic in and out of Placentia Bay. Placentia Bay is seen as the area in Canada with possibly the highest risk of having an oil spill.

• (1150)

It was only recently that the Atlantic Pilotage Authority wanted to move the pilot station, where pilots board tankers to help guide them through the tricky waters. The pilotage authority wanted to move the boarding station deeper into Placentia Bay, but it backed off when opposition rang out, including opposition right here in the House. It backed off because it made no sense, because it increased the risk.

As it stands, Transport Canada's oil spill response equipment for Placentia Bay is located hundreds of kilometres away in a warehouse in the city of Mount Pearl, next to the city of St. John's. How does that make any sense?

Private Members' Business

One of the first papers I read in preparing to speak on the bill was a report carried out for B.C.'s first nations. The report was entitled, "Assessing offshore oil and gas development on British Columbia's coast". The report said, "The risk of oil spills is declining with new management practices and technology". That is fair enough. I suppose it is. However, here is the interesting part: "However, oil spills are a relatively common occurrence in oil and gas development. Newfoundland has recorded 138 small oil spills from 1997 to 2002".

In the 13 years since that report, since those numbers were gathered, we can bet that there have been dozens, hundreds even, more spills, mostly small spills, but still spills.

Returning to British Columbia, there are two concerns with the Enbridge northern gateway project: the impact on the environment and the impact on the economy. The project would move 525,000 barrels of diluted bitumen per day from Alberta to B.C. The 1,177 kilometre pipeline would cross the Rocky Mountains, which I hear are almost as beautiful and as rugged as Newfoundland and Labrador's mountain ranges. The pipeline would cross the Rocky Mountains and hundreds of rivers and streams. From Kitimat, the bitumen would be loaded onto supertankers and shipped down the Douglas Channel and along B.C.'s north coast to Asia or California, wherever the markets are.

B.C.'s north coast is known for great biological diversity and extreme weather. It sounds like home. The north coast is home to 120 species of birds and 27 species of marine mammals, including orcas and gray and humpback whales, not to mention salmon, halibut, and other fish species. Again, it sounds like home and almost as nice. An oil spill would be devastating. Supertankers do not stop on a dime. Supertankers have a minimum stopping distance of three kilometres.

The economic cost of a spill would be equally as devastating. B.C.'s seafood sector generates close to \$1.7 billion a year. Wilderness tourism is worth another \$1.55 billion. Combined, that is well over \$3 billion a year. We could imagine the dent an oil spill would put in those numbers.

However, there is another economic impact, not just for British Columbia but for all of Canada. The Alberta Federation of Labour estimates that 26,000 jobs could be created in Alberta if those 525,000 barrels of diluted bitumen were upgraded and refined right here in Canada. Why would we ship out unrefined bitumen? Why would we throw away 26,000 jobs? How does that make sense? How is that smart?

Newfoundland and Labrador has not benefited just from our own oil and gas industry. Alberta's oil sands have pumped hundreds of millions of dollars, dare I say billions, into our economy through hundreds and thousands of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who migrate west every day, every week, every year. I speak with them on the planes. I see them in the airports. They go to places like Fort McMurray, Newfoundland and Labrador's second biggest city, as the joke goes. Why would Canada support a pipeline that threatens so much of our environment and exports jobs to other countries?

There are three coasts in Canada. Each is equally important, although it does not always feel that way. In B.C., as in

Newfoundland and Labrador, we live and die by the sea. If we jeopardize our oceans, our coasts, our culture, and our heritage, our economy will be lost.

● (1155)

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to have a right of reply to first express my thanks to my colleagues from across the country and in the House. From the east coast and to the north, I thank my colleagues from British Columbia, New Democrats, Liberals and Green Party alike, as well as the independents who have shown their support.

I represent northwestern British Columbia in the House of Commons. We are a culture and an economy based on our environment. As we say up north, the people do not make the land, the land makes the people, which is increasingly true.

This bill that I have presented in Parliament was in fact borne out of a crisis, out of a threat from an oil company seeking to build an 1,100-kilometre twin pipeline carrying unrefined raw bitumen from northern Alberta to the Port of Kitimat and then on to China through supertankers three football fields long. In my duty as the member of Parliament representing this place, I realized that I had to oppose this project, because the risks so far outweighed the benefits for the people I represent, and I would argue for the people of British Columbia and Canada.

However, from this crisis is an opportunity, and we have taken this opportunity to find common cause, not just in northwestern British Columbia, but across beautiful B.C. and in fact across this country. First nations and non-native people, community to community, have stood shoulder to shoulder in expressing our commonly held values to protect our homes. They have expressed that most Canadian sense of determination, that when a government tries to force something upon us, we stand resolute with one another in opposition to that government.

Also through this bill, I sought to propose solutions to the crisis that is upon us, to make consultation with Canadians meaningful and respectful, so that if the opinion of Canadians in their communities and their homes is asked, then the Government of Canada should listen.

This bill, perhaps for the first time in Canadian law, also seeks to actually have an opinion about natural resources in this country as to whether we export them raw, as is planned by Enbridge's northern gateway and Kinder Morgan, Keystone, or if we add value to the endowment that we have inherited. However, if we ask these questions of proponents, the Conservatives say we are antagonistic, but I say that is not right.

*Government Orders**And five or more members having risen:*

I have held dozens of town halls across British Columbia, from the east to the west, from Vancouver Island to the interior, to the north, to the cities. Tens of thousands of British Columbians have been engaged, signing petitions, writing postcards and coming to town halls.

I was in the interior of B.C. this weekend and took the red eye back this morning. A woman came up to me at one of our town halls and thanked me for providing a little bit of hope, because she felt quite desperate with the current Conservative government and its approach to her province and home and native land. However, I realized that through the course of this, it has been myself that has taken the most inspiration from the British Columbians I have engaged with.

Despite a cynical and oppositional government that seeks to strip our environmental laws, ignore first nations' rights and title, ignore the reality of climate change, ignore the idea that we should be adding value to our natural wealth, despite all that, British Columbians, Canadians, have continued to show up. Even with the increasing threat from a government that says if one dares have an opinion that is contrary to its own, one will be called a foreign-funded radical by one's own government, one will be called an enemy of the state by one's own government, people have chosen hope over that fear time and time again. It does not make one an enemy of Canada to express an opinion; that makes one truly Canadian.

Coastal first nations; B.C. municipalities; the B.C. government; the Fraser community's labour, tourism and businesses have all stood together in opposing this project; two-thirds of British Columbians consistently. Therefore, I say to my Conservative colleagues from British Columbia that they clearly have a choice in a vote in 48 hours to decide who it is that they work for. Do they work for the current Prime Minister and his oil lobby friends, or do they work for the people who sent them to this place from British Columbia?

Those members must decide that within the next two days, because this bill is an opportunity to stand with British Columbia and defend our coast, or stand with the Prime Minister, who has truly lost his way and believes that it is a radical thing to stand up for one's community, that it makes one an enemy of Canada rather than a Canadian citizen.

• (1200)

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): In my opinion the nays have it.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

SAFE AND ACCOUNTABLE RAIL ACT

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC) moved that Bill C-52, an act to amend the Canada Transportation Act and the Railway Safety Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

She said: Mr. Speaker, today I rise in my place to begin the second reading of Bill C-52, the safe and accountable rail act.

[Translation]

Since arriving at Transport Canada, I have made safety my absolute top priority.

[English]

As minister, I have borne witness to events that have led us to examine the safety regime and the manner in which railways and shippers are held accountable when things go wrong. Things can and do go wrong.

The most notable event without question was the explosion of railway cars in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec, on July 6, 2013, and the 47 people who died that day, a day that will be inscribed in the memory of all members of this House. It has galvanized our determination to find better ways to protect Canadians and our communities, and better ways to safely move the goods on which the Canadian economy depends.

[Translation]

We are committed to achieving that, and we have taken decisive measures to do so.

[English]

Very soon after the tragedy, we introduced measures to address safety issues. We established two-person minimum crews for locomotives pulling dangerous goods, and we slowed the speed of all of those trains. We adjusted the specifications of tank cars, and immediately took the least crash-resistant cars off the rails. We strengthened regulations and we increased inspections. We also took steps to address longer-term issues. We have been working with municipalities, first responders, railways and shippers to strengthen emergency response across this country.

In August, the Transportation Safety Board issued its final investigation report on the Lac-Mégantic tragedy, and again we responded. Last October, I introduced further measures, including an emergency directive on how trains are to be braked, the accurate classification of dangerous goods and steps to improve training of all rail employees.

Government Orders

We also introduced measures to make safety management systems more effective in ways that I will discuss in more detail, but I want to emphasize this: this government has implemented every single one of the recommendations of the Transportation Safety Board in response to Lac-Mégantic. We have learned the lessons inherent in past tragedies, and our commitment to safety is absolute.

The bill before us introduces further steps to strengthen the safety regime of Canada's railways and ensure the accountability of railways in the case of accidents. It moves on three different fronts. The first is prevention. Amendments would strengthen the regulatory regime to reduce the likelihood of rail accidents. The second is communication for effective response. The bill would allow for requirements related to information sharing between railways and municipalities to improve the response in case of emergencies. The third is accountability. The bill would take steps to ensure railways have enough insurance to pay for damages. It would also make crude oil shippers accountable for what they put on the rails by ensuring they pay into a supplementary fund that would be available when an accident involves crude.

The bill before us would amend two pieces of legislation: the Railway Safety Act and the Canada Transportation Act. Taken together, these amendments represent a significant step in improving the overall safety in Canada's railways, especially in the transportation of dangerous goods. These amendments respond to the recommendations of the Transportation Safety Board in response to Lac-Mégantic, and the 2013 fall report of the Auditor General. We welcomed all their input.

Let me begin with prevention and the features of the bill that would help prevent rail accidents. The Railway Safety Act sets out a regulatory framework to address the safety, the security and the environmental impact of rail. Under the act, federally regulated railways are responsible for the safety of their rail line infrastructure, of their railway equipment and of their operations.

Transport Canada monitors the railway's compliance with the act and with the department's rules, regulations and engineering standards.

●(1205)

Transport Canada also conducts audits and inspections to ensure that the overall safety of railway operations is maintained. Canadians can be assured that Transport Canada does not and will not hesitate to take appropriate action to address safety concerns. The bill before us today would provide new authorities to the safety inspectors and to the Minister of Transport to do just that.

Under this bill, a new provision would give the Minister of Transport the authority to order a railway to take a corrective action, to stop any action, to follow any procedure or to suspend operation. In other words, the minister would be able to intervene directly should there be a concern for safety.

A Transport Canada railway safety inspector would be given broader authority to issue notices and orders to any person or entity, including railway companies, road authorities and municipalities, relating to safe railway operations. By increasing the authorities for the minister and railway safety inspectors, we would increase Transport Canada's ability to administer the Railway Safety Act and

the regulations, the rules and the engineering standards made under the act. These are all powerful tools and they would increase the regulation of oversight of railway companies that Transport Canada regulates and would ensure that railways operate according to the standards established in the act.

However, I would like to emphasize that some of the most important steps that railways make to improve safety and safety culture are not the results of the provisions of the Railway Safety Act but are contained within their own safety management systems or SMS. I want to be clear on this point. A safety management system is not deregulation and it is not self-regulation; it is an internationally recognized, science-based process that has been used in rail transportation since 2001. SMS do not replace rules or regulations or inspections. They provide a systemic approach to safety that incorporates specific regulations and proactive measures to identify hazards and to mitigate risks.

Transport Canada has created regulatory requirements around safety management systems and the bill before us would strengthen the department's oversight. Under the amendments, I believe that if a railway company were implementing its safety management system in a way that could compromise railway safety, I could take that company to corrective action by placing an order. With this additional oversight, railways would have further incentive to ensure that they manage the risks associated with operating a railway.

I would like to draw the attention of the House to the elements of this bill that would help quicken emergency response through closer communication and co-operation between railways and municipalities through which they pass. Under this bill, Transport Canada would have new authority to regulate the sharing of information, of documents and of records from one party to another other than the department, for example, from a railway company to a municipality.

Canada's history is one of towns and cities that sprang up along the rail lines in this country. We have to ensure that the people who live in these areas are safe. The collaboration between railways and communities on such matters would no longer be at the discretion of the railways. It would form part of a mandatory regulatory framework. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities has been an outspoken champion for better communication and more transparency between railways and municipalities on safety-related issues, and we thank its members for their input and advice.

In addition to prevention and effective communication for improved response, the third pillar of the bill involves accountability. By this, I mean the need to ensure those responsible for operating the railway system and those who put high-risk goods into the system would have the financial resources they need to compensate victims and to clean up communities if things go wrong. This is not just an issue that results from major tragedies such as what happened in Lac-Mégantic, although I will return to that in a moment.

Government Orders

●(1210)

More frequently, municipalities are called to respond to incidents of lesser impact, such as putting out fires that may have been caused as a result of a railway operation. Under the current regime, these costs are often borne by the provinces and municipalities and ultimately their taxpayers. However, under the bill before us, if a province or municipality believes that a fire was started as a result of railway operations, it can apply to the Canadian Transportation Agency for reimbursement. The amendment would give the agency authority to determine if indeed the fire was caused by railway operations, and would be able to determine the costs incurred in putting out the fire and require the railway to reimburse the province or municipality for those costs.

This amendment and the others I have spoken to today are changes to the Railway Safety Act that promote a safe and secure, efficient and environmentally responsible transportation system in Canada. The amendments would give Transport Canada more authority and oversight in rail operations, bring in a new era of communication between railways and municipalities in an effort to improve emergency preparedness, and help make the railways accountable for the costs incurred from fighting fires that result from their operations.

However, another important issue of accountability became all too apparent in the aftermath of the Lac-Mégantic tragedy. The cost of the disaster in terms of the lives lost was incalculable. They are beyond words. However, there were calculable loss costs as well, and the costs of putting out the fire and clearing the debris, cleaning up the effects on the environment, and, of course, the costs of rebuilding a community and compensating, truly shattered lives. No one wants to anticipate such a disaster, but any responsible company must prepare for such eventualities by carrying sufficient insurance to cover the costs.

Under the Canada Transportation Act, federally regulated railways must carry insurance, but the Lac-Mégantic tragedy has proven that the measures now in place are simply not sufficient. Therefore, the bill before us identifies specific levels of insurance that must be carried, depending upon the type and volume of dangerous goods that the railway transports. These insurance requirements would come into force 12 months after the bill's royal assent, giving the insurance market the necessary time to adjust, and railways enough time to obtain the necessary insurance, which is usually purchased on an annual policy.

Class 1 railways carry significant quantities of dangerous goods, and they will be required to hold \$1 billion in insurance. The House will be reassured to know that both CN and CP customarily carry more insurance than that. At the other end of the spectrum, railways carrying little or no dangerous goods would be required to hold \$25 million in insurance. For short-line railways carrying higher amounts of dangerous goods, there would be an initial requirement to hold either \$50 million or \$125 million in insurance. One year later, those levels would increase to \$100 million and \$250 million respectively. This phase-in period would allow short-line railways time to adjust to the new requirements. The agency would be able to make inquiries to determine whether railways are maintaining the correct amount of insurance, and must revoke or suspend the certificate of fitness of any railway that fails to comply.

The agency can also enforce insurance requirements through administrative monetary penalties of up to \$100,000, and there is more. Unfortunately, there is always the possibility and potential for a tragedy to exceed the ability of a railway's third-party insurance to cover the damages, so crude oil shippers must also share in the responsibility that comes with the transport of their dangerous goods. For those reasons, the bill would also create a supplemental fund that would be financed by levies on crude oil shippers, in the amount of \$1.65 for every tonne of crude that is shipped. If the damages caused by a catastrophic crude oil accident were more than a railway company's insurance could cover, the fund would be there to cover the cost, not the taxpayers.

●(1215)

This is consistent with the polluter pays principle and is similar to the approach taken in marine transportation; the costs associated with an incident are shared by industry.

Crude oil shippers are included in the amendments before us today, but Transport Canada is looking at the possibility of expanding the regime to cover industries that ship other dangerous goods. In this way, we promote a shared accountability between rail carriers and the shippers of dangerous goods to ensure that victims and taxpayers are fully protected from bearing the costs of rail accidents.

Our goal is to ensure that communities, citizens, and taxpayers are protected in the event of an incident. The polluter will pay to clean up and provide compensation. We support a competitive rail sector and the resource economy that brings jobs to Canadians, but when it comes to safety in the transportation system, communities and citizens will always come first.

The measures in this bill come in addition to the steps the government has already taken to improve the rail safety regime. I would point out that there is a private member's bill that has been tabled to amend the Railway Safety Act, and I would like to commend the work of our colleague, the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre. Her private member's bill, Bill C-627, is also designed to provide greater protection to persons and property from railway operations.

The government supports this bill, and I wish to assure the House that we have coordinated the amendments in the bill before us to ensure that both bills will be harmonized when they reach royal assent. This is the customary way to give effect to two bills and will result in both bills having equal and consistent impact on the Railway Safety Act.

Government Orders

Railway operators and Transport Canada have taken many measures to improve rail safety, and this has reduced accident rates over the past several years. However, the amount of dangerous goods and other commodities moving by rail is increasing, and it will continue to grow. We need proper oversight to reduce accidents. We need better communication between railways and municipalities to provide more effective response, and we need a stronger liability and compensation regime in the event of an accident.

The bill addresses each of these areas. It introduces substantial changes to the regimes for both rail safety, and liability and compensation. In the last Speech from the Throne, this government committed to drawing upon the lessons of the tragedy at Lac-Mégantic to make shippers and rail companies accountable for rail safety.

[Translation]

With this bill, we are fulfilling that commitment.

[English]

Our system of transportation safety is strong, but it can be improved. By strengthening the safety, liability, and compensation regimes, we will improve public confidence in the rail industry. Above all, we will underscore that the safety and the security of Canadians remain the top priority of Transport Canada.

We have put in place many rail safety initiatives, through directives, orders, and regulations within the existing legislation framework.

• (1220)

[Translation]

This bill will enable us to take further measures.

[English]

I hope hon. members share my sense of urgency that we get this done, and that they join me in supporting this extremely important bill.

Mr. Hoang Mai (Brossard—La Prairie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the bill is a step in the right direction.

After Lac-Mégantic, we saw the impact of a company not having sufficient liability insurance. We have also seen the impact of not having a fund to help families and municipalities when they have to deal with the cleanup.

I would like to hear from the minister. When the minister tabled the bill, we heard talk about \$250 million regarding the disaster relief fund. I would like to know whether or not that is a cap. Has the government decided to put a cap on that fund? If it is a cap, why is it capped at \$250 million?

Hon. Lisa Raitt: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his support in our bringing forward this legislation.

There has been a notional amount to which the fund has been pegged in order to share capitalization. Much like in the ship-source oil pollution fund, we have set a limit in terms of the levies coming in to make sure there is a certain amount of money available.

That being said, if there ever is a case where that fund is exhausted, on top of the insurance, there is power within this act for

the government to assess another levy in order to bring that fund back up to the amount it needs to be in order to ensure that taxpayers are not ultimately on the hook for the costs and that it truly is the polluter pays principle.

There is a limit on the capitalization of the fund, but beyond that there is the ability for us to go back and extract that. It would be the consolidated revenue fund that would take over if need be, but we have the ability to get that money back from the railway and from the shippers.

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Trinity—Spadina, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the issues that concerns a number of the residents in the riding that I represent, and in fact all of the downtown residents, is the level crossings. In a dense urban area where many of these trains travel, including the train from Lac-Mégantic which came through the downtown, level crossings are still the defining characteristic of rail crossings in Toronto and across the country. There are thousands of them.

My understanding is that there is a budget of only \$10 million a year to transition the level crossings into rail underpasses or overpasses. Is the government considering increasing the funds available to cities and municipalities to make the rail lines safer as it brings in stronger safety regulations?

Hon. Lisa Raitt: Mr. Speaker, I would implore the members of the House to make their municipalities aware of the grade crossing separation fund that is available. Unfortunately, it was not fully subscribed to last year.

Ironically, one would think that it should be available and people would take it up. The money is there in order to make sure we have participation by both rail and the municipality, and the federal government has its piece through this fund. I encourage people to make the application.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I know the hon. minister has put great effort into improving rail safety, and I commend the steps that have been taken. I am not convinced that we have done enough yet. However, we know we are moving a lot of goods by rail, and it is focusing on the dangers of those goods.

I want to ask the minister about the definition of crude oil in the bill. It lumps together different kinds of products that have widely different risks. We know that the Lac-Mégantic disaster involved Bakken shale from North Dakota, which was highly volatile. At the other end of the spectrum, we have conventional crude oil which is not nearly as volatile.

I am wondering how we could better differentiate and if operationally there are ways to do that. Certainly when shipping diluent to northern Alberta, to stir it into bitumen, diluent itself is a hazardous material, even though shipping bitumen as a solid would not be. These are the kinds of distinctions that are ignored in the current definition.

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Hon. Lisa Raitt: Mr. Speaker, I would refer the hon. member to proposed section 87 of the Canada Transportation Act, under clause 4 of Bill C-52, where we give the definition of crude oil. I can assure the member that there was a lot of discussion with respect to that with Transport Canada officials. Where we landed is where we list it here, which is in compliance with the United Nations designation and classifications.

We will always make sure we are getting the appropriate capture with respect to crude oil to ensure it is part of the shippers' fund. We cast the net quite widely in this case, but if there are any specific concerns that the member may have with respect to that, I will ask her to bring it up for Transport Canada officials, through me, and we will be able to get you the appropriate answer.

My understanding is that we threw the net widely in order to capture the entire definition in accordance with the United Nations regulations.

• (1225)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): I would remind all hon. members to direct their comments to the Chair rather than directly to their colleagues.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the minister's speech very carefully. As the minister well knows, in my region we have had three derailments recently: one in Hornepayne and two in Gogama. The last one in Gogama was particularly concerning because of the tankers that spilled into the Mattagami River near the fish spawning grounds. A lot of work has gone into making sure that we have a healthy fish population, not just for first nation people but for all tourists and outfitters who live along the Mattagami River.

Given the ecological damage that has been done to the Mattagami River, I would like to ask the minister if she can update the House on the remediation plans in place and what she thinks it is going to take in the long term to restore the fishery habitats that have been damaged on the Mattagami River.

Hon. Lisa Raitt: Mr. Speaker, as I understand it, CN has made a commitment to the member's colleague with respect to the cleaning up of that river to 99.9%. That is the statistic that I have been told. I do not have direct communications with CN on this topic. I am happy to gather further information on mitigation and provide it to the hon. member and his colleagues on that.

I would say one last thing, though. One change that this government did make is on risk assessments to be conducted by rail. Companies have to take into consideration environmentally sensitive areas through which they travel as part of their risk analysis to ensure their operations are in line with our best practices. That is something that will be taken into consideration, and if CN is not cooperating, let us know.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Hoang Mai: Mr. Speaker, this bill would give inspectors more powers and rights. One of the problems, as I have indicated to the minister, is that since 2013, when the Lac-Mégantic accident happened, only one rail safety inspector has been hired.

How can the minister expect inspectors to do their work if there are not enough of them to do a good job of inspecting the rails? What we saw in the Gogama accident is that there were problems with the rails.

Can the minister explain why she has not increased the number of rail safety inspectors?

[*English*]

Hon. Lisa Raitt: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member and I have been over these numbers before. One thing I can tell the House is that the number of individuals who are involved in railway oversight has increased, both in the transportation of dangerous goods aspect and in the railway safety aspect of the department. We will continue to make sure that we are fully resourced in accordance with what Transport Canada officials indicate they need.

However, it is important to note that the amendments being sought here would not actually increase the workload. What they would do is give the inspectors more power so that they would not be caught up in a paper war with the railway but would have absolute, concrete powers to make orders and get justice and action from the railway as they need to and as issues unfold with respect to railway safety matters.

Mr. James Rajotte (Edmonton—Leduc, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the minister for this legislation and for the actions that she has taken with respect to railway safety. I have railways that go through my riding on a very regular basis, which she knows very well.

This is a very good debate and discussion, with questions and comments from both sides of the House. With regard to the member who asked about CN cleaning up, one example that I remember is the situation that happened in Lake Wabamun. It is not in my riding, but it is near my riding. There was a spill there. I thought that CN did an outstanding job in the remediation at the lake.

I want to ask the minister to just expand on something. She mentioned in her speech that this is not self-regulation. This is a question that I sometimes get from companies in my area and the Nisku area, as well as from my constituents, especially in the southern part of the riding of Leduc. They ask if this is just allowing the companies to regulate themselves.

She pointed out in her speech how that is not the case and that it adheres to international standards. I wonder if she could just expand on that a little.

• (1230)

Hon. Lisa Raitt: Mr. Speaker, it is not often that we have enough time to explain safety management systems, but what I can tell the House is that it was determined many years ago—about 25, in fact—here in Canada that with 46,000 kilometres of rail in our country, it would be virtually impossible to have an inspector every single day, at every single moment, on every single inch of rail doing the regulatory inspections that they were currently doing. It was determined at that time—and it was a good determination, by another government—that we would move to safety management systems to mimic what was happening internationally.

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It starts with having regulations in place that will always stay in place and inspections in place that will always stay in place. However, it puts the burden of having a safety culture on the rail companies as well. They must embed safety practices into every aspect of their operations, from the very top—where we say there has to be a safety executive designated with the responsibility for safety in the company—all the way down to ensuring that training for unionized employees includes safety management systems.

Having whistle-blowing involved as well in the safety management system is incredibly important. Together, they work to make sure that we are plugging any holes that may be in the rail safety regime.

It works. The Transportation Safety Board agrees with us that it works. It is a great system for Canada.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Hoang Mai (Brossard—La Prairie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to debate Bill C-52. This is a government bill that amends the Canada Transportation Act and the Railway Safety Act. It is a reaction to what happened in Lac-Mégantic.

I would like to begin by saying that I support the government's amendments because they are a step in the right direction. However, we would like to know why the government waited so long to do this. Why did it take a tragedy like Lac-Mégantic for the government to fix some of these problems?

Before getting into the details of the bill, I would like to go over the background. In 2013, a tragedy occurred that shocked the entire nation and had a terrible impact on the people of Lac-Mégantic. Everyone knows that 47 people were killed. Unfortunately, we cannot change that. However, the NDP has said since the beginning that we must learn from our mistakes. What happened? Why was the self-regulation and self-inspection system, which was implemented by the Liberals and maintained by the Conservatives, in place for so long?

As we all know, the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities studied the transportation of dangerous goods. The NDP presented a supplementary opinion. We found that, once again, the recommendations were a step in the right direction, but did not go far enough. Meanwhile, we did not hear any recommendations from the Liberal Party.

We need to know why the Lac-Mégantic tragedy happened. Despite a study that took from November 2013 until now to complete, since the report was tabled in the House relatively recently, many questions remain unanswered. That is why one of the NDP's recommendations called for a public inquiry to really get to the bottom of what happened. Our proposal has the support of the people of Lac-Mégantic and, more recently, the support of the Lac-Mégantic city council.

A lot of questions remain unanswered. For instance, why is it that the government authorized MMA to operate with a single conductor, especially considering that company's poor safety record? Why was MMA given an exemption? I would remind the House that in the entire country, only two companies were exempt from the rule that required two conductors. Why did the government authorize just one

conductor, especially in the case of MMA, a company with a troubling history, as we know?

Other questions were also raised. How is it that the government still has not assumed its share of the responsibility, despite the investigation done by the Transportation Safety Board, which found the government at least partially to blame? It is rather uncommon for the Transportation Safety Board to come down so hard on a government. I spoke with some residents of Lac-Mégantic, and I can assure you that they remain frustrated about the lack of information. They do not feel as though justice has been served. No one can understand why the government refuses to launch an independent public inquiry to really get to the bottom of what happened.

To come back to the bill, the Lac-Mégantic tragedy made us realize something else. Afterward, we realized that MMA had \$25 million in liability insurance. That amount does not even begin to cover the \$400 million that has been spent to date on cleaning up and rebuilding, and that cost may still go up. How can a company have only \$25 million in insurance? One of the ways that the government responded and the reason why we are supporting this bill is that it will require rail companies to increase their liability insurance, or at the very least, it will impose a minimum amount on them. As I said, this is a step in the right direction. However, if we take a closer look at the table, we see that a minimum of \$25 million is being imposed on the smallest rail companies that transport smaller amounts of dangerous goods.

• (1235)

That is the same amount that was set for MMA. On the other hand, the government wants to set the minimum level of liability coverage for larger companies at \$1 billion. That includes CN and CP, which are class 1 railways that carry substantial amounts of dangerous goods. Without getting into too much detail, the bill sets out minimum levels of liability insurance up to a maximum of \$1 billion based on the type of dangerous goods that the company transports.

Why are these levels based on the quantity of dangerous goods that are transported all year? The Lac-Mégantic incident involved a small rail company that happened to be transporting a fairly large quantity of dangerous goods at the time. However, the costs associated with the disaster are far greater than the limits set out in this bill, particularly for small companies.

Once again, we will not give the government a blank cheque. We know that this bill is a step in the right direction, but we want answers to these questions.

What is more, this bill provides for a disaster relief fund financed by shippers to cover any damages resulting from accidents involving crude oil.

[*English*]

I asked the question of the minister today regarding what I will call the disaster relief fund. The minister said today that it would be pegged at \$250 million. I am asking why we are pegging the disaster relief fund at \$250 million.

I mentioned before that the Lac-Mégantic disaster will cost more than \$400 million. Also, if we really believe in the principle of polluter pays, why put a cap? Does that not mean that in the case that the railroad company does not have enough insurance, then the disaster relief fund would apply? If it is capped at \$250 million, who else would have to pay for the cleanup and reconstruction? At the end of the day, it is the taxpayers who would have to pay, through the government.

That is actually what is happening right now. We saw it happening in Lac-Mégantic. Unfortunately, we do not understand why there will be a cap here, especially of \$250 million. That is another question we will have to ask the minister and probably a Transport Canada official.

I asked the minister another question, and we will probably agree to disagree. The minister said they have increased the number of rail safety inspectors to a sufficient number. I mentioned before in the House and in committee that the government has only hired one additional inspector for rail safety. I am not the person who is saying that; it is Transport Canada actually answering one of my questions.

We know the impact on the environment after what we saw in Lac-Mégantic and with the derailments in the northern part of Ontario. My colleague from Timmins mentioned the Gogama derailment and the implications it has with respect to the environment. If the only answer from the government is to hire one more rail safety inspector, that is a problem, especially after we read in the TSB's preliminary report that there were issues with rail infrastructure.

The government says it is not allowing self-inspection or that SMS is sufficient. What the NDP is saying on this side of the House is that although the safety management system put in place by the Liberals is a system that goes in the right direction, how it is applied and enforced is key, and what we have seen is the government just transferring all the responsibilities to the railway companies.

• (1240)

That is clear because when we ask questions to railway companies as to who is responsible for inspections, they will tell us they are.

On the other side, all Transport Canada is looking at is mainly whether the safety management system is existent. Again, the Auditor General and the TSB said that the way it was applied and enforced was not sufficient.

Questions were raised with regard to whether Transport Canada had enough resources. We know the rail safety directorate, the body that is in charge of overseeing and ensuring that rail safety is enforced and applied, has had its budget cut by 20%, if we look at the 2010 numbers. The government's actions speak louder than words. It is cutting the rail safety directorate, the body that looks at ensuring rail safety is enforced.

When we talk about rail safety, again, there is the issue of the lack of oversight. That was raised a long time ago by the TSB, and it has been raised by the official opposition. However, when we look at the action, which is cutting budgets to the rail safety directorate, we do not understand where the government intends to take leadership in ensuring that oversight is there.

Government Orders

I have also asked the minister questions about the number of railways that have received penalties in the past few years.

[*Translation*]

The response from the Minister of Transport is zero. The railway companies have been fined zero dollars, when we know that some companies have not been obeying the laws or the regulations and are cutting corners.

The government is currently cutting the budget of those responsible for inspecting the railway companies and enforcing the law, but what is more, it is fining the railway companies zero dollars. The law is not actually being enforced.

Further on in Bill C-52, some measures are introduced to give the minister and the inspectors more authority. On that issue, we support the proposed amendments.

Indeed, when we know that a railway company is breaking the rules or has some safety problems, then it is important for the government to take action.

Again, we take issue with the lack of transparency in all this. There is a reason we asked for a public inquiry into the Lac-Mégantic tragedy and the transportation of dangerous goods. Again, we are not getting all the answers that we and the public are looking for.

When it comes to lack of transparency, we need not look very far; we just have to look at the government. The former minister said that if municipalities wanted information about dangerous goods passing through their area, they would have to complete an access to information request.

I have to acknowledge that the current minister has made progress. However, that does show this government's reluctance to share information and work with the municipalities.

There is not yet full co-operation with the municipalities. I wonder how the municipalities are going to pay for their first responders' training and ensure that they have all the training information and the resources needed to respond to an emergency.

Unfortunately, what I heard from the many municipal councillors and mayors I met with is not reassuring. I travelled around Quebec to hear from Quebeckers and, unfortunately, they still feel that there is a lack of co-operation and information-sharing.

For example, since Lac-Mégantic, the Transportation Safety Board has asked railway companies to provide their risk assessments.

• (1245)

Companies must assess the risks, for example when they pass through a densely populated area or when they are transporting a certain quantity of a particular type of product. In the United States, the assessments are public and can be viewed. The Canadian government has not taken steps to enable the public—and especially the groups affected, like municipalities—to access these assessments.

Government Orders

In committee we asked why a particular risk was taken, what risk assessments were done and whether Transport Canada had received them. The response was that risk assessments had been done. Transport Canada responded that all of that information is not made public. We cannot get an answer to our question. The NDP thinks that the government should be much more transparent.

Unfortunately it takes disasters like the one in Lac-Mégantic and the ones in northern Ontario for people to truly see what is going on. It is shocking to see what happens, for example, with train derailments and the impact they have on the environment. The government continues to lack transparency.

I have to say that this and other bills have been steps in the right direction. However, there are still some unresolved issues. One of those issues is the rail cars that were introduced after the Lac-Mégantic accident even though the Transportation Safety Board of Canada has been asking the government to make rail cars safer for the past 20 years. At the time they were called DOT-111 tank cars, or class 111 tank cars. "DOT-111" is the term used in the United States.

Last year, the government introduced new standards in response to Canadians' concerns. The government said it would take three years for all of the rail cars in use in Canada to comply with the new standards. Unfortunately, the Gogama incident and the subsequent Transportation Safety Board report showed that CPC-1232 tank cars were not adequate either. The new DOT-111 tank cars, which the minister said are the new standard, are not appropriate. They respond just like the old DOT-111 tank cars. That is not according to me; that is according to the Transportation Safety Board itself. We still have the same concerns.

The minister said that new standards would be brought in. I asked why it took so long for that to happen.

• (1250)

[English]

The minister's response was that it was negotiating and dealing with the U.S., which takes time. However, when we talk about the safety of Canadians, we know these standards are not sufficient. It will take another 10 years to put the promised standards in place. That is 10 more years for us to have these unsafe rail tankers going through our cities and near our schools. I have heard a lot about that from Canadians from coast to coast to coast. They are worried.

Although these are steps in the right direction, there is still a requirement for stronger regulations and enforcement. The main concern is with respect to the lack of oversight. The government has said that it is moving forward on that front, but we know the budget for the rail safety directorate has been cut by 20% since 2010 and when we only have one additional inspector, those actions speak louder than words. The government needs to do more to ensure that safety of Canadians is the number one priority.

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Trinity—Spadina, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the member with great interest. However, I am also aware that the policy of the member's party is to put a priority on passenger rail over that of freight, particularly in southern Ontario. In other words, freight trains would be pushed to the side as VIA Rail passenger trains pass through and then the cargo trains would be allowed to continue.

With the high volatility of the cargo and the switching of tracks being one of the prime drivers behind derailments, is the NDP considering re-evaluating its policy of putting VIA Rail on a priority basis and cargo trains having to shunt back and forth between side rails as they move through dense urban areas?

Mr. Hoang Mai: Mr. Speaker, yes, the NDP believes in passenger rail. We have to be proud of VIA Rail, although a lot of things need to be improved.

I am not sure if the member understands when we talk about switching because there already is switching. One of the problems is that passenger trains use the same lines as other railway companies. When we talk about giving priority, it does not change the fact that there is still switching. There are still issues with respect to how cargo goes through our cities.

The New Democrats believe in passenger rail, and that it is important. However, we need to find other options of not having cargo, especially dangerous goods, going through our cities, and this is the case right now. Giving priority does not change the fact that dangerous goods will continue to travel through densely populated areas.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when I was first elected here 11 years ago, the then Liberal government had a big plan for rail safety with self-regulation. Certainly the New Democratic Party warned against the danger of allowing very large corporate interests to self-regulate, but that seemed to be the Liberal mantra at the time in all manner of public safety issues, that we should allow companies to do it, that they would do it more efficiently, and it would save money. Yet, in all manner of areas, whether it was food safety in the listeriosis crisis, the beef industry or Lac-Mégantic, there is a fundamental need for the public good to have clear regulations and inspections from outside by public servants to ensure the public interest is protected.

I would like to ask my hon. colleague, from his time in his transport critic portfolio, what he thinks of this long-standing policy that the Liberals and the Conservatives have had of allowing corporations like CN and CP self-regulate.

• (1255)

Mr. Hoang Mai: Mr. Speaker, it is a concern. My colleague is right when he says that is the Liberal and Conservative philosophy of allowing self-regulation, but also, let us not forget, self-inspection.

A big study was done on the transportation of dangerous goods and the NDP came out with recommendations, whereas the Liberals had no recommendations. Basically, the Liberals were saying that everything that was in place was fine. When we talk about self-regulation and self-inspection, if companies are asked if their regulations are safer or stronger than the government has put forward, most of the companies that are respectable and have a culture of safety will say yes, their regulations are stronger and they have to do inspections. After that, the government does not look into it.

Government Orders

We have heard from the minister and the Liberals. They believe companies have to self-inspect and self-regulate. SMS is one step, but the way it is being enforced or applied is not sufficient or satisfactory to us.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, could the member provide some clarification on the question from my colleague from Toronto?

One could comment on the NDP position on pipelines, which is almost for no pipeline expansion and, as a direct result, we would no doubt see thousands more tankers on our railway system. However, I will put that one to the side for now.

The question I have for him, following on the question by the member for Toronto Centre, is this. When we talk about VIA Rail going down the tracks versus a freight train going down the tracks, what happens currently is that VIA Rail pulls over to the side and the freight train continues on. The NDP is saying that it should be reversed. If it is reversed, there is an element of danger whenever a train pulls over.

Would the NDP consider looking at changing its position so we would not put communities in danger by VIA Rail being given the first priority over some of the long freight trains that are carrying a considerable amount of dangerous goods, as he has pointed out?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Hoang Mai: Mr. Speaker, this is the second time I have been asked that question.

The problem is that rail cars transporting dangerous goods continue to run on the same tracks. The issue of priority will not necessarily make the problem any worse, because right now, there is already switching to allow passenger cars to go through.

The real question we need to ask, however, is this: why do the Liberal members continue to believe that the companies themselves will be the ones to come up with the best solutions, to self-regulate and self-inspect? Why is it that, despite what happened in Lac-Mégantic and in Gogama, the Liberals are being so supportive of the Conservative government's approach, even though it has not added any recommendations to any of the studies done on transporting dangerous goods? They are content with the status quo, with what happened in Lac-Mégantic and in Gogama, and have no additional recommendations to make.

I repeat, I am proud to be a member of a party that supports passenger rail. That is very important to us, considering our view of the environment and the future of transportation. We need to find the safest options. Unfortunately, the Liberal Party does not want to even look at that aspect.

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by thanking my colleague for his speech and I commend him on all his hard work on this file. Obviously, he raised all our constituents' concerns over rail safety.

We can see that the government is being very inconsistent. It is great that Bill C-52 would increase the companies' insurance premiums, but that measure is not enough.

Another thing we have to be proactive about is assessing safety in the first place. There was talk of deregulation, but the number of inspectors is quite small, since only one inspector is being added.

Could my colleague elaborate on that?

• (1300)

Mr. Hoang Mai: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Saint-Lambert for her question.

I worked with her on rail safety in the south shore and I know that this is an issue she follows very closely and is very important to her constituents.

Her question is very important in the context of today's debate. The government is putting rules in place, but they address certain financial issues that come up after the fact, once tragedy strikes.

However, what the NDP wants is preventive measures to ensure that tragedy like the one in Lac-Mégantic never strikes again. For that we need prevention. We need to make sure that the rules are not only tougher, but also enforced.

For that we need people. Unfortunately, the government is taking a wrong turn when it cuts the budget of those who are there to enforce the rules. What is more, since 2013, it has added only one more rail inspector, which does not bode well.

[*English*]

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Trinity—Spadina, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the issue of rail safety is paramount to the riding I represent. Both the southern boundary and northern boundary of the riding are defined by some of the busiest track in Canada.

The south end, which used to be an industrial zone, is now lived in by thousands of people, and thousands more within the next few years. It has a largely commuter rail system. VIA Rail and the regional GO Transit move through the corridor of downtown Toronto. In the north, a single pairing of rail lines moves along Dupont Street through central downtown Toronto. This is the same line that the Lac-Mégantic trains travelled through Toronto on. They are also the same lines on which, 30 or 40 years ago, the Mississauga trains that derailed and caused one of the largest civilian evacuations in the history of this country passed through this section of downtown Toronto.

As a former city councillor, we were always dealing with the challenges of these rail lines in terms of the zoning that they created, but also in terms of trying to moderate speeds and get a handle on the dangerous goods that are travelling on these rail lines.

The half dozen derailments in Ontario, two in Gogama and others, would also have travelled through some of the most densely populated parts of Canada. We know from one of the derailments that it was just a matter of time before the fractured wheel would crack, splinter and cause a derailment. As I said, that could have happened in the heart of downtown Toronto. That is not to say that wherever it happened would not have been a tragedy, but the cost, population and scope of the damage could have been phenomenal.

We have been tracking this issue very closely in the local neighbourhoods and there are a few things that come to mind. One of them is this notion of the zoning.

Government Orders

We heard at committee last week a Conservative member talk about trying to sterilize 300 metres on either side of the tracks right across the country as a way of protecting populations. This is absurd, as 300 metres would have meant the SkyDome could not have been built, the CN Tower would not have been built and even the Royal York would have been barred from redevelopment. Also, the cost of sterilizing that land would be in the trillions of dollars. However, this is what happens when one thinks off the back of an envelope in a committee. It scares one to think what might be happening in cabinet right now as we speak.

The zoning that has been put in place is about crash barriers. However, the zoning was put in place years ago when there were smaller trains with far less volatile chemicals travelling through this part of the country.

It is one thing, with those speed limits and size of trains, to build a 30-metre crash wall, reinforce it with engineering, push residential zoning away from the area and zone it as industrial. However, when we triple and quadruple the size of the trains, increase the speed of those trains and reclassify volatile goods so that we can increase those speeds, a crash barrier will simply become a containment for a blast, and that blast would be extraordinary, especially in a dense urban area, especially with 30-metre blast walls containing the explosion. We know about volatile chemicals when they explode in that circumstance: the containment actually increases the volatility and the damage would be extraordinary. Therefore, getting it right is fundamentally important.

My question to the Minister of Transport is germane to this, because that same line travels through downtown Toronto with level crossings. In one particular spot near the Dupont junction area, there is a public school right next to the level crossing. If a school bus, God forbid, stalled on the track or a traffic jam backed traffic up, and it happens, a freight train and a school bus could come into contact.

My question to the Minister of Transport is: What kind of money is there from the federal government to start changing these level crossings?

The answer to that is \$10 million a year. However, \$10 million a year does not pay one-eighth of the cost of changing those level crossings to underground bypasses, which is the norm across downtown Toronto. This means that there is not any money there, because there are about 5,000 of these level crossings identified as being dangerous across the country. Yet, we put \$10 million a year on the table, as a country, to try and modify and modernize our rail capacity as we load more and more and longer and longer trains into these areas. Something has to happen.

At the same time, the rail companies are not securing the corridor. We heard from one of the presidents in Montreal at the board of trade a few weeks past saying that terrorism is now a concern. If those volatile chemicals that are travelling through Lac-Mégantic and Mississauga are travelling through Toronto, one would think the rail corridor would be secure.

• (1305)

I can show, next to a liquor store in downtown Toronto, where the fence has been pulled apart so many times they do not even bother putting it back up. We can see the path that has been beaten in the

snow and in the soil, across the train tracks. It is extraordinarily dangerous.

When we try to get information as a city on what the actual speeds of these trains are, what the speed limits should be in a dense urban area, when we try to re-calibrate that for the volatility, size and weight of the trains passing through, when we try to get that information, we are told we cannot have it.

We can get the information after the fact now. We can get disclosure after the fact. However, when an emergency is under way, they have to call while the trucks are on the way. Trying to build a rail corridor in advance for the volatility, that information is seen as proprietary and as a result cities do not have it.

The transport minister is mistaken when she says the FCM is satisfied with this bill and these steps, because the FCM is looking for more information. One of the reasons is not because of fire departments like the one we have in Toronto, it is that all along the rail corridors across this country most of the fire departments are made up of volunteer firefighters. They have neither the training nor the equipment, nor the advance knowledge nor the capacity to get the advance knowledge as they race to some of these areas.

Advance notification and co-operation with FCM is missing from this bill and it needs to be in it.

We also know that there is virtually no monitoring. When we try to find out what the speeds of the trains are, and we ask, we are met with a blank stare. It has gotten to the point where we are almost putting police officers with radar guns by the tracks to try to figure out if they are in compliance with their own rules and regulations. That has to change. Posted speed limits and community knowledge about this have to become the norm. Instead, it is still hidden behind this veil of railway secrecy which predates the arrival of many of the municipal codes that govern the exact issue we are talking about here.

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

Every time a solution is layered on the rail companies, what is built is pressure for a new pipeline. During the by-election that I was elected in, the NDP was claiming it did not support any pipelines in Canada, including Canada east. It said it wanted everything moved by rail. It became very apparent to the voters in the riding that I represent that if everything is not put on rail, it ends up in pipelines; if it is not in pipelines, it is on rail.

Government Orders

There has to be a decision one way or the other, but to be against both is not a solution. The chemicals and oil are going to get to market, and we have to manage them better. There has to be a decision based on evidence and safety, with proper enforcement and standards that make a solution possible.

Pumping it all through Toronto on rail cars, then not enforcing rail safety, then not maintaining the lines, then not monitoring the speeds, and then not doing proper safety inspections, and then not giving municipalities the money they need to build the infrastructure to make this happen is a recipe for disaster. We have seen tragic disasters in smaller communities. It is a matter of time, unfortunately, and if we do not take action that we are going to see it in a larger community. That has to change. We have to get on that issue right away.

While this bill takes some small steps forward, and we will be supporting those small steps forward, there is much more that needs to be done. That is the campaign that residents in the riding I represent are starting to lead.

The other issue is this: the notion of shunting cargo and freight trains to the side tracks while passenger trains whip through at high speed appears to be good transportation policy vis-à-vis getting commuters from one city to the next or from one part of the region to the next. The trouble with that is that these large trains do not move very quickly when they do move and have to take the side tracks.

The act of zipping across lines and moving to side tracks creates the volatility and the risk. If there is constant moving of volatile freight from line to line to line to allow passenger trains to go through straight and fast, that actually accelerates and amplifies the possibility of a risk. I think that is the question we are trying to get at when we are talking to our NDP colleagues about their priority of passenger rail over freight rail.

We have to do what is right for freight. The real solution is not prioritizing one over the other. The real solution is building more track. That is what Unifor has been asking for. That is what this Liberal Party has been asking for. That is the actual solution, to invest in the infrastructure, not trying to make do with the existing circumstance and just hoping that the decision made does not end up in a disaster.

● (1310)

It is about taking the tough steps to understand that these chemicals and materials that are cargo have to get through some dense urban areas. The choice is pipeline versus rail, in some cases. The other choice is freight over passenger to maintain safety. If we do all of that correctly, engage communities and municipalities, and fund municipalities properly, we can end up with a transportation system that works, that is safe, that is modern, and that does not require monitoring the fear as much as monitoring the freight.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Philip Toone (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech. There are certainly aspects that we should examine.

I think my colleague is dreaming about the era of Pierre Elliott Trudeau, who said that he wanted to double the number of railway

tracks in western Canada in order to improve the transportation network.

Has my colleague calculated how much it would cost to double the tracks in Canada? How much time would that take? I think he is living in a dream world, especially since the Liberal Party has not introduced any plans in that regard. I hope that they will introduce a plan and not just criticize the other parties' plans, which have been tabled and costed.

If he does not support increased oversight by the Transportation Safety Board of Canada, then what exactly is the member proposing to do? If the Liberals are instead proposing to spend billions on other railway lines, have they found the means to pay for that dream?

[*English*]

Mr. Adam Vaughan: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that there are many people dreaming of Trudeau these days, and that is clearly reflected in the polls. Some people's dream is another party's nightmare, quite clearly.

The area I am talking about where there has been investment in rail and a multiplying of the number of tracks—doubling was the phrase the member used—is the Quebec-Toronto-Windsor corridor. In that area, Unifor has identified and clearly shown that adding additional rail capacity would create safety and better commute times for both regional and national companies. That is one of the areas I think we need to explore. You are asking for particular policies. You will get those.

In terms of oversight, we want more oversight and more effective oversight. We certainly want the money that is currently budgeted to be spent.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Before we go to questions and comments, I remind all hon. members to direct their comments to the Chair rather than directly to their colleagues.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to know if my colleague could expand on the area of infrastructure spending. If we are prepared to spend infrastructure dollars, not only will it create valuable jobs, which Canadians are in great need of, but it will expand economic horizons and provide wonderful social benefits.

Can the member expand on the feasibility of having new tracks put in place and on how all sides could benefit if only we had a government that understood basic economics and how the country would benefit from investing more in infrastructure.

● (1315)

Mr. Adam Vaughan: Mr. Speaker, the current fund for rail underpasses is \$10 million a year, which is an eighth of the cost of a typical underpass. The reason municipalities are not subscribing is that they do not have the other \$70 million to build.

Under questioning, the minister answered that the municipalities could use the new build Canada infrastructure fund, which, as we know, has been cut down to \$200 million this year. It is back-end loaded to ten years from now, which means that we have to wait ten years for rail safety. That is not appropriate.

Government Orders

The provinces quite often see this as a federal responsibility, and they do not see a role for partnering. If the government was serious about rail safety, municipal infrastructure, and building an economy right across the country, those dollars would not be so small, the payout times would not be so staggered, and the commitment to municipalities would not be just a moral commitment; it would be a real commitment that delivered real dollars for infrastructure.

One of the reasons it is so critical that we change the government is that we need to change those policies.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to speak today in support of Bill C-52, the safe and accountable rail act, which would further strengthen our rail safety regime and ensure that adequate compensation is available. Our government takes the safety and security of Canadians very seriously.

In my constituency of Brandon—Souris, rail safety is an important issue, as most communities have a rail line going directly through town. In addition to rail lines going through communities, many farmers and landowners have a rail line on their property. Only a couple of weeks ago, there was a train derailment northeast of Brandon. We were fortunate that the damage was minimal and no one was hurt, but this incident is just another reminder of why we need to implement the measures contained in Bill C-52.

Let me first highlight how the government works with communities to ensure proper emergency response regimes and then how the measures in Bill C-52 would ensure liability and compensation for any community.

I would like to take the opportunity to salute our first responders, who play a critical role in the event of an accident. We all value the work of Canada's first responders, and our government works with them on matters pertaining to the transport of dangerous goods and emergency response. Transport Canada works to ensure that measures are in place to quickly respond in the event of an accident involving dangerous goods. This work includes ensuring that municipalities and first responders have the tools and information they need in a timely manner. The department provides emergency planners and first responders with information to assess risks in their communities and to plan and train for emergencies.

On November 20, 2013, the Minister of Transport issued protective direction no. 32, under the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act. The intent of the protective direction was to help ensure that municipalities would have access to better information for emergency response and planning purposes. According to the protective direction, railway operators must share yearly aggregate information on the nature and volume of dangerous goods transported by railway through a municipality to the municipality's designated emergency planning officer. As well, all operators must report any significant change in the information provided to municipalities, meaning a change in the types and volumes of goods transiting through a municipality, as soon as is practical after the change occurs. This information provides emergency planners and first responders with the information they need to improve risk assessment, emergency planning, and training. Municipal leaders and emergency planners are already using this information to prepare for incidents involving dangerous goods.

Emergency response has been an important issue that has been raised by municipalities and the public. It is important to note that the vast majority of dangerous goods shipments arrive at their final destination without incident. However, unfortunately, accidents can still happen. To help avoid the potentially serious consequences of such events, as well as to speed up recovery efforts, our government is actively involved in supporting municipalities and first responders in emergency situations.

On April 23, 2014, our government announced the creation of an emergency response task force to bring together stakeholders, including municipalities, first responders, railways, shippers, and response organizations, to strengthen emergency response capacity. The emergency response task force will conduct further research and will assess, evaluate, and make recommendations to advise on improvements we can make to the emergency response assistance plan program. In fact, such recommendations from the task force have already been implemented. The task force members include railway representatives, chemical producers, and the Aboriginal Firefighters Association of Canada, just to name a few. The Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs is also an active member of this task force.

• (1320)

These members have been meeting monthly since July 2014, and sub-group meetings have been held for targeted discussions on specific topics, one of them being first responder training. Our government is facilitating these discussions, where railways and shippers can join forces with the first responders community to identify readily available training materials, to identify gaps, and to find solutions that will increase support to first responders during large-scale rail incidents involving flammable liquids.

The emergency response task force continues its work of reviewing and making recommendations on the transportation of flammable liquids by rail in Canada, and our government looks forward to receiving its final report and recommendations this summer.

Emergency response assistance plans are required for certain dangerous goods that call for special expertise and response equipment. These plans stipulate what industry must do to support first responders during an accident involving dangerous goods.

Our government has worked to strengthen the emergency response assistance plan regime. We are now requiring rail shippers to develop such plans for higher-risk flammable liquids, such as crude oil, gasoline, diesel, aviation fuel, and ethanol, when a single-tank car contains one of these designated liquids. These plans are now in place to help provide expert assistance to first responders.

Government Orders

Before a shipment can be made, any person who imports or offers for transport dangerous goods must submit a plan to Transport Canada. The department then reviews the plan and approves it if it is satisfied that there is a capability to respond to emergency situations for those dangerous goods listed in the plan. The emergency response assistance plan assists municipalities and local emergency responders by providing them with around-the-clock technical experts and specially trained and equipped emergency response personnel at the scene of an accident.

Members of the House may be aware that Transport Canada operates the Canadian Transport Emergency Centre, a national advisory service that assists emergency response personnel in handling dangerous goods emergencies on a 24-7 basis. This centre is staffed by bilingual professional scientists who specialize in emergency response. They are experienced in interpreting technical information and in providing assistance to first responders. The centre handles over 25,000 phone calls per year related to safety, and scientists are available to take emergency calls immediately.

Transport Canada, through CANUTEC, also publishes an emergency response guidebook to help firefighters that is available at no charge to the first responder community. In addition to being available online, almost 100,000 paperback copies of the most recent version of the ERG 2012 guidebook were distributed for all vehicles used by Canadian fire departments, police departments, and ambulance services across Canada.

The next publication of the emergency response guidebook, scheduled for 2016, will include information on the Canadian emergency response assistance plan program and its applications. The inclusion of this information was recommended by the same task force that is investigating the need for future changes to the emergency response assistance plan program.

The Lac-Mégantic tragedy highlighted the need to strengthen Canada's liability and compensation regime for rail. In this case, Montreal, Maine and Atlantic Railway only carried \$25 million in insurance, far too little to cover the scope of damages from this catastrophic accident. That is why in the 2013 Speech from the Throne, our government committed to requiring shippers and railways to carry additional insurance so that they will be held accountable.

In January 2014, the Minister of Transport launched a review of the liability and compensation regime for the railways. The primary goal of this review was to strengthen the rail liability and compensation regime and to ensure that sufficient funds would be available to compensate potential victims and clean up the environment after any future incident.

● (1325)

Bill C-52 goes beyond simply increasing insurance requirements. The bill would also provide an additional source of funds for catastrophic accidents, clarify railway liability and implement stronger enforcement measures.

The first step Bill C-52 takes to ensure that accident costs would be covered is to implement mandatory railway insurance requirements that correspond to the risks associated with railway operations. The Canadian Transportation Agency would assign

railways to one of four levels of insurance based on the type and volume of dangerous goods they carry. Railways carrying little or no dangerous goods would be required to hold a minimum of \$25 million in insurance, while class 1 railways, which carry substantial amounts of dangerous goods, would be required to hold at least \$1 million in insurance. Short line railways carrying moderate amounts of dangerous goods would initially be required to hold \$50 million or \$125 million in insurance, again depending on the type and volumes of dangerous goods being carried. The levels would increase to \$100 million and \$250 million respectively one year later. Railways would be required to inform the agency of any change in their operations that could impact their insurance.

Importantly, the agency would be empowered to ensure that railways complied with the new requirements. The agency could make inquiries as it deemed necessary in order to make certain that railways continued to hold the required amount of insurance. If it found otherwise, the agency would have to revoke or suspend the railway's certificate of fitness.

On top of this, Bill C-52 would provide the agency with the ability to apply administrative monetary penalties to any railway failing to comply with insurance level requirements or failing to report a change in its operations that could affect its insurance. These penalties would go up to \$100,000 per violation.

With these risk-based mandatory minimum levels of insurance and strengthened enforcement mechanisms, Bill C-52 would hold railways accountable and would ensure there would be sufficient resources to cover the vast majority of potential railway accidents.

What would occur in the rare event of a catastrophic rail incident, like the one experienced in Lac-Mégantic? The transportation of crude oil by rail is rapidly growing and as we know, accidents involving crude oil can have dangerous consequences. It is important that a strengthened liability and compensation regime be prepared to address the costs of such an accident.

For catastrophic accidents involving crude oil, Bill C-52 would implement a two-tier regime, similar to the one we currently have for marine tankers. The regime would clearly establish and share liability between railways and shippers and provide an additional source of compensation. In this two-tier regime, railway companies would be held automatically liable up to their mandatory minimum level of insurance. This means they would be liable without the need to prove fault or negligence.

Government Orders

In cases where a crude oil accident results in damages that surpass the railway's minimum mandatory insurance levels, a supplementary compensation fund would cover the costs. The fund would be financed by the shippers of crude oil through a levy of \$1.65 per tonne. Railways would collect the levy and remit it to the government and the funds would be kept in a special account on the consolidated revenue fund. Once the fund reaches the targeted capitalization of \$250 million, the minister of transport could stop the levy and then reinstate it again when and if ever necessary. The fund would be managed by an administrator appointed by the Governor-in-Council. The administrator would be responsible for establishing and paying out claims.

In the unlikely event that damages from an accident exceed the amount held in the shipper financed fund, the consolidated revenue fund would act as a backup to ensure that all costs were covered. Any amount charged to the consolidated revenue fund would be reimbursed using the shipper levy. The Minister of Transport could also institute a special and temporary levy on federally regulated railways to expedite the repayment of the public purse.

• (1330)

This new regime for crude oil accidents would cover all actual losses, including damages to people, property and the environment. It would also cover costs incurred by the Crown in responding to the accident and compensation for damage to the non-use value of public resources. Although at the outset, the fund would only cover incidents involving crude oil, the bill provides the flexibility to add other dangerous goods by regulation in the future.

Of course, the new shipper-financed fund could not function without a means of ensuring compliance. Administrative monetary penalties of up to \$100,000 per violation could be applied to ensure the railways adhered to their obligation to collect the levy and remit funds to the government, as well as the requirement to keep records regarding the levy.

Railways common carrier obligation to provide service will be dependent on the payment of the levy. This means that a crude oil shipper would be required to pay the levy in order to obtain rail service.

By creating mandatory insurance levels for railways, providing additional layers of compensation and instituting robust mechanisms to ensure compliance, Bill C-52 would make certain that in the event of a rail accident, no matter the magnitude, there would be sufficient resources to compensate victims and remediate the environment.

I encourage all members to vote in favour of the bill and refer it to the committee without further delay.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the current government has been trying to catch up as a result of the Liberal government's deregulation of railways in 1999.

Rail safety regulation has been neglected, and we see that without a government committed to ensuring that safety we find ourselves trying to catch up. There was the Lac-Mégantic tragedy in particular, and in the riding next to mine, in south-west Montreal, there have been four derailments in recent years.

Do my Conservative colleagues not believe that the government should make a stronger commitment to rail safety?

[*English*]

Mr. Larry Maguire: Mr. Speaker, we want to do everything we can to ensure the safety of our railroad transportation and all mechanisms of transportation. We need to be accountable wherever we can.

There certainly has been more crude oil carried on rail in the last number of years with the expansions and what we would have anticipated had there been more pipelines. I would encourage the opposition to come on side with some of the favourable pipeline developments we have put forward and recommended.

Everyone knows that pipelines are the safest way to move oil, interprovincially and internationally on our continent, as well as trying to expand some of our export commitments and customer opportunities as well.

However, we have certainly taken the bull by the horns, so to speak, in regard to Bill C-52, safe and accountable rail act and have responded to the tragedy that happened at Lac-Mégantic. We can never underestimate the devastation that took place in that community. This is just a start in regard to the programming that we can put in place, and the compensation and importance that we put on rail responsibility.

• (1335)

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to put for my hon. colleague the position put forward by the member for Trinity—Spadina in his remarks, and it is this. One of the most dangerous aspects of rail travel with regard to freight is the shunting of large trains from place to place to make way for passenger trains.

It is not so much a case of choosing between efficient passenger travel and efficient freight travel or safety as much as it is a question of allocation of resources. All too often we see that every problem here apparently can be addressed by a legislative change, when really, what we should do is look at how resources are allocated.

Does the hon. member agree that increased infrastructure spending, especially with respect to rails, would increase safety, and is an 87% cut in the build Canada fund from \$2 billion down to \$287 million consistent with the government's apparent support of rail safety in that context?

Mr. Larry Maguire: Mr. Speaker, the pretext of the member's question is wrong. The building Canada plan is the largest single investment in Canadian infrastructure in Canadian history, at \$7 billion over the next 10 years. Therefore, the premise of his question is false.

Government Orders

However, I agree that taxpayers should not have to be on the hook for these kinds of accidents. We brought forward Bill C-52, the safe and accountable rail act, to ensure there are insurance levels that are commensurate with today's costs of doing business and the actions of cleanup, not only for our environment but also for the tragedies that have happened in communities such as Lac-Mégantic, which hopefully will never happen again.

I believe the levels of compensation with respect to insurance are responsible. There have been public discussions with industry as well. There is a compensation package put in place of \$1.65 a metric tonne to help compensate for disasters that may be over and above the regular insurance limits allowed by the insurance packages we have asked to have put in place. The levy would still be in place to help collect any back amounts, which would be at the cost of the government as well.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech.

I want to tell him that, unfortunately, when it comes to safety self-regulation has not been very successful.

My colleagues from the south shore and I organized a public consultation on the transportation of dangerous goods. Our constituents are very concerned because they do not have the information they need about the trains that pass through densely populated urban areas. There are houses and apartment buildings in these areas.

Although this bill increases the level of liability insurance that companies are required to have, it does not really focus on safety and assessment.

Could my colleague tell us how his government plans to take those concerns into account and address them in a constructive and positive manner?

• (1340)

[*English*]

Mr. Larry Maguire: Mr. Speaker, my colleague's question is an important one because it refers to a situation I had the opportunity to deal with in my farm leadership life on the Prairies before I came to Parliament or the Manitoba legislature.

We have been dealing with train sizes and speeds for many decades. It is the reason why I was so firm with respect to ensuring that the emergency response task force include stakeholder input throughout the whole process as it was developed. That is over and above the insurance liability. Compensation is only one aspect of covering the costs of cleanup.

We would like to see measures put in place to prevent these accidents from happening. I believe Bill C-52, the safe and accountable rail act, would create a situation where there would be more planning on the table with respect to the emergency response task force and the emergency response plan, which would inevitably reduce some of these accidents. However, as I said earlier, one of the answers is to move more oil the tracks and into pipelines.

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Trinity—Spadina, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to hear that because during the by-election the NDP

candidate who I ran against said that the New Democrats would never support any pipelines. Which is it? Is it no pipelines or is all of this to go by rail? What is the position of the NDP? I am trying to get an answer on that one.

Mr. Larry Maguire: Mr. Speaker, I have also heard the New Democrats say in the House that do not want it to move oil by pipeline but they also do not want it to move by rail. I do not think the answer is to try to move it all by truck either. Although I thank my colleague for that question, there is a bit of a setup there. However, it looks like neither party is in favour of moving oil by pipeline.

Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill C-52, an act to amend the Canada Transportation Act and the Railway Safety Act.

Railway safety has been a very important issue to the New Democratic Party. We have watched multiple derailments across this country over recent years. This topic has gained a lot of attention and is of tremendous concern to the Canadian public. That concern was most certainly heightened by the terrible tragedy of the derailment in Lac-Mégantic, where 47 lives were lost. It is important to keep at the front of our minds as we discuss railway safety in the House that when accidents like this happen, there are losses that are irrecoverable. Those losses include the loss of life and they include damage to our environment which in many cases we cannot recover.

Since that terrible tragedy in Lac-Mégantic, the Conservatives have promised time and time again to rectify the shortcomings of the railway safety system in Canada with increased safety inspections and rail safety compliance measures. They have yet to honour that commitment and this bill does very little to move us closer to that commitment.

With three train derailments occurring in the span of a month recently, this is a pressing issue, top of mind for many Canadians, not just for those who live where the derailments occurred, but right across this country, for those who live or have loved ones who live close to railway lines. This is an issue which the government has been scrambling to catch up with for the duration of its time in government, which is coming on 10 years now.

So far, these derailments have occurred mainly in rural areas, the terrible tragedy in Lac-Mégantic notwithstanding. As the critic for urban affairs, I am hoping to draw the attention of the House to the potential economic, human, and environmental costs that would arise if something like this were to happen to a train passing through one of our big cities. It should be noted that this bill would do little to alleviate the costs associated with a derailment in urban areas, where in many cases there are tens of thousands of people living quite literally within a stone's throw of a potential derailment site.

Government Orders

There are some principles that we in the NDP adhere to, stand by, and put forward that inform our comments on Bill C-52 through this debate. These core principles include implementing the principle of polluter pay while also improving rail liability and accountability measures for rail companies. The latter, rail liability and accountability measures, are long overdue. In the case of Lac-Mégantic, taxpayers are still on the hook for hundreds of millions of dollars in cleanup costs and rebuilding costs, and of course, as I have mentioned, one cannot put a price on the cost of the lives lost there.

• (1345)

The second principle is that the very fundamental, core responsibility of government is to protect the public. The NDP believes we must do everything in our power to ensure that tragedies such as the one that occurred in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec, never happen again. Fixing the liability for that is part of a necessary response to that incident, but it does not deal with the issue of prevention, which of course is the most important principle here.

The third is that we not only need stronger laws, but we need stronger enforcement of those laws and regulations. We need penalties on those who break them. It is clear to us and to the experts, such as the Transportation Safety Board, that the government has a very serious problem in terms of oversight, inspections and audits.

These are the three principles that will inform my comments on the bill itself.

Since 1999, successive Liberal and Conservative governments have let companies self-regulate and self-inspect their equipment and railway lines. This approach is clearly not working to protect the safety of Canadians.

Since 2013 and after the Lac-Mégantic tragedy, Transport Canada has only hired one additional railway safety inspector. The number has gone from 116 in 2013 to 117 in 2015. What we need most of all is for the government to provide the necessary resources to Transport Canada so that it has the needed number of inspectors and auditors to fulfill its oversight function. Rather than cutting the rail safety director's budget by almost 20% as the government has done, the government needs to invest in that directorate's budget in order to protect the safety of Canadians.

The bill put forward by the minister is an effort to address some of the liability and accountability issues associated with railway safety, and its tragic and unfortunate history of derailments. It proposes several necessary fixes, but the fixes that it does propose are simply a start. As I have mentioned, it fails to address the most pressing issue, that of preventing these incidents in the first place.

We not only need stronger laws, but we need stronger enforcement of laws and regulations. We need penalties on those who break those laws and regulations. It is clear to us and to the experts that the government has not put in place the necessary penalties, oversight, inspections and audits to amend the record that we have of railway safety disasters in this country.

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

provides more authority to the minister, cabinet and railway safety inspectors.

It appears to me that these are measures put forward by a government playing catch-up on this issue of rail safety and have more to do with covering the costs of train derailments than with public safety itself. The bill sets out to provide compensation for victims of derailments after the fact, as if accidents and train derailments are inevitable.

These concerns of ours which we put forward today in this debate in the House are also shared by Safe Rail Communities, a community-based initiative started by people in Toronto. They have raised concerns about the liability amount, and that most of the amendments in this bill are retrospective and retroactive. They are after-the-fact measures. The Safe Rail Communities organization wants to see more preventative action by the government.

• (1350)

Nevertheless, the proposed changes remain necessary, and they do receive the support of this caucus.

When it comes to insurance, there is currently no minimum insurance level for federally regulated railways. However, the Canadian Transportation Agency is mandated to review the insurance coverage of railway companies on a case-by-case basis to make sure that it is adequate.

Bill C-52 would provide for a legislated minimum insurance coverage from \$25 million for railway companies transporting minimal quantities of dangerous goods, up to a maximum of \$1 billion for railways transporting more substantial quantities. Railway companies would be liable for losses, damages, costs and expenses resulting from a railway accident involving crude oil or other designated goods up to the level of the company's minimum liability insurance coverage. Based on the cost of train derailments, these measures appear to be justified, at a minimum.

After the Lac-Mégantic disaster, for example, the Montreal, Maine and Atlantic Railway exhausted its insurance coverage of \$25 million and went bankrupt, yet damages paid by taxpayers have amounted to hundreds of millions of dollars. The Quebec government has estimated that the total cost of that accident will be over \$400 million.

The second thing the bill sets out to do is to establish a pooled disaster relief fund that would be made available if the minimum insurance levels are insufficient. Railway companies shipping crude oil would pay a fee, starting at the rate of \$1.65 per tonne shipped as of March 31, 2016. That amounts to 23¢ per barrel of oil. The fund would be capped at a total of \$250 million to cover costs above the company's insurance coverage if it is involved in an accident.

For the 200,000 barrels of oil transported daily, Transport Canada estimates oil levies under the fund would contribute about \$17 million annually to general revenues. While this is a step forward, there are outstanding concerns that this may not be sufficient in the event of another major disaster, particularly in an urban area. This levy would need to be in place for almost 15 years before that \$250 million cap was actually generated. With the Lac-Mégantic disaster totalling about \$400 million, it is very easy to see that a derailment in an urban area could almost inevitably exceed that \$250 million generated through the disaster relief fund.

With respect to more authority given to the minister, cabinet and railway safety inspectors, we say that finally the bill would implement a number of changes to do this. For example, under the bill, railway safety inspectors would be authorized to order a person or company to take any measure they deemed necessary to mitigate a threat to the safety or security of railway operations. These amendments would also authorize the minister to order a company that is implementing its safety management system in a manner that risks compromising railway safety to take necessary corrective measures. These are clearly important measures to put in place.

While the government has a responsibility to ensure that tragedies like Lac-Mégantic never happen again, we also want to ensure that railways have enough insurance to cover all the costs in the event of a disaster, and as mentioned, particularly in the context of a disaster in an urban area. With that said, the amounts are clearly insufficient. The government should do more, and we believe the government can do more.

• (1355)

The government has a responsibility to ensure that no disasters like this take place again, that all of the costs are covered, and to put in place a polluter pay system to be applied to total environmental and cleanup costs of railway accidents. These must and should be borne by the industry, as is consistent with the polluter pay principle, and not downloaded on to taxpayers as they have been in the Quebec context. Once companies are fully liable for their actions, the safety of the public, and the safe transportation of their goods, we believe they will begin to take safety more seriously.

However, we are concerned that the insurance levels established in this bill are not sufficient. Insurance levels should be based on the threat to the public, not just on the type and volume of goods that are transported. Although the bill would establish a pooled disaster relief fund that would be made available if minimum insurance levels are insufficient, we also want to ensure that the fund is sufficient to cover all costs of disasters, including the unlimited liability for railway negligence.

To adequately protect the public from future risk, we want the government to pass the bill before the next election. We are concerned that the government will not make this a priority. It has been playing catch-up, and a bill like this is long overdue in light of the very sorry safety record that the government has with respect to rail safety in this country. That means that we continue to experience uncertainty and a lack of accountability, and communities along railway lines in this country continue to be exposed to terrible and potentially tragic risks.

Statements by Members

If the Conservatives are serious about this bill and about these measures, they will take quick action. We in the New Democratic Party are prepared to work with the government—

• (1400)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): The time for government orders has expired. The hon. member for Beaches—East York will have three minutes remaining in his speech when this matter returns before the House.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Rick Norlock (Northumberland—Quinte West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I stand in the House today, confident that our government is keeping Canadians safe. Terrorism remains a very real threat to Canadians and Canadian values. As a member of the public safety committee currently reviewing the government's anti-terrorism legislation, I know first-hand the commitment that our government is making to protect Canadians from violent jihad extremism.

Bill C-51 is an important piece of legislation that would provide the proper tools to law enforcement to apprehend and prosecute terrorists. As a retired police officer, I know how important it is that our law enforcement officers have the ability to go after these terrorists. When it comes to terrorism, it is most important that those who are tasked to protect Canadians have the enforcement tools and ability to do so.

* * *

[Translation]

NADIA BOUILLON

Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to pay tribute to Nadia Bouillon from Chelmsford who won a gold medal in solo women's ice dance at the Special Olympics in Prince George, British Columbia.

A member of the Walden Figure Skating Club, Nadia has been skating since she was eight years old and says she enjoys the hard work that it takes to compete at this level.

Most importantly, Nadia tells us that she skates to have fun and do the best she can. She enjoys travelling to competitions and making new friends with other athletes.

Nadia's success is rooted community engagement and the determination it takes to overcome obstacles.

I am sure all members will join me in congratulating Nadia and her parents Paul and Lynn, along with her coach Maxine Connolly and everyone who makes the Walden Figure Skating Club successful.

Great job Nadia.

Statements by Members

[English]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada is a trading nation, and our Conservative government's ambitious trade agenda is helping small businesses and the economy prosper in Lambton—Kent—Middlesex and across Canada.

This past weekend, I had the opportunity to host the Minister of International Trade at two round tables, which focused on small businesses and the opportunity to host a global workshop to further promote local growth on an international level. For example, I am pleased to say that Mayor Joanne Vanderheyden of Strathroy—Caradoc and her team have one of the first designated, investment-ready, certified sites, the largest so far in Ontario. It is ready to attract new business, taking advantage of Canada's stable bank system and low taxes.

Trade agreements such as CETA encourage prosperity and growth in agriculture, manufacturing, and all industries. Our government's unprecedented support for small businesses is recognized as the opportunity for them to reach their full potential.

* * *

RESIDENT OF LAC-SAINT-LOUIS

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Allison Tsylin, a young resident of my riding, on a remarkable scholastic achievement. Allison recently took part in Quebec's Journée des maths, an online competition that tests students from grade 3 to secondary 4 on their knowledge of mathematics. She placed first in her group for the second year in a row. Competition was so fierce that it required a perfect score to secure top place in her grade 6 group.

Math is just one of Allison's talents. She is an accomplished chess player who has participated in national junior tournaments and represented Canada internationally. Allison also enjoys karate, ballet, swimming, and gymnastics.

I had the pleasure of hosting Allison, along with her mother Diana and father Vadim, on a recent visit to Parliament Hill. Allison, who already demonstrates a keen understanding of Parliament, was delighted to take in her very first question period from the gallery.

Please join me in congratulating Allison and wishing her continued success in her many wonderful endeavours.

* * *

LEGALIZATION OF MARIJUANA

Mr. Terence Young (Oakville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, legalized marijuana in Colorado has not been just good clean fun. Illegal drug dealers are still thriving, as dope smokers avoid the 27.9% sales tax. In 2014, 45 children who were eight years old or under ingested marijuana-laced sweets and ended up in poison control centres, some needing intubation or spinal taps in hospital. One young man consumed a marijuana cookie and jumped to his death. Another allegedly shot and killed his wife after eating marijuana candy. In Canada, most dead drivers in car accidents are aged 16 to 24, and

40% of Canadian youth have ridden with a driver who has smoked marijuana.

So much for the Liberal leader's brave new world of legalized dope. Shamefully, the Pied Piper of pot announced his legalization plan to teenagers at a Charlottetown high school. While parents are looking for ways to keep their children and teens safe, the Liberal Leader would make that harder. He should take advice from one of his old Pink Floyd albums: "Hey! [...] leave [them] kids alone!"

* * *

● (1405)

CANADA POST

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are concerned about the end of door-to-door mail delivery. In my riding alone, Canada Post plans to shift 15,000 households to community mailboxes this year. Most residents find this hard to accept, especially after Canada Post's announcement that it made a profit of nearly \$200 million again this year.

In my riding, residents and their municipalities are still struggling to get answers from Canada Post. Who will cover the costs associated with installing these boxes, like lighting and sidewalks? Who will evaluate pedestrian safety and traffic concerns, or will Canada Post just wait for accidents to happen? Who will pick up the tab for litter? Who will clean up the graffiti? Who will compensate those whose property values crash when a box is plopped in front of their house?

I continue to get phone calls, letters, and emails in my constituency office almost every day asking for help, but Canada Post refuses even to host an open house in my riding to answer questions like these.

It is time for the Conservatives to order a halt to this ill-conceived and unnecessary attack on an essential public service and good-paying jobs in our communities. It is time for the Conservative government and its cronies at Canada Post to go.

* * *

THORNCLIFFE NEIGHBOURHOOD OFFICE

Mr. John Carmichael (Don Valley West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to congratulate the Thorncliffe Neighbourhood Office in Don Valley West on its 30th anniversary.

This organization has faithfully served the people in my riding and surrounding area, providing a wide range of community services. It gives assistance to seniors, conducts valuable job training and job placement services, and facilitates a variety of programs for children and youth.

Our government is proud to partner with this organization that assists thousands of newcomers each year in the settlement process. It also operates one of the largest English-language instruction programs in all of Ontario.

Statements by Members

I offer my sincere congratulations to Bill Pashby, chair of the board, and Ahmed Hussein, executive director, and the entire TNO team. I wish them the very best as they continue to serve our community.

* * *

PENTICTON INDIAN BAND

Mr. Dan Albas (Okanagan—Coquihalla, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we often talk on the importance of building bridges with first nation communities. I am happy to announce that in Okanagan—Coquihalla this is happening literally, as the Penticton Indian Band is building the new Satik^W Crossing over a portion of the Okanagan River system. This new bridge is vital to opening up lands for economic development that will in turn create jobs.

It is developments like this bridge that have earned the Penticton Indian Band the award of Aboriginal Economic Development Corporation of the year from the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business. More recently, the band received a coveted Tommie Award for environmental construction for its Skaha Hills development.

This is very exciting news for our region, and the Satik^W Crossing is just one of the many major projects underway or recently completed.

However, these projects do not happen by accident. I would like to ask the House to join me in recognizing the leadership of Chief Jonathan Kruger and council in making these important projects a reality.

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[*Translation*]

MEDAL OF BRAVERY

Mr. Hoang Mai (Brossard—La Prairie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on May 29, 2012, one of my constituents in Brossard—La Prairie, Constable Carl Éthier, from the Service de police de la Ville de Montréal, rescued a suicidal woman who was threatening to jump off the top of a 22-storey building.

Constable Éthier and his colleague, Constable Roberge, scaled a four-foot-high safety wall and crawled onto a narrow ledge towards the intoxicated woman. They placed themselves dangerously close to the edge in order to reach her and bring her to safety.

I invite all of my colleagues in the House to join me in congratulating Constable Éthier and his colleague Constable Roberge for this remarkable act, for which they received the Governor General's Medal of Bravery. This decoration recognizes acts of bravery in hazardous circumstances.

I extend our congratulations and our deepest gratitude to our men and women in uniform.

* * *

● (1410)

[*English*]

TAXATION

Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadian families know that Conservatives

understand that parents know best. That is why we introduced the family tax cut and enhanced universal child care benefit that will provide support to four million Canadian families with children.

In fact, this is one of the biggest packages of tax relief for Canadian families in modern history. The vast majority of these benefits will go to low or middle-income families.

Sadly, the high-tax and high-debt NDP and Liberals have not followed our lead in supporting Canadian families in choosing the type of child care that works for them. Instead, the NDP want to undo our support and impose a one-size-fits-all bureaucratic scheme that fails to do anything for 90% of families. And the Liberals, well, they have just promised to take our money away. That is shameful.

The high-tax and high-debt NDP and Liberals need to stop listening to their elites, and start listening to real Canadian parents. Until they do, our Conservative government will continue to support moms and dads in making the best decisions for their families.

* * *

COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION FORUM ON ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this weekend I joined almost 20 local community associations and environmental groups for a meeting of the Community Association Forum on Environmental Sustainability. CAFES brings together community organizations from across downtown Ottawa to discuss environmental issues, share best practices and create solutions. It was great to see the creative thinking and collaboration coming from my fellow residents of Ottawa Centre.

One of the key issues at Saturday's meeting was developing a plan to promote urban trees in Ottawa. Urban trees help to mitigate climate change. They also make our cities better places to live. All levels of government should support this agenda. In particular, Canada should join other G7 countries in supporting urban forests at the federal level.

From responsible development to public transit to shoreline cleanup, Ottawa's grassroots community organizations are showing great leadership in building a greener, more sustainable Ottawa. I am very proud to represent such an engaged and informed constituency.

On this day, I also wish my partner, my friend, my wife, a very happy birthday.

* * *

ISLAMIC STATE

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the terrorist cult ISIL has made clear that it is targeting Canadian civilians. Both the NDP and Liberal leaders had an opportunity to speak to the threat ISIL poses to Canadians and they opted for partisan attacks over serious dialogue. It is beyond concerning that both of these leaders failed to acknowledge the real threat posed by ISIL and jihadi terrorism to Canada. In fact, the Liberals could barely find speakers on this important issue when it was debated last Thursday.

Oral Questions

ISIL has declared war on Canada and said that no Canadians should feel safe at home. It has already inspired attacks in Canada, as well as against our western allies in Denmark, France and Australia.

Our Conservative government is facing this threat head on. I encourage all members in this place to support today's motion to extend the mission against ISIL so it can be degraded to the point where ISIL no longer poses a threat to Canada.

* * *

MAX KHAN

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to mourn the passing of my extraordinary friend, Max Khan, who loved life, was a three-time cancer survivor, the councillor for Ward 6 in Oakville, a champion for his constituents and someone who knew the meaning of service. Max was always enthusiastic, interested and asking if he could help.

Today we think of Max, and his family and friends, whom he loved dearly. We extend our condolences to his beloved father, mother, three sisters, brother and a son.

Max had been a resident of Oakville for the past 25 years and served as a town councillor since 2006. He was thrilled to be the nominated federal Liberal candidate for North Oakville-Burlington and was planning to open his campaign office in just a few weeks, with a much anticipated launch.

Oakville has lost a friend and a great man. Words cannot describe the loss to his family, friends and community.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Phil McColeman (Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today the Prime Minister is at the Honda plant in Alliston, Ontario, where he made an important announcement for Canada's automotive and advanced manufacturing sector. For the first time, Honda Canada will use one of its Canadian facilities to produce vehicles for export to Europe. This is big news for Ontario and for all Canadians, made possible by the historic Canada-EU trade agreement.

When our government came into office, Canada had only five free trade agreements in place. Since 2006 we have committed to fixing the 13 dark years of trade under the Liberals. Now, Canadian world-class products will have virtually unfettered market access in 43 countries around the world.

Under the leadership of the Prime Minister, our government has created the right economic environment for Canadian businesses to succeed in global markets, creating jobs and long-term economic prosperity for all Canadians.

* * *

•(1415)

[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP): Mr. Speaker, can someone remind the Minister of Finance that he is still on the clock until October 19? He still has some work to do, such as tabling a budget.

Canadians are anxious to see how the government will try to whitewash all of the bad news about our economy: the drop in oil prices; the deteriorating job market; the loss of good jobs in favour of precarious, part-time jobs; and the closing of many businesses including Mexx, Jacob, Target and now Future Shop.

The provinces are struggling with the same problems, yet they have managed to present budgets. Why can the Minister of Finance not present his?

If he is short on ideas, I invite him to come talk to us. Every day the NDP makes suggestions to help Canadians, and we will implement these ideas in our budget in 2016.

* * *

[English]

TAXATION

Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we know that the high-tax, high-debt Liberals and NDP have not met a tax they did not like or want to hike and we know these high-tax, high-debt Liberals and NDP think government makes the best choices for families. On this side of the House, our Conservative government believes in keeping more money in the pockets of Canadian parents.

Our low-tax plan for families is working, and we are making sure 100% of families with kids benefit with almost \$2,000 back in their pockets. If given the chance, the high-tax, high-debt Liberals will take these benefits away to pay for big government that tells parents how to raise their kids. The contrast is simple. The Liberals believe bureaucracy knows best when it comes to Canadian families while we, as Conservatives, believe in keeping money in the hands of the real experts on families. Their names are mom and dad.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

EMPLOYMENT

Ms. Nycole Turmel (Hull—Aylmer, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Future Shop is going out of business, and 131 stores have closed and 1,500 people are out of work. Many will not even qualify for benefits after years of Conservative and Liberal reductions to EI.

Oral Questions

This is just the latest in a growing list of closures. With 1,500 more families facing job loss, how can the Conservatives explain their inaction on job creation and the economy?

Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while the global economy remains fragile, our government is focused on creating jobs, growth and economic prosperity. Since the depths of the recession we have created 1.2 million net new jobs in the Canadian economy, and we will continue our low-tax plan for jobs and growth.

In contrast, the NDP has a plan to introduce a carbon tax, which is a job-killing plan that would take \$20 billion out of the pockets of ordinary Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nycole Turmel (Hull—Aylmer, NDP): Mr. Speaker, with 1,500 people out of work, it is time for the Minister of Finance to face up to reality.

These people deserve better than a government that is incapable of delivering a budget on time and that has no clear job creation plan, unlike the NDP. The list of layoffs in Canada is growing: Mexx, Jacob, Target and now Future Shop.

What is the government waiting for? When will it deliver a budget that makes job creation a priority?

Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians should stay tuned for the budget.

The NDP believes in policies that would deliberately weaken Canadian industry. In contrast, under our government, Canada has created more jobs than any other G7 country. Proportionally speaking, we have created nearly 20% more jobs than our closest competitor.

If they had the opportunity, the New Democrats would go back to their old high-tax, high-spending agenda.

* * *

• (1420)

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Ms. Nycole Turmel (Hull—Aylmer, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are improvising on more than just the budget.

Over the weekend, the Chief of the Defence Staff, General Tom Lawson, had to help the Minister of National Defence out of some very hot water by correcting the minister's comments.

Can the minister confirm that he agrees with his Chief of Defence Staff that Canada and the United States are not the only members of the coalition who are using precision guided munitions in Syria?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of National Defence and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): No, Mr. Speaker. I completely agree with the General.

However, the hon. member is wrong because the United States and Canada will be the only allied countries using precision guided munitions to strike targets dynamically. That is a very important asset.

That is one of the reasons why the United States encouraged Canada to broaden the scope of its military mission against the

genocidal terrorist organization known as the Islamic State, namely so that we can hit these dynamic targets using our precision guided munitions, which are among the best in the world.

[*English*]

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the minister may be new to this portfolio, but he is not new to politics.

This is about our military being involved in a war. The minister told the media repeatedly that Canada was the only allied country, other than the U.S., with precision-guided weapons for use in Syria. The Chief of the Defence Staff then had to make a public statement to correct the minister.

Will the Minister of National Defence now apologize for his hyperbole, and start telling Canadians the true facts about our involvement in the Iraq war?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of National Defence and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately the member for St. John's East is incorrect.

The statement of the Chief of the Defence Staff confirmed what I said, which was based on the advice I received from the military indicating that currently only the United States is using precision-guided munitions of this nature against ISIL targets. The Royal Canadian Air Force, I am advised by the Chief of the Defence Staff and the military, has amongst the best, most advanced precision-guided munitions in the world that can hit dynamic targets, and that only the United States is currently using against the genocidal terrorist organization.

It is regrettable, however, that the NDP wants Canada to sit on the sidelines in the fight against this genocidal—

The Speaker: The hon. member for St. John's East.

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the minister, as usual, chooses to be over the top on providing the facts to the Canadian people.

Canadian pilots will, according to the government, be carrying out bombing runs in Syria, and they will face many challenges, including the 131 active surface-to-air missile sites controlled by the Government of Syria.

Given that the Assad regime is both murderous and untrustworthy, could the minister provide assurances to the House and to Canadians that Canadian Armed Forces pilots will not be targeted by the Syrian regime?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of National Defence and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, obviously, there is an inherent risk involved in any military deployment or operation. Having said that, the advice I have received consistently from our military is that the Syrian military does not have radar coverage in that part of Syria. Indeed, we have observed that hundreds, if not thousands, of sorties against ISIL have been flown by the United States and other allies in operations against the genocidal terrorist organization, the so-called Islamic State, in eastern Syria. We are not aware of any efforts to challenge them. Neither ISIL nor the Syrian state has challenged any of those flights.

Oral Questions

Our assessment is that the risk is no greater flying in that part of Syria than it has been in Iraq to date.

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[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a recent survey of business leaders suggests that they are feeling less optimistic than ever since the end of the recession. Close to 40% of them are expecting the economy to decline in the next year, compared to 3% last year.

Expectations are tanking under this government's reign. We are seeing the poorest economic growth of the past 80 years. What did the minister do? He postponed the budget and disappeared. Will we be seeing a budget the week of April 20?

Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out that the Liberal finance critic said the Liberals believed Canadians were okay with paying more and more taxes. We do not need any lessons from the Liberals, who cut provincial transfers and to this day have not explained where the \$40 billion of taxpayers' money went.

Our Conservative government is the only government that people can trust when it comes to creating jobs.

• (1425)

[English]

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government's record on economic growth is the worst in 80 years. All of the chartered banks, the Conference Board, the IMF and the OECD have all chopped their forecast yet again. Now the Bank of Canada says that economic growth in the country is atrocious and requires "considerable monetary stimulus to avoid falling back into recession".

Will the finance minister do what his own department says is the most cost effective thing to drive immediate growth, which is invest in more municipal infrastructure right now? Will he do that?

Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the governor's comments related to the impact of the drop in oil on the oil industry and the economy, yet the Liberals are advocating policies that would deliberately weaken the Canadian oil economy.

Under our government, we have the strongest job record in the entire G7. With respect to infrastructure, we have the largest and longest infrastructure program in the history of Canada, with \$75 billion over the 10 years and \$53 billion to the provinces and municipalities. We are very proud of what we are doing in this field.

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with a great big \$5 billion hole in it right now. The Conservatives live in a time warp over there. The jobs they brag about were three, four and five years ago, not recently. Last year, new jobs were barely 121,000. That was down 3.5% from the year before, and the year before was down 60% from the year before that. They are steadily creating fewer jobs, not more, and they are going in exactly the opposite direction from the Bank of Canada.

Will the minister stop undermining Governor Poloz and reinvest in municipal infrastructure right now?

Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it seems that the member opposite does not listen very well. We talked about the largest and longest infrastructure program in the history of Canada, much more than the Liberals even thought about. That is a party that believes that increasing taxes and increasing expenditures is the road to growth. In fact, it is the road to economic decline.

We do not take any lessons from the Liberals, who created a \$40 billion slush fund and now want to introduce a carbon tax, a tax on everything, which will kill jobs and undermine our economy.

* * *

[Translation]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives' Bill C-51 reveals their obsession with spying, particularly on activists who do not subscribe to their ideology.

Veterans' groups, first nations associations and doctors campaigning for care for refugees have been spied on by this government on the pretext that they are threats to national security. Bill C-51 will make that even easier for the Conservatives.

Why would the minister want to spy on Canadians involved in legal activities?

Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have confidence that the committee will improve the bill with reasonable amendments that will make it better and provide greater protection for Canadians.

I would like to quote a former Supreme Court justice, John Major, who said that better information sharing could have prevented the Air India tragedy.

We have to take concrete measures. Sharing information is part of that. Protests are not subject to that information sharing.

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, 45 of the 48 witnesses who appeared before the committee proposed amending the bill or scrapping it altogether and going back to the drawing board. I truly hope that the Conservatives have decided to do the right thing and support the NDP's amendments.

Intelligence agencies are producing more and more investigation reports. The Government Operations Centre received reports on more than 160 lawful events and demonstrations between May 2014 and February 2015. Virtually none of those activities presented a potential risk to national security. Bill C-51 will not help matters.

Why is the minister wasting taxpayers' money to monitor the activities of groups that pose no risk to national security?

•(1430)

Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Government Operations Centre plays a vital, critical role for our country because it monitors events that could have catastrophic consequences, such as floods, earthquakes and fires. It was created in 2004 and is responsible for coordinating all government operations. Clearly, Bill C-51 does not cover those activities

Still, I would like to invite my colleague to avoid looking for excuses for not putting effective mechanisms in place to protect Canadians.

[English]

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives may want to appear like they have been listening when it comes to Bill C-51, but the three weak amendments they have had to bring forward to their own bill do not even come close to dealing with its fundamental flaws.

Bill C-51 is still dangerously vague and overreaching, and it still ignores proven measures that work to combat terrorism.

When Canadians hear that security services are monitoring protesting veterans and disability advocates, they are right to wonder whether it makes any sense to give these agencies wider powers with no new oversight.

Why does the minister continue to insist that more oversight is not needed when it clearly is?

Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): It is amazing to hear, Mr. Speaker, the NDP using excuses not to support a bill that has common sense measures to protect Canadians against the terrorist threat we face, a terrorist threat we have seen in Ottawa, we have seen in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, in Copenhagen, in Paris, in Sydney.

This is a serious matter. I count on the committee to come up with good proposals and amendments that would strengthen the bill, strengthen our protection, our right, but, more important, keep us safe from the terrorist threat we now face.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we are waiting for official reports on both those incidents in October.

It is not just Bill C-51 where the Conservatives are falling short on protecting public safety. Global News investigators have raised questions about whether RCMP officers lacked the tools and training needed to respond to the attack on RCMP members in New Brunswick, which cost three lives.

The RCMP has been forced to reallocate resources and to move 600 officers from organized and financial crimes to respond to national security threats, a situation the RCMP commissioner called unsustainable.

Now the Conservatives are asking the RCMP to do even more, while they cut its budget for a third year in a row. Does the minister think the situation is acceptable?

Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while we have increased the

Oral Questions

budget or the RCMP by one-third, we did not get the support of the opposition.

Keeping our streets and communities safe is our priority. While training and procurement are matters that fall under the direct review of the RCMP, our government supports Canada's law enforcement agencies with legislative tools such as Bill C-51, which the NDP are not willing to give to our RCMP officers, and resources.

Will the New Democrats stand up for the RCMP? Where is the NDP when talking of public safety and security?

* * *

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP): Mr. Speaker, another company is paying the price for the Conservatives' incompetence. Future Shop is closing its 131 stores across the country and 1,500 employees are being laid off. That is in addition to the tens of thousands of people who have already lost their jobs under the Conservatives' watch. A number of workers learned they would have to look for a new job when they arrived at work to find the doors locked on Saturday morning.

How do the Conservatives explain their inaction to the families of Future Shop employees?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, obviously, we will help all the employees affected by this decision. We will help connect them with available jobs.

Fortunately, in the meantime, we have an economy that has created more than 1.2 million jobs; more than 85% of those jobs are full time and two-thirds are in well-paying industries. It is tax cuts that helped build our economy.

The NDP and the Liberals want to raise taxes. That will kill jobs and hurt families. We will not let them do that.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is not just the job losses at Future Shop that have us concerned. The Governor of the Bank of Canada is painting a gloomy picture of our economy.

The economic results for the first quarter of 2015 will look "atrocious". Stephen Poloz is calling on the Conservatives to take action, but we are still waiting for their budget. In the meantime, France suspects a major Canadian bank of facilitating tax evasion.

When will the Conservatives take action and revitalize the economy by fighting tax evasion?

•(1435)

Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, members will have to stay tuned for the budget.

Oral Questions

[English]

However, I will tell Canadians that we will balance the budget and we will introduce a budget that will benefit Canadians from coast to coast to coast. We have already introduced a plan that will benefit four million Canadian families right across the country. We have introduced a tax rebate that will benefit 90% of businesses, 780,000 businesses.

Ours is a low-tax plan for jobs and growth in contrast to the opposition which would do the opposite. We will assure long-term prosperity for Canadians, and the budget will be part of that plan.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, “atrocious” is the term used by Stephen Poloz, and that describes the government's economic record.

Canada's economy is going from bad to worse and the Governor of the Bank of Canada gave the Conservatives a clear warning. Sliding oil prices could quickly impact the economy and the labour market. The Minister of Finance is still missing in action.

When will the minister leave his ivory tower and bring in a budget for the middle class?

Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I have said many times, the budget will not be tabled before April, and now I am telling members to tune in because the day is approaching. We will balance the budget and introduce policies to benefit Canadians across the country.

* * *

[English]

EMPLOYMENT

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, let us try again.

Future Shop announced the permanent closure of 66 stores with another 1,500 jobs lost, adding to the tens of thousands of lost retail jobs under the Conservatives' watch. Now, after record lows in job growth, the Governor of the Bank of Canada is describing our country's economic performance as atrocious, yet the Minister of Finance continues to delay the budget.

When will Conservatives listen to the Bank of Canada and take urgent action to create jobs and help the economy? When will they table the budget?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, ironically, the Governor of the Bank of Canada was commenting on the effects of low oil prices on the Canadian economy, which points to the fact that our natural resource sector is extremely important. The leader of the NDP calls that sector a disease, and the New Democrats, along with their Liberal friends, want to bring in a carbon tax that would decimate both that sector and many others right across the economy.

The last thing our economy and its workers need right now is gigantic new debt and taxes that the NDP and Liberals propose. Instead, we will keep taxes low and create jobs for Canadians.

* * *

HOUSING

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Bank of Canada says that the situation is atrocious and Canadian families are paying the price.

A new report says that in Toronto alone, 12,000 public housing units will be uninhabitable within eight years unless the government helps. The mayor said that inaction had left cities like ours “twisting in the wind”.

When will the Conservatives stop hiding and start doing their job? When will they finally introduce a budget and make the economy work for Canadian families?

Hon. Candice Bergen (Minister of State (Social Development), CPC): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to Canadian families, we have given them tax cuts and direct benefits. When it comes to housing, we have signed affordable housing agreements with every province across this country. We have made strong investments so that provinces can allocate the funding where they believe that housing is needed and in the way that it is needed. We have also invested in a homelessness partnering strategy.

Whether it is cutting taxes for families, helping businesses, or helping provinces with housing needs, we are getting it done.

* * *

[Translation]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Commissioner Paulson said that 300 RCMP officers assigned to criminal investigations had to be transferred to counter-terrorism operations.

The RCMP is being forced to choose which of its main responsibilities it will carry out because of the Conservative government's \$195.2 million in cuts to its budget.

Why is the minister denying that the budget was cut by \$195.2 million when it is right there, in black and white, in budget 2012, Table A1.19, “Planned Savings—Public Safety Portfolio”?

● (1440)

Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for referring to a specific table, and I would like to give him an overall picture of the situation.

Since coming to power, the Conservative government has increased the budget of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police by over one-third.

Unfortunately, my colleague and the Liberal Party did not support these increases. However, I can assure the House that we will continue to ensure that our police forces have the resources they need to protect Canadians and carry out their mandate.

Oral Questions

[English]

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the minister should know that a cut is not an increase. Cuts of \$195 million and more since 2012 to the RCMP are not keeping Canadians safe. Having to transfer hundreds of officers from criminal investigations to anti-terrorism is not keeping streets safe in this country. In fact, the rank and file RCMP officers came out this weekend and put their jobs on the line to tell the Canadian public that they feel betrayed by the government because they are not getting the funds for training. Why is the minister compromising public safety?

Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, I thank my hon. colleague. He has given me an opportunity to remind those who are listening to us that this Conservative government has increased by one-third the financial resources for the RCMP. Why? Because we believe it is important to ensure that it has efficient resources, not only the resources but also the tools, especially when we are facing a terrorist threat. That is why here and abroad this government is standing up for Canadians and protecting them.

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is enough from this minister of deception. The Global news program on the weekend cut through the deception—

The Speaker: Order. We have had similar instances where members do not use proper terms. There are proper cabinet ministerial titles. I will ask members to keep to those as it leads to a lot less disorder.

The hon. member for Malpeque.

Hon. Wayne Easter: Mr. Speaker, my point is that the government is good at deception but not good at talking about the facts.

This weekend, media reports showed that the rank and file RCMP members are coming out and speaking out. They are feeling betrayed. They are not provided the resources for training or the resources for the equipment they need to do their job.

Simply put, why is the minister compromising public safety and why is he—

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Public Safety.

Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, again, let me tell the member and those who are listening to us that keeping our streets and communities safe is our priority. I am proud to stand with a government that has done so much not only to keep our streets safe, but also to take care of victims. We have done that by increasing our investments with respect to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. We have invested in crime prevention. We also want to protect Canadians against a terrorist threat.

Let me say that this government is committed to ensuring that the RCMP has sufficient resources to keep Canadians safe.

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AVIATION SAFETY

Mr. Hoang Mai (Brossard—La Prairie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, early Sunday morning, Air Canada flight 624 crash-landed at Halifax

international airport. Twenty-five passengers were injured, but luckily all are now safe and sound.

Earlier reports indicate the plane touched down more than 300 metres short of the runway and smashed through antennas. Since 2010, the Transportation Safety Board has been sounding the alarm about runway overruns and the lack of tougher safety regulations.

Can the minister tell us why the government has been dragging its feet?

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we want to thank the flight crew and first responders who responded so effectively to this incident in Halifax, making sure that the passengers did, indeed, make it to safety in a timely manner.

I would also say that I spoke with the chair of the Transportation Safety Board today. She indicated that they are taking the investigation very seriously. They are there on the ground in Halifax. Any updates and reports of course will come from them as they are the ones in charge and the proper authority in this case and in this matter. I look forward to getting the results from this investigation.

• (1445)

[Translation]

Mr. Hoang Mai (Brossard—La Prairie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this landing could have been a real tragedy. Fortunately, the 133 passengers and crew members on Air Canada flight AC624 are safe and sound.

The plane touched ground about 300 metres before the landing strip, hitting an antenna array. The accident raises a number of questions.

Furthermore, since 2010, the Transportation Safety Board of Canada has been calling for stricter regulations to prevent landing accidents. Will the minister finally follow the TSB's recommendations?

[English]

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, again, we are grateful that everybody involved in this incident are safe and sound. I want to express my thanks, once again, to the first responders and to the flight attendants who ensured that the passengers were evacuated safely.

Finally, this is truly within the domain of the Transportation Safety Board right now. It is undertaking the investigation and analyzing any factors that came into play. I look forward to the results.

* * *

[Translation]

GRAIN TRANSPORTATION

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, grain farmers will continue to pay the price for the Conservatives' mismanagement. Over the weekend we learned that the government would not renew the grain transportation quotas. These quotas are important for farmers and many of them are still having a hard time emptying their silos.

Oral Questions

How can the government justify siding with the rail companies instead of taking a stand and protecting our farmers?

[English]

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC): Actually, Mr. Speaker, with respect, the member is completely incorrect. Our government's action has actually worked in this case. The amount of grain has moved significantly off the Prairies and again, grain is running at a rate that contributes to the strong economic growth that we had intended from the beginning.

It has been a successful intervention. I am grateful for the support from the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, who has done an excellent job with this file. I am grateful as well to the farmers in Canada and the rail companies who ensured that we moved this valuable commodity at the pace that we did in that crisis.

Mr. Malcolm Allen (Welland, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I suggest the minister should try telling that to producers and shippers who actually have been waiting for producer cars the last couple of months.

The government's treatment of grain farmers has been nothing less than shameful. First, it waffled on the penalties, lowering the fines and giving the railways a pass for violating rules, and now it is not going to extend the minimum requirements. There are farmers who still have grain backlogs. There are producers still awaiting producer cars in the Prairies.

It is a simple question. Why is the government so unwilling to stand up to the railways and defend Canadian farmers?

Mr. Gerald Keddy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture, to the Minister of National Revenue and for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the OIC worked to get grain moving and reclaim Canada's export reputation as a reliable shipper. Western Canadian shipments from ports are 31% higher than last year and 25% higher than the five-year average. CP and CN moved almost 50 million tonnes of grain under the OIC, 2.5 million tonnes over the mandated requirements. Carry-out is projected to be within the normal average of 10 million tonnes.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren (Chatham-Kent—Essex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today the Prime Minister is at the Honda Canada plant in Alliston, Ontario, where he announced that for the first time, Honda will be using one of its Canadian facilities to produce vehicles for export to Europe.

Can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade share with the House why this announcement is so important for Ontario's automotive and advanced manufacturing sector and indeed for all Canadians?

Mr. Parm Gill (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today's announcement by Honda was made possible by the historic market access provided by the Canada-EU trade agreement, which is paving the way for increased Canadian exports to the world's largest integrated market.

This government's top priority is to create jobs and economic growth, which is why we have worked so hard to open new markets for Canadian companies and why we continue to support our exporters and manufacturers as part of the most ambitious pro-export, pro-jobs plan in Canadian history.

* * *

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Ms. Mylène Freeman (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development deeply offended first nations leaders when he tried to cite an unsourced fact contradicted by the RCMP. Instead of attacking indigenous people, the minister should bring people together to end the violence, and finally call a national public inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women.

Will the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development stand up and apologize for his hurtful and thoughtless comments?

• (1450)

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I said last week, the week before I did a tour of the Prairies and met with several first nations and stakeholders to discuss a wide range of issues.

While I do not disclose the specifics of closed-door meetings, I can assure all members that we had a productive discussion. What I got from many people outside of those meetings, and I am talking about chiefs and tribal councils, is that they will indeed use the action plan to address the issues of missing aboriginal women.

[Translation]

Ms. Mylène Freeman (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the minister insists on blaming everyone other than himself and his own inaction.

There have been more and more calls for his resignation. Yesterday on *Tout le monde en parle* we heard a moving plea from Laurie Odjick, the mother of Maisy, who disappeared more than six years ago in the aboriginal community of Kitigan Zibi.

Will the minister listen to her call for justice and for a national public inquiry?

[English]

Mrs. Susan Truppe (Parliamentary Secretary for Status of Women, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that member knows full well that we do not need a national inquiry. What we have is an action plan which the minister tabled in September of last year.

We will continue to work with communities to develop safety plans, to raise awareness and take measures to empower aboriginal women and girls. We are developing more community safety plans on and off reserves, including in regions identified specifically by the RCMP. This action plan will engage men and boys. It will raise awareness to break intergenerational cycles of violence. It will address underlying causes of violence through structured training initiatives.

We on this side of the House stand up for aboriginal women and girls.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is the deadline for announcing greenhouse gas reduction targets as part of the Paris climate conference.

Mexico has already submitted its action plan, and the United States is expected to officially announce its commitments tomorrow. However, true to form, the Conservatives have no plan.

Why is this government still lagging behind?

[English]

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government is playing a constructive role in establishing a new international climate change agreement that includes meaningful and transparent commitment from all major emitters.

In line with the Lima agreement, Canada is preparing its intended nationally determined contribution and is committed to submitting it well in advance of the December 2015 COP 21 meetings. As this is an international contribution, we are seeking information from the provinces and territories to understand how they intend to meet their targets and how their plans will factor into Canada's overall commitment.

In the lead-up to Paris, we will continue to take action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the only thing the Conservatives are on target to meet is complete failure.

Months ago the government agreed to a March 31 deadline for announcing national climate targets, but just like with the oil and gas regulations, this has become the latest in a long string of broken promises. Mexico has announced its plan. The U.S. is moving forward.

When will we stop being international laggards on climate change? When will the government release Canada's plan for reducing greenhouse gases?

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we welcome the announcement recently by the United States and Mexico on climate change.

Oral Questions

We are very pleased to see that Mexico and the United States are undertaking efforts that emulate much of the work that Canada has done in partnership with the United States. Canada and the United States are successfully aligning regulations in several areas, including the vehicles and the HFCs.

At home our government is reducing emissions while growing the economy. We are doing this without the job-killing carbon tax the NDP and the Liberals would introduce.

[Translation]

Ms. Lise St-Denis (Saint-Maurice—Champlain, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada will soon participate in the 21st United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

According to data compiled by Canadian scientists, Canada will not be able to meet the March 31 deadline for submitting its greenhouse gas reduction targets.

Is the Prime Minister's plan for our country a new strategy for reducing or for increasing harmful emissions?

● (1455)

[English]

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I have stated, Canada is playing a constructive role in establishing new international climate change targets for Canada. In line with the Lima agreement, Canada is preparing its intended, nationally determined contribution and is committed to submitting this well in advance of COP 21. This is the work that we are continuing to do with the provinces and territories, and seeking the information to understand how they intend to participate in meeting those targets and how that plan will factor in Canada's overall commitment.

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the deadline for submitting Canada's next climate action program to the UN is tomorrow; the Conservative government will not meet that deadline. The Petersberg climate dialogue will take place in May; the Conservative government will not attend. Chancellor Merkel plans to make climate change the number one priority of the G7 meetings in June; the Prime Minister will try to obstruct those meetings.

If deadlines are missed, meetings are skipped and the G7 sabotaged, then why bother with the charade of COP 21 in Paris?

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I have stated, we are in line with moving forward in establishing the targets for Canada. COP 21 meetings do not take place until December 2015. Because we have to work with the provinces and territories, we are seeking information from the provinces and the territories in terms of their plans and how they will contribute to Canada's developing its target.

Oral Questions

Our government is playing a constructive role in establishing new international climate change agreements that include meaningful and transparent commitments—

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Louis-Hébert.

* * *

[Translation]

QUEBEC BRIDGE

Mr. Denis Blanchette (Louis-Hébert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Quebec Bridge file is stagnating. The latest study from Roche estimates that painting the bridge will cost about twice as much as expected, but CN is refusing to release the complete report. How is that for transparency?

While the Conservatives are busy making promises in Quebec City, the federal government is getting ready to repaint the Jacques Cartier Bridge in Montreal.

Will the minister stand by the people of Quebec City and demand that CN release the study?

Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Infrastructure, Communities and Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are working on this file with the mayor of Quebec City, Mr. Labeaume; the mayor of the City of Lévis, Mr. Lehouillier; and the Government of Quebec.

The bridge belongs to CN. From the start, we have asked the company to come to the table. We kept our promise.

What has that member done for the Quebec Bridge? One thing: he organized a nice photo contest last summer. What a great way to move things forward. Meanwhile, we invested \$75 million to repaint it.

Ms. Annick Papillon (Québec, NDP): Mr. Speaker, that is nonsense. We know very well that this minister is not doing anything at all for Quebec City.

In Quebec City, we are still waiting for the bridge to be repainted. We have been waiting seven years for the Quebec City armoury to be rebuilt, and still nothing has been done. Plus we are still waiting to hear whether the tall ships project for 2017 will be funded.

Will the minister finally take the interests of the people of Quebec City seriously and do his job?

Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Infrastructure, Communities and Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed my pleasure to visit the Quebec City area regularly, because not much has changed in Quebec City since the last election, apart from the orange construction cones.

That said, we are working hard for the greater Quebec City area and all regions of Quebec and Canada. We will continue to do our job. We believe it is very important to respect the jurisdictions. We are working with our municipal and provincial partners, rather than centralizing everything in Ottawa, as that party likes to do. That is not what we want.

[English]

CHILD CARE

Mr. Rob Clarke (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, some Canadians choose to have family members care for their young children. This important group deserves support, but the NDP child care plan would do absolutely nothing for them. It would not provide these families with a single dime they could use to care for their children. That is shameful.

Could the Minister of State for Social Development please update the House on how our Conservative government plan would help every Canadian family?

• (1500)

Hon. Candice Bergen (Minister of State (Social Development), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member is right. What Canadian families are looking for are options and choice when it comes to child care. Some families use other family members to help care for their children. Some use regulated daycare spaces. Some use private daycare. Some families make that sacrifice and one parent will stay home. Our plan supports every single family with children because we trust them with their decision making.

The opposition, the NDP, would only help 10%. The Liberals have no plan for families. We will trust families. We will continue to put money in the pockets of Canadian families so they can make choices best for them.

* * *

HEALTH

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one year after the expiry of the 2004 health accord, Canadian Doctors For Medicare and other health advocates are on the Hill with thousands of petitions from Canadians concerned for the future of medicare.

In 2004, as leader of the opposition, the Prime Minister supported the accord and vowed "...we must ensure governments live up to their commitments made in the Health Accord". Yet, his government abandoned the agreement, refuses to meet premiers and changed health transfers to per capita, jeopardizing provinces' ability to provide basic services. Why did he break his promise and put the future of medicare at risk?

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Health, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is entirely untrue. Under the late Jim Flaherty it was announced that we would of course continue funding health care for the next 10 years and we are now at the highest recorded health transfers in Canadian history. Since forming government, health transfers have increased by almost 70% and record funding is going to reach \$40 billion annually. Most importantly, every single year we will see an increase in health spending.

*Oral Questions***FISHERIES AND OCEANS**

Mr. Ryan Cleary (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a fisheries delegation from Newfoundland and Labrador is in Ottawa today to talk about the Conservatives' mismanagement of northern shrimp. Unfortunately, the fisheries committee is not slated to meet with them and there is no sign of the Conservatives correcting their course.

Coastal communities should be able to benefit from the resources off their shores, but the Conservatives have not committed to upholding the principle of adjacency when it comes to northern shrimp. Why does the minister continue to ignore Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who depend on healthy local fisheries?

Mr. Gerald Keddy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture, to the Minister of National Revenue and for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to fish harvesting decisions, we always look for the right balance between maximizing economic opportunities for fishermen and ensuring sustainable fisheries.

As announced by the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans today, this year's science supports a rollover of total allowable catch in most shrimp fishing areas with a modest increase in Area 5. This means that all fishermen currently involved in the northern shrimp fishery will be out fishing this upcoming season.

* * *

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, farmers know that one of the most useful short-term loan programs that they have is the advanced payments program. The program provides all farmers, whether they have grain or oilseed, livestock or horticulture businesses, the ability to borrow \$400,000 from the federal government and up to \$100,000 of that being interest free on an annual basis. These dollars are used to cover production costs before crops get an opportunity to go to market.

I would like to ask the Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture to please inform the House and farmers what the government is doing to improve this program.

Mr. Gerald Keddy (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture, to the Minister of National Revenue and for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today the Minister of Agriculture announced that as of April 1 our government is improving the advanced payments program. Farmers can now get multi-year loan arrangements, use new security to guarantee the loan and repay it with cash on hand. It is easier for farmers than a co-operative, or for farmers who have incorporated, to access the program. We have removed the monopolies of the program administrators and now they have to compete for farmers' business with lower rates and advances suited to the needs of the farmer.

This is another example of how our government is creating the conditions for economic growth and prosperity in Canada.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Brent Rathgeber (Edmonton—St. Albert, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, tonight the House will vote on extending our commitment to degrade ISIL until March 30, 2016. I want to support the motion but I am having a difficult time seeing positive outcomes for the well intentioned goal of degrading ISIL. In fact, the U.S. is worried that Shia militias will retaliate against Sunni civilians if occupied territories are recovered from ISIS. CIA operatives believe that the real threat in the region is not ISIS, it is the Shia militia that wants to replace ISIS.

Assuming that ISIL can be degraded, does the government believe that that will lead to more or less stability in the region?

● (1505)

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of National Defence and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Yes, Mr. Speaker. Degrading the genocidal, fanatical terrorist organization, the so-called Islamic State will be helpful to regional security, which is why every single country in the region is involved in the military operation against ISIS. It is why 60 countries are supporting the overall allied coalition. By the way, all 28 NATO countries are supporting the operation in one shape or form against ISIL—

Mr. Charlie Angus: No, they're not.

Hon. Jason Kenney: Yes Mr. Speaker, they are, according to the Secretary-General of NATO.

Mr. Brent Rathgeber (Edmonton—St. Albert, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, last October 22, moments before he murdered an unarmed sentry guard and then stormed into this very Centre Block, an armed terrorist recorded a video confirming that his actions were in retaliation for Canada's involvement in Afghanistan and our then recent decision to deploy the RCAF to Iraq.

Given the increasingly complex quagmire in Iraq and Syria, and therefore the dubious nature of long-term positive outcomes, is the government not concerned that by extending our modest commitment for another 12 months, an unfortunate consequence could very well be more retaliatory attacks on Canadian soil?

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member alluded to this at the beginning, that these jihadists have declared war on Canada. They have urged their supporters to attack "disbelieving Canadians in any manner" and vowed that we should not feel secure even in our own homes. If the hon. member is looking for a reason to support this motion, I would suggest to him, because it is the right thing to do, he should support it.

*Routine Proceedings***SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

Mr. Scott Andrews (Avalon, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, in 2013, the Conservative government dismantled the office of the commissioner of review tribunals and replaced it with a social security tribunal. A number of files were transferred from the OCRT to the SST. My office has files going back to 2012, which have still not been resolved. Many gravely ill Canadians have been denied speedy hearings and are still waiting to have their appeals heard. This is unacceptable.

The minister promised to wipe out the backlog by the summer. Could he provide an update on his spike unit and what impact it is having on eliminating the backlog?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Democratic Reform, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we consider the backlog to be completely unacceptable. That is precisely why my predecessor came up with a common sense plan to triage the backlog within the department, that is to say, treat the cases that have been around for a long time by settling them before they even have to go before the tribunal.

I can report to the House that my officials advise we are on track to eliminate the backlog and that our officials within the department are making great progress toward that goal.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, the hon. Minister of Public Safety earlier in question period completely mis-characterized the evidence of former Justice John Major who headed the Air India inquiry. Justice John Major made it abundantly clear to the public safety committee that he does not find the information sharing provisions in Bill C-51 adequate at all. If he said it once, he said it a dozen times. We need oversight at the back end. We need to have a national security adviser. Justice John Major said that it was human nature to withhold information between agencies. The bill needs fixing. Will the minister fix it?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Blaney (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I have said, our government is open to reasonable amendments to ensure that the anti-terrorism bill achieves its objective, which is to protect Canadians while also strengthening their rights and freedoms.

As for oversight, Canada should be proud of its model, and this bill contains a number of provisions that strengthen both the monitoring mechanisms as well as the oversight mechanisms, including threat reduction.

I invite my colleague to read part 4 of the bill, which gives the review committee expanded powers in that area.

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[*English*]**PRESENCE IN GALLERY**

The Speaker: I am honoured to recognize His Excellency, Kevin Vickers, Canada's Ambassador to Ireland and former Sergeant-at-Arms who is joining us today in the Speaker's Gallery.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: For nearly a decade, Mr. Vickers' presence resonated throughout the Parliamentary precinct. He joined us in 2005 as director of security services, after a distinguished career with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. A year later, he was appointed the 9th Sergeant-at-Arms of the House of Commons.

As Sergeant-at-Arms, he expanded on his security leadership role, taking on new challenges, including leading the long-term vision and plan for the House of Commons, strengthening partnerships with key organizations and improving service delivery to members.

[*Translation*]

Please join us as we express our gratitude to him and share our best wishes for this exciting next chapter of his distinguished career.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

● (1510)

[*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 51 petitions.

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AIRLINE SAFETY

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to subsection 6.41 of the Aeronautics Act and for referral to the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, I am pleased to table, in both official languages, this interim order respecting flight deck occupants, which I announced last Thursday, March 26, 2015, as a precautionary measure to ensure the security of Canadian passengers following the Germanwings tragedy.

My officials continue to review all policies and procedures, and any further actions will be communicated to the House as appropriate.

* * *

SUPPORT FOR VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES ACT

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-58, An Act to amend the Canadian Forces Members and Veterans Re-establishment and Compensation Act and to make consequential amendments to another Act.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I table this bill, the purpose of which is to recognize and fulfill the obligation of the people and the Government of Canada to our veterans and their families.

[*Translation*]

It is an honour for me to introduce this bill to provide support for veterans and their families.

Routine Proceedings

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

* * *

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West—Glanbrook, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the seventh and eighth reports of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development. The seventh report is entitled “Overcoming Violence and Impunity: Human Rights Challenges in Honduras”. The eighth report is entitled “Canada’s Response to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)”.

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to each of these reports.

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in relation to the chair of the foreign affairs committee’s tabling of the report on ISIL, I would like to submit the New Democratic Party’s supplementary report of recommendations. It was our party that called for a study on our response to ISIS.

I would like to present to the House our supplementary report, which asks that we deal with the threats of financing and recruitment and do more to deal with the arms flow. I submit this on behalf of the official opposition.

* * *

PETITIONS

AGRICULTURE

Mr. John Rafferty (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, petitioners in my riding are calling on the Government of Canada to ensure that Canadian policies and programs are developed in consultation with small family farmers and that they protect the rights of small family farmers in the global south to preserve, use, and freely exchange seeds.

•(1515)

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to table a petition on behalf of thousands of Canadians who are calling on the Prime Minister and the Government of Canada to work with the premiers to ensure quality health care.

Tomorrow is a sad day. It marks the first anniversary of the expiry of the 10-year federal-provincial health accords. These citizens are concerned about our public medicare system and want the federal government to show leadership to preserve and enhance it.

I thank the thousands of citizens who signed on. I thank Dr. Monika Dutt who appeared with me and other MPs at a press conference today. I also thank the Canadian Doctors for Medicare for showing leadership on this issue and for being an advocate for evidence-based reforms to improve Canada’s health care system.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, violence against women is an abomination, yet in communities

across Canada, women and girls of all ages face violence every day. Violence drives over 100,000 women and children out of their homes and into shelters each year.

The petitioners call upon the government to work in partnership with the provinces, territories, and stakeholders to develop a national strategy and action plan to end violence against women and to hold a national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women in Canada.

HOUSING

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of many of my constituents in Parkdale—High Park about the issue of affordable housing.

A report was presented today from Toronto Community Housing by our mayor, which indicates the shortfall of funds needed from the federal government to invest in our public housing to keep that housing stock useful and active for community members.

What the petitioners are requesting is a national housing strategy to ensure that people have access to secure, accessible and affordable housing for all Canadians in co-operation with all levels of government. They are calling on the government to make meaningful, long-term investments to build more affordable housing and to address the housing crisis.

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by a great number of constituents who are concerned about the restructuring of agriculture, especially in the developing south. Specifically, the petitioners are concerned that laws are being promulgated that prevent farmers from freely exchanging seeds.

Therefore, the petitioners call upon the Government of Canada and the House of Commons to commit to adopting international aid policies that support small family farmers, especially women, recognizing their vital role in the fight against hunger and poverty, to ensure that these policies and programs are developed in consultation with small family farmers, and to protect their rights in the global south to preserve, use and freely exchange seeds.

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Blanchette (Louis-Hébert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to present a petition today signed by 1,700 of my constituents who believe that the agri-food industry’s patents are threatening the ancestral rights of farmers to preserve, use and exchange seeds.

These people are calling on the government to adopt international aid policies that support small farmers, particularly women, and recognize their vital role in the struggle against hunger and poverty, as well as to ensure that Canadian policies and programs are developed in consultation with small farmers, and that they protect their right to preserve, use and freely exchange seeds.

S.O. 57

[English]

THE ENVIRONMENT

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

The first petition is from residents of the west coast, from my own riding of Saanich—Gulf Islands, as well as from Ontario who are calling on the government to institute a permanent ban to protect the west coast from tankers carrying a mixture of bitumen and diluents along the B.C. coast.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition has over 1,800 signatures from Vancouver, Victoria, Burnaby, and within Saanich—Gulf Islands.

The petitioners call on the House to reject all aspects of the so-called anti-terror bill, Bill C-51, which violates the constitution of this country and which will be ineffective in prosecuting and preventing terrorism. The petitioners call upon the House to reject the bill in whole.

[Translation]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Réjean Genest (Shefford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition from my constituents. They are calling on the government to request that Saudi Arabia free Raif Badawi and that it drop all charges against him.

• (1520)

[English]

CHILD CARE

Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to present a petition in support of affordable child care in Canada. The signatories to this petition note that after nearly a decade of Conservative government, child care costs in this country are soaring and nearly a million kids across this country with working parents have no regulated child care space. They further note that quality child care and early learning offer children a head start in life while easing poverty.

The petitioners call upon the House to work with provinces and territories to implement the NDP's plan for affordable child care across Canada.

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I bring forward a petition signed by many constituents who call upon Canada to adopt international aid policies that support small family farmers, especially women, and recognize their vital role in the struggle against hunger and poverty. Further, the petitioners ask that Canadian policies and programs be developed in consultation with small family farmers and that they protect their rights, particularly in the global south, to preserve, use and freely exchange seeds.

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

MILITARY CONTRIBUTION AGAINST ISIL

MOTION THAT DEBATE BE NOT FURTHER ADJOURNED

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with respect to the consideration of Government Business No. 17, I move:

That debate be not further adjourned.

The Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 67.1, there will now be a 30-minute question period. I would ask members to keep their questions to around one minute and government responses to a similar length of time.

The hon. opposition House leader.

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is a sad day in the House. This is the 92nd time the government has imposed time allocation or closure on important legislation. In comparison, the previous government in Canadian history did it less than a third as often as this government has. It has almost 100 times imposed time allocation and closure.

This comes after one day of debate on this important issue. As the leader of the official opposition said last week, there is no more serious question than to decide to send our women and men in uniform into a situation where they could well be giving their lives. Yet the government, after one day, is saying, "Enough debate, we just want to ram this thing through".

There is a reason for this. It is quite simple. With Bill C-51, the more debate there has been, even at the committee level, the less Canadians have liked Bill C-51. We have seen a majority of Canadians now go to a majority of Canadians opposed to Bill C-51.

There is no doubt, on this particular motion, that as the debate has been furthered, Canadians have become clearer about what the government has tried to pull over the Canadian public, the whoppers that have been told, and the fact that our humanitarian aid is scant compared to the nearly \$1 billion the government wants to put into bombs.

Is that not really why this is happening today? The government does not want the debate, because it is afraid of the facts this debate will expose.

S.O. 57

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of National Defence and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): In point of fact, Mr. Speaker, since the member has referenced public opinion, I would note that in several public domain, empirical public opinion surveys, some two-thirds of Canadians expressed accord for an extension of our mission against the genocidal terrorist organization, the so-called Islamic State. In the most recent Ipsos-Reid survey, some 56% of people who intend to vote for the New Democratic Party, so the vast majority of supporters of his own party, disagree with his ideological and rigid position on this.

I would note that contrary to what the member suggested, this is not legislation. This is a motion the government has tabled to seek a sense of the House. That is done, frankly, *ex gratia*. There is no constitutional or statutory requirement for the government to table a motion of this nature. In fact, this is a relatively new practice in this place.

I would point out that the previous government committed thousands of Canadian ground troops to a very difficult battle against the Taliban in Afghanistan without even seeking a sense of this place. However, there have already been in the debate on this discretionary motion 21 speakers for the NDP and altogether well over 50 speakers, and it will be 15 hours of debate. That compares to the seven hours of debate that occurred on a similar motion at the Westminster Parliament a few months ago. This is in addition to the dozens of hours of debate and speeches that occurred, on essentially the same mission, last October.

This is an extraordinary new precedent this government is setting to consult this place. However, the consultation, of course, has to have some parameters. It is not an invitation for the House leader for the NDP to stall the government legislative mandate, which of course we have an obligation to implement, further to the last election.

• (1525)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have had numerous opportunities to talk about the issue of time allocation. I will put that on the back burner for now and focus on the issue at hand. More and more, whether it is the Prime Minister, the Prime Minister's Office, the Minister of National Defence, or the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the government has been sending very confusing messages to Canadians on this issue of Canada's role.

There has been a lack of transparency and openness. To use an example, one could talk about the issue of combat roles. There is a conflict between what the Prime Minister said at one time and what is actually happening today.

Maybe I will ask the Minister of National Defence if he could provide some clarification. The other day he talked about precision guided missiles and said that only Canada and the U.S. actually have that capability, only to find out later from a general that it is not the case. It took a general to come out and defend the minister and the comments he was espousing all over media outlets.

Can the minister explain what he was telling Canadians and why the general had to actually correct what the minister was telling Canadians?

Hon. Jason Kenney: Mr. Speaker, none of that is true. I would point out that there is probably a reason why the member for Winnipeg North does not want to discuss the matter before us, which is the motion to limit debate, because his party has already limited debate. His party has put up I believe two or three speakers. I think last week on Thursday the Liberals missed several of their designated speaking slots.

That is the party that committed Canadian ground troops to what turned out to be a decade-long and costly war in terms of treasure, talent and the sacrifice of our troops in Afghanistan without ever having come to this place. We have already had more debate just on the renewal of Operation Impact than we have had in 10 years in this place under the previous government on the operation against the Taliban.

With respect to precision-guided munitions, what I reported to the public last week was precisely verbatim of what I had been briefed by the military, which has been confirmed by the Chief of the Defence Staff, contrary to inaccurate media reports. The Chief of the Defence Staff said:

The weapons that will be employed [by the RCAF] will be amongst the most advanced precision-guided munitions in the world. The[y]...are equipped with laser and GPS guidance systems, giving Canada the ability to strike targets in all types of weather. Currently, only the United States uses these advanced precision-guided munitions in Syria.

Our highly trained pilots can use these advanced precision-guided munitions to strike targets either deliberately, or dynamically....This is a significant capability which, currently, only the US employs in Syria.

That is what I was briefed by the Chief of the Defence Staff.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am not surprised that I am let down, but I am not surprised that the government wants to limit debate when the Prime Minister stands in the House of Commons and makes jokes about whether Canada is in breach of international law, while we are possibly putting people in harm's way. Later that day the Conservatives had to tweet that they were going to send a letter to the United Nations because they had not even bothered to do that.

We hear from the government about our allies and the allied coalition, yet it is a fiction. This is not a UN mandate nor a NATO mandate. There is no western country other than the United States involved. According to those who are looking at the situation in Syria, they say that Bashar al-Assad is the head of the snake and ISIS is its tail. They said that in Kobani, our allies, the PPK, were considered as fanatical as ISIS, that on our so-called allies that Canada had in Syria right now, which are doing the bombing and fighting in Syria, Joe Biden had admitted that all those allies the minister had been cozying up to were actually fighting a proxy Sunni-Shia war in Syria.

Therefore, with the misinformation and the misrepresentation that we have heard from the government and the minister in particular, I am not surprised they would not want to debate this. Who are the allies on the ground who will ensure that we prevent further damage to a nation that is already seriously damaged and whether we are in any way following international law because the Conservatives did not bother to get a mandate?

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•(1530)

Hon. Jason Kenney: Mr. Speaker, only in the distorted world view of the NDP could striking targets of a genocidal terrorist organization that has declared hostility toward Canada and indeed civilization, such as the Islamic State, be considered doing damage to Syria.

The member contends that this motion is limiting debate. In point of fact, the actual consultation of the House through the motion before us is relatively unprecedented. This is a new practice introduced by this government. There was no constitutional, statutory or even conventional obligation for the government in exercising the royal prerogative in the deployment of Canadian troops to consult with the House of Commons. Therefore, every hour of debate that we have in this place, including the 15 hours on this motion, is extraordinary. It is an extraordinary opening to the democratically-represented voices of the people in the House.

I would point out that I was here for I think 13 of the 14 hours of debate on Thursday and the New Democrats were not really interested in the substance of the debate. They all read the same canned speeches. It is simply a parliamentary tactic to delay all of the government's business, to delay the people's business.

Hon. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to touch on a couple of points.

We talked about the mission changing and evolving. In my view, people are making it, and I will ask the minister to comment on this, more complicated than it needs to be.

There are only two changes happening to the mission. First, it is going to be extended for 12 months because the job is not over until the job is over, and the enemy has a vote what goes on. Second, airplanes, instead of operating within Iraq, are going to be operating over Syria. The border between the countries has effectively been erased by ISIS in any event. The actual changes to the mission are not all that complicated and substantive.

The other point is that people are saying it is really a combat mission. The ground mission is in a dangerous place. We have done missions in dangerous places around the world for many years. They were called peacekeeping missions. They were missions in dangerous places. They were missions where Canadian peacekeepers died because they were shot by people who did not like the fact that we were there. By definition, of the verbiage in the media and the opposition, that would suggest that every one of our peacekeeping missions was in fact a combat mission.

There are words here that are being used inappropriately. What is the actual change of the mission, and is it really not all that different other than we will be airborne over one more place?

Hon. Jason Kenney: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Edmonton Centre for his service in the Royal Canadian Air Force. He speaks on these matters with source credibility.

His comments are absolutely accurate. We already had a very extensive debate in this place, with dozens of speakers, last October. This is another discretionary motion for a discretionary debate that the government has given the House an opportunity to have, which is essentially over the same mission. He is quite right.

In fact, we are not adding any additional assets or personnel to the mission. We continue to deploy 69 special operations forces for an advise and assist mission in the Kurdish region of northern Iraq, and some 600 RCAF personnel situated out of Kuwait who are manning 6 CF-18, 2 Auroras and 1 Polaris aircraft.

It is the same character of the mission. We will simply be hitting ISIL targets in what it regards as its state, which is in an area of Syria where it has de facto sovereignty. We are doing so in full compliance with international law.

This is just an extra opportunity for debate in this place, as we do want to hear the opinions of members. I do not think my friends in the New Democratic Party really believe there should be unlimited canned speeches on what is essentially a relatively minor change to the terms that were discussed here last October.

•(1535)

[Translation]

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is rather amusing to see the minister using smoke and mirrors to try to cover up his real agenda.

The government is an expert at that sort of thing. For four years, it has been imposing its will both in the House and in committee by systematically rejecting thousands of amendments put forward by the various opposition parties and refusing to listen to very reasonable and rational speeches about its proposals. Now, the government is claiming that the issue was thoroughly debated.

When did the minister take the time to listen to what was said in this House about this debate alone? When did all of the members of cabinet take into account the opinions of a broad segment of the population that we, the legitimate representatives of that population, have been sharing with them?

The minister may be trying to put one over on members and Canadians, but the truth is that he is trying to once again shut down debate and ignore the opinions of a broad segment of the Canadian population. When will he listen?

Hon. Jason Kenney: Mr. Speaker, I am listening. I was here in the House on Thursday as well, debating this motion for 13 or 14 hours. Today, I plan to be here as long as possible, likely all day, in order to listen, answer questions and clarify the government's policy.

This is not a bill. This is a discretionary motion that the government is under no obligation to move. However, we developed a new approach whereby we consult the members of the House, because we believe that is important when it comes to major deployments of the Canadian Forces overseas.

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The hon. member says that the government is not taking the opinion of some Canadians seriously, but it is the NDP that is opposing the majority opinion of its own supporters. According to the polls, the majority of those who voted for the NDP support a continuation of our fight against this genocidal organization that is trying to rid the world of cultural, ethnic and sexual minorities. These are crimes against humanity. It is sad that the NDP believes that Canada should do nothing to deal with this threat.

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, to listen to the minister talk about extending this mission in Syria, one would think that we should be thanking him. He is saying that he has done us a favour by moving this motion.

Let us not forget that we still live in a democracy here and that it is important that such an essential and crucial matter be debated in the House and for more than a day, of course. Extending this mission will add more chaos to a chaotic situation. This new mandate has no legal legitimacy, especially since the UN has issued no mandate for this mission.

Can the minister explain to us why the Conservatives are yet again imposing a unilateral decision that was never fully discussed in the House?

• (1540)

Hon. Jason Kenney: Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, we are going to spend not one, but two days discussing it. Add to that the two days spent in October, and we will spend four days on it. By comparison, the British Parliament, a minority parliament, debated a similar motion for only seven hours.

Yes, ours is a parliamentary democracy. However, according to our Constitution, the government is not required to consult Parliament about this. It is a royal prerogative, a discretionary decision under our Constitution. Every hour of debate and every speech is extraordinary and made possible by our government and our desire to include all voices, even dissenting voices.

The sovereign government of Iraq wrote to the UN asking that other countries help defend its citizens against the terrorist and genocidal attacks of the Daesh. Accordingly, we are providing a military response to this request, together with 24 other countries. Under Article 51 of the UN charter, this is the alliance's concept of collective self-defence.

[English]

Ms. Lois Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, could the minister speak about what he feels is Canada's moral obligation to act? He has talked about the brutality of ISIS. We know it has specifically targeted religious minorities. The Yazidis have been specifically attacked as a group.

I know the minister has spoken to diaspora groups across the country. Could he relay to the House the things he has heard from diaspora groups about our need to help?

Hon. Jason Kenney: Mr. Speaker, it is a very good question, in part because Canada is proud to have received over 20,000 Iraqi refugees in the past few years, in what has been the largest refugee resettlement program to this country since that of the Vietnamese boat people in 1979 and 1980.

Because I was the Minister of Immigration who launched this Iraqi refugee program, I have come to know the Iraqi Canadian community quite intimately. I can tell the member that in my consultations with the breadth of that community, the Assyrian Canadians, Chaldean Canadians, Canadians of Kurdish origin, Yazidi Canadians, Mandaean Canadians, Canadian Iraqi, Shia and Sunni, with all of whom I have consulted and all of their organizations who have spoken on this, 100% have indicated their support for the Canadian participation in the allied military operation against the genocidal terrorist organization which is seeking to wipe their people off the face of the earth.

There used to be a time when the left in this country believed in concepts such as the responsibility to protect, that responsible and proportionate action was sometimes necessary to prevent genocide. It is regrettable to see that the blinkered ideology of the NDP no longer accepts that notion.

However, fortunately, according to the recent Ipsos Reid poll, 56% of supporters of the New Democratic Party still believe in the concept of the responsibility to protect and in action to prevent genocide. The vast majority of Canadians and New Democrats agree with the overwhelming majority of Canadians of Iraqi origin.

Mr. Tarik Brahmī (Saint-Jean, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is very ironic that the minister is using the argument of responsibility to protect. They are trying to convince us that bombing Syria or Iraq is our responsibility to protect. I think it is the first time he has used this argument, and it does not make sense.

I would like to talk about the example that he uses of the attack and murder of Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu. Conservatives try to use that as proof that Canada is under attack by Daesh, and I have even heard “under siege by Daesh”. The truth is that it is actually the contrary. The reason that the killer of Patrice Vincent committed that act is because he was not able to make any connection to Iraq or Syria and he was frustrated. He had been trying for months to make a connection through the members of the local mosque to Syria and Iraq. He was not able to do that. He was frustrated. He decided to kill an innocent officer in the Canadian army. That is proof that he was not connected to Daesh. Why do the Conservatives now want to limit debate and forbid members from explaining to Canadians the reason that this killing occurred?

• (1545)

Hon. Jason Kenney: Mr. Speaker, it is clear to anyone with eyes to see that the two terror attacks that occurred on our soil last October were inspired by the cult of violence, the cult of jihad, of Daesh, of the so-called Islamic State.

With respect to the responsibility to protect, I think in virtually every intervention and speech I have given on this matter since the invasion of Iraq by ISIL last fall, I have invoked the concept of the responsibility to protect.

Obviously we are not invoking the actual legal formulation of RTP at the United Nations because it requires the support of the United Nations Security Council. Insofar as Vladimir Putin and the People's Republic of China are required to support this, we do not believe that Canada's foreign policy should be circumscribed by the policies of those countries.

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The essence of responsibility to protect is this. When such crimes against humanity as genocide are being committed against helpless civilians by their government, or their government is either unwilling or unable to protect them, there is a moral responsibility. We ought not feel narrowly limited by the legalisms of Westphalian sovereignty. It is regrettable, in fact bizarre, to see the NDP take that position now. If we were not acting in concert with our allies against ISIL, there would be tens of thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands, of additional victims: women and girls subject to sexual slavery, gay men being executed, religious minorities being slaughtered. Thank God, we began to act last October to at least prevent many more of those crimes from being committed.

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to remind all of us of what we are debating here right now. It is actually a time allocation on a very serious bill to extend the mission into Iraq, and also to expand it to include Syria as well. Syria, by the way, has not invited us into that country at all, so it is disturbing.

Over the weekend, I had the pleasure of meeting with many Syrians. I actually went to someone's house and they had gathered a great number of neighbourhood friends and relatives there. These people were concerned that here, de facto, we would be supporting the heinous regime of Assad. They were saying that the biggest fear that their relatives and friends have is from the Assad regime and they are very disturbed.

On top of our not being able to debate this issue in a reasoned manner and put forward arguments, once again I am very disturbed that the Conservatives are going to use their majority to silence any different point of view. After all, this is the place where we are supposed to debate. Once again we are shutting down debate on a very serious issue of sending Canadian men and women into war, into Iraq and Syria. That should give us all a great deal of concern. It makes me shudder.

Hon. Jason Kenney: Mr. Speaker, first, we are not debating a bill. I need to correct the member in this respect. It is a motion.

If the government were interested in “shutting down voices”, as the member contends, the government would not have brought forward this motion in the first place. I will repeat yet again that there is no constitutional, statutory or conventional obligation on the government to invite a debate of this nature.

The member says “shutting down debate”. In fact, we are having well over 15 hours of debate and dozens of speeches over two days, in addition to dozens of speeches over many hours of debate in October on effectively the same mission. All of this is done out of discretion by the government, precisely to include many different voices in the debate.

With respect to the Assad regime, of course this government condemns it, and is actively supporting international diplomatic efforts to seek a truce between the warring factions of the Syrian civil war. We hope, and we would certainly provide assistance in terms of humanitarian and capacity building, to develop a democratic Syrian government that is representative and protective of all of the factions and communities in that country. However, we should not allow the savagery of Bashar al-Assad to give ISIL a de facto safe haven in the east of that country.

• (1550)

[Translation]

Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we are debating a very serious matter. We have to be very serious and think carefully if we are to send men and women into combat in Iraq and Syria.

The Minister of National Defence makes it sound like the opposition is neither shocked nor disturbed by the actions of the so-called Islamic State. We are extremely worried about it.

On this side, we believe that the Conservatives' proposed mission will not resolve the issue. Crimes against humanity are being perpetrated and we believe that emergency humanitarian aid is needed.

Canada must contribute to this emergency humanitarian aid and must be there to follow up and ensure that the people responsible for crimes against humanity are prosecuted.

We also believe that—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Order.

The hon. Minister of National Defence.

Hon. Jason Kenney: Mr. Speaker, NDP members display a profound lack of logic on this issue when they say that crimes against humanity are being perpetrated in the region, yet we must respond with humanitarian aid. Without a strong military response to stop crimes against humanity, there will continue to be more victims. The NDP's strategy is to let ISIL take over and kill more people, then send in humanitarian aid at the end. That makes no sense at all.

We are taking strong military action and providing humanitarian aid. We are the fifth-largest donor providing aid to displaced people in Iraq. We have contributed over \$67 million to date.

[English]

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Call in the members.

•(1635)

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

(Division No. 366)

YEAS

Members

Abлонczy	Adler
Aglukkaq	Albas
Albrecht	Alexander
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Ambler	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson
Armstrong	Aspin
Barlow	Bateman
Bergen	Bezan
Blaney	Block
Boughen	Braid
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Bruinooge	Butt
Calandra	Cannan
Carmichael	Carrie
Chisu	Chong
Clarke	Clement
Crockett	Daniel
Davidson	Devolin
Dreeshen	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Dykstra	Eglinski
Falk	Fantino
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Fletcher	Galipeau
Gallant	Gill
Glover	Goguen
Goldring	Goodyear
Gosal	Gourde
Hawn	Hayes
Hiebert	Hoback
Holder	James
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kent	Kerr
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lake	Lauzon
Lebel	Lemieux
Leung	Lizon
Lobb	Lukiwski
Lunney	Mackay (Central Nova)
MacKenzie	Maguire
Mayes	McColeman
McLeod	Menegakis
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Nicholson
Norlock	Oliver
O'Neill Gordon	Opitz
O'Toole	Paradis
Payne	Perkins
Poillievre	Preston
Raitt	Rajotte
Reid	Rempel
Saxton	Schellenberger
Shiple	Shory
Smith	Sopuck
Sorenson	Storseth
Sweet	Tilson
Toet	Trottier
Truppe	Uppal
Valcourt	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Wallace
Warawa	Warkentin
Watson	Weston (Saint John)
Wilks	Williamson
Wong	Woodworth
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Young (Vancouver South)	Yurdiga
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Members

Adams Allen (Welland)

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Ayala	Bélangier
Bellavance	Bennett
Benskin	Blanchette
Blanchette-Lamothe	Boivin
Borg	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brahmi
Brison	Brosseau
Caron	Casey
Cash	Charlton
Chicoine	Chisholm
Choquette	Christopherson
Cleary	Comartin
Côté	Cotler
Crowder	Cullen
Cuzner	Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Day	Dewar
Dion	Dionne Labelle
Donnelly	Doré Lefebvre
Dubé	Dubourg
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Dusseault	Easter
Eyking	Freeland
Freeman	Fry
Gameau	Garrison
Genest	Genest-Jourdain
Giguère	Godin
Goodale	Gravelle
Grogulé	Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Harris (St. John's East)	Hsu
Hyer	Julian
Kellway	Lamoureux
Latendresse	Laverdière
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Leslie	Liu
Mai	Marston
Masse	Mathysen
May	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Michaud	Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)	Mourani
Mulcair	Murray
Nash	Nicholls
Nunez-Melo	Papillon
Patry	Péclet
Pilon	Quach
Rafferty	Rankin
Rathgeber	Ravignat
Regan	Rousseau
Saganash	Scarpaleggia
Scott	Sellah
Sgro	Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-
Nil	sor)
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PAIRED

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

CONSIDERATION OF THE MOTION

The House resumed from March 26 consideration of the motion, and of the amendment.

Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Consular, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is good to be here today.

It is interesting to see that the Liberals actually showed up in the House for the vote on closure, but they do not seem to be that interested in the debate. I think they have had four speaking slots and have only used two of them. We will see whether they have a little more interest in this as we go forward.

Government Orders

It is intriguing to see the change the Liberals have made in their party over the last few years. One of their policy documents, “Canada in the World: A Global Networks Strategy”, states:

Another Canadian-inspired idea, Responsibility to Protect, will ensure that military intervention is truly a last resort, but that when sovereign states fail to protect their people and the international community mobilizes to stop large-scale harm to innocent life (for example in genocide and ethnic cleansing), Canada will be there.

However, the Liberals do not seem to be willing at all to support that statement in their own policy document. It has been interesting to listen to them talk about the fact that they want there to be humanitarian aid, but they really do not want it the way it is delivered right now. They want things to settle down there, but they will not make the commitment in any way that would help us find a solution to the conflict that is taking place.

The NDP talked a little earlier this afternoon about its doctrine that it once had responsibility to protect, and it seems to have gone a long way away from that as well. One NDP member today talked about 60 nations operating together as being unilateral action. Of course, we would disagree with that.

This afternoon, I would like to put a bit of a face on some of the conflict we have been seeing over the last few years. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights just released a report in the last few days that talks about the situation in northern Iraq and Syria. I want to talk about that and try to put a face on some of the victims that are being pressured so aggressively by ISIL.

We know that Iraq has had decades of authoritarian government and civil strife. A lot of people, through the violence, have been killed over the years. The so-called Islamic State surfaced last year for the most part out of a lack of inclusivity that was part of the political system in Iraq. It was able to finally begin to expand where it had not been able to previously.

In January 2014, it showed up in the city of Fallujah. In April, Anbar was a battleground. By May, 500,000 civilians had been displaced. It hit Mosul and Tikrit in June. It was able to seize Sinjar and other areas around there in August. Then we began to hear of the many irregularities that were taking place, the serious human rights abuses. By the time that the Yazidi Christians had been evacuated from that area, over 1.5 million people had been displaced from their homes. That is a huge situation and it is disappointing that the opposition parties are not willing to agree to activities that would solve the situation there.

I want to talk about some of the groups that have been attacked in that area. First, the attacks on the Yazidis have received media attention. As I mentioned, ISIL hit the Sinjar area and was able to force the Yazidis out of there. It has been persecuting the Yazidis as a group, based on their religious beliefs. It has systematically and in a widespread fashion carried out atrocities against the Yazidi population on the Nineveh plains and the Yazidi-populated cities and villages.

ISIL has separated the men and women from the children. It has taken men away, and in many places the men have been executed. The women have been taken as what is called spoils of war. The women and girls have been separated into three groups and taken away. It has also detained many of them for months. For example, the United Nations report tells us a group of 196 disabled Yazidis,

including the elderly, children, and many people who were ill, were held captive in Mosul and Tal Afar for months. We can see that the Yazidi community has been targeted as one of the specific communities that ISIL has been trying to destroy.

Christians are seen, as the report points out, as “people of the book”. That is a classification that has granted them certain protection in comparison to other ethnic and religious groups over the years, but not with ISIS.

● (1640)

In August of 2014, an estimated 200,000 Christians and members of other ethnic and religious groups in the Nineveh plains were forced to flee. There were 50,000 people who had previously been displaced from Mosul who were mostly Christians as well. Of course, we have heard of many other places. In Qaraqosh, ISIL pillaged and destroyed the buildings in the city, including a lot of historic Christian cathedrals and churches. Basically, it took possession of all of the possessions and all of the identity documents of the families who could not leave and then expelled them from the city.

Shia Muslims have been subject to attacks as well. The pattern has been consistent right across all of these groups where ISIL surrounds villages. It kills the inhabitants who cannot escape, burns and destroys houses, businesses and places of worship and then pillages private and public places. That has gone on in the Shia areas as well. We know that it has executed men and abducted numerous members from Shia and Shabak communities.

It has laid siege in different places. One example is in Amerli, where it laid siege in June of 2014. It cut off the water and power 20 days into the siege and the people who were inside that community were not able to get out. There were 15,000 people trapped in there. Eventually, people were drinking contaminated water and getting sick or dying. The siege was finally broken in September of 2014.

We know there was a prison in Badoosh, where ISIS went in, took the prisoners out, separated them into groups according to their ethnic or religious affiliations and then killed them. In particular, the Sunnis were taken out to a ravine, shot and piled into that ravine.

There have been politically motivated attacks throughout the area as well, particularly against those who have been affiliated with the government. We have seen police officers, members of the Iraqi armed forces, public servants, members of parliament and people who were running for elected office targeted. These folks were not targeted specifically because of a perceived ethnic or religious identity but because they were linked to the government or have been trying to work with the government.

We know that approximately 1,500 members of the Iraqi armed forces from Camp Speicher in Salah ad-Din governorate were summarily executed on June 12 by ISIL.

Government Orders

All of that pales in comparison to some of the sexual and gender-based violence reports that have come out, particularly against the Yazidi women. When attacking Yazidi villages, ISIL would typically kill the men but would also take the women and children as well. There have been widespread killings, enslavement, the selling of women, rape, sexual slavery, forced transfer of women and children, and the inhuman and degrading treatment of them. If we take a look at the report, it goes into far more detail than I am willing to or interested in going into today. Many of the girls and the unmarried women can recount the process of enslavement they went through as well.

ISIL is not above recruiting and using children. Young male children were taken to training centres and forced to watch videos of beheadings in an attempt to desensitize them so that it could convince them to join with it.

A ton of crimes have been committed here. Our government knows that we need to be involved. We have heard many hours of discussion about this, but the challenges that Iraq faces are daunting. Canada and the coalition of 60-plus countries, including many in the Arab world, are supporting Iraq and responding to the threat of ISIL. Progress has been made on military fronts, humanitarian fronts, political fronts and human rights fronts.

We value our good relations with Iraq. Canadians can be proud that Canada and this government is doing its part to fight ISIL. Canada will continue to work together with Iraq in support of the Iraqi people's aspirations for the stability, security, prosperity and freedom that we so much take for granted.

• (1645)

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to my hon. colleague and certainly the horrific record that ISIS has registered in terms of the levels of atrocities that it has committed. What I did not hear from my hon. colleague is the diplomatic role that Canada should be playing with our allies. We know that when this vote on Syria was brought to the British Parliament, the Conservative Party voted it down because of the uncertainty of going into Syria. We do not have a single western ally with us. I do not see any efforts being made to build a coalition of western allies. What we have is the United States, as well as Arabic countries that have been known to be spending millions of dollars fighting a proxy Sunni-Shia war in Syria. Those are our so-called allies.

I would like to ask my hon. colleague this. Why did the government not go to the United Nations to ensure that Canada was fully within our capacity in terms of our international legal obligations? Why did the government ignore the United Nations? Why do we not have a mandate from NATO to do this?

If my hon. colleague wants to have a long-term solution in Syria, then we need our allies there. They are not there and I would like to ask him why.

Mr. David Anderson: Mr. Speaker, our allies are there. The only ones who are not there are the opposition, and they should be.

Obviously, we are operating on the diplomatic front. If the member listens, he might learn something. He always like to talk, but the reality is, if he was paying attention he would know that even the

minister of consular affairs was at the United Nations just last week talking about this very issue. Our Minister of Foreign Affairs' first trip was to the Middle East to deal with these issues. Our former foreign affairs minister made this a priority as well.

We are working on a number of fronts. We are working on the diplomatic front. We are obviously making a military commitment. We do not expect that the NDP would support us, but we certainly had some hope that the Liberals might have some interest in doing the right thing and supporting us on that. We are also working on the humanitarian front, having committed many dollars towards humanitarian efforts both in Syria and Iraq. As talked about today, we are looking into and working on the human rights issues as well.

Mr. James Bezan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs for the heartfelt speech he just gave and his comments.

The opposition members, from the get go, keep talking about the humanitarian aid. However, the member has pointed out the humanitarian efforts that Canada has already undertaken: we are the fifth-largest donor in Iraq and the sixth-largest in Syria with over \$700 million committed in the region which, on a per capita basis, is punching way above our weight. The Canadian taxpayers have been extremely generous through the Government of Canada to the displaced people and refugees in the region.

Can the member comment more on the issue of making sure that we have security in the region and how we go about bringing that security so that we can stop this carnage and actually deliver the humanitarian relief that is needed?

Mr. David Anderson: Mr. Speaker, I wish I had more time to address this issue, because it is critical.

Obviously, one of the reasons we deployed Canadian military personnel to Iraq was to provide the benefits of the experience and expertise that we have in order to train its military. The Iraqi military is growing in strength, numbers and professionalism. That is thanks to our engagement and the fact that we and our coalition partners are there. That is why the opposition should be supporting this.

We have said in the House that military operations are essential. That is not going to be sufficient to defeat ISIL. We know that. We know that a political solution is required to stabilize ISIL, and it looks like this new government is actually interesting in pursuing that. It has adopted an ambitious four-year program, from 2014 to 2018, which includes the elements the member is talking about, such as key action to restore security, provide better overall services to its citizens, and really deal with tackling corruption and strengthening the economy, reforming government institutions and decentralizing powers.

Those are the kinds of things that are part of this package that we are doing. It is one of the reasons why the opposition should be standing with us and supporting what it is this government is trying to do in Iraq and in the area.

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Mr. Ted Opitz (Etobicoke Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I take to the floor today to seek recognition by this House of Commons that the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, or ISIL as it is more commonly called, represents a clear and a continuing threat to Canada.

I fully support our government's decision to extend the current military mission in Iraq. It is clear to all of us that ISIL poses a significant threat to local and regional stability and to international peace and security overall.

We have just to turn on our TV sets to witness the barbarity of these ultra-radicalized jihadists. By displacing more than two million people they have created a severe humanitarian crisis in Iraq and in neighbouring countries. By systematically persecuting ethnic and religious minorities, they have caused the death of thousands of innocent men, women and children, as the parliamentary secretary who spoke before me very clearly and very articulately laid out.

By conducting barbaric acts against western hostages and the Jordanian pilot, we all remember his fate, they have signalled to the world that they are prepared to go to any length to cultivate and to spread terror.

This group has issued an edict to their followers to attack Canadians. ISIL is active on social media and the Internet, spreading their hateful ideology and their propaganda, encouraging their followers to target innocent people wherever they live, and calling on would-be fighters to rise up and join them on Middle Eastern battlegrounds.

They have inspired the terrible tragedies that took place in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu and Ottawa. They gleefully cheered when Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent and Corporal Nathan Cirillo, men in uniform who pledged to defend our country, were felled by the cowardly and terrorist actions of radicalized Canadians.

It is clear that ISIL represents a continuing threat to Canada and Canadians. This is why Canada needs to extend the mission in Iraq, expand its operation to Syria and do its part to deter and degrade this threat. Canada will always do her part and the brave men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces are playing an exceptional role in the coalition against ISIL.

As the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence said, Canada is punching away above its weight, and we should all be proud of all of our men and women serving abroad today.

I would like to go into some detail about the contribution being made by our air assets. To date, CF-18 Hornets have conducted over 436 sorties, resulting in the destruction of ISIL vehicles, heavy weapons, IED factories, storage facilities and fighting positions. By damaging or destroying assets like these, the Canadian Armed Forces not only degrades ISIL's combat capability and prevents ISIL fighters from establishing safe havens, but they are also enabling the Iraqi forces to go on the offensive. Ultimately it will be the responsibility of the Iraqi forces to bring sufficient pressure to bear on ISIL and eliminate the threat that it represents.

The CP-150 Auroras, outfitted with advanced imaging systems, radar and other sensors, have conducted over 122 reconnaissance

missions, collecting the critical intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance data that is used to identify and strike targets accurately, as well as to assess the battle damage that they cause. The modernized Aurora is a cutting-edge platform. The information this aircraft collects not only enhances the effectiveness of air strikes, but also helps avoid collateral damage by ensuring that targets are limited strictly to military objectives. In fact, our Auroras have made a crucial contribution to what is considered the most precise, close air support campaign in history.

Last, the CC-150 Polaris refueller has conducted over 111 sorties, delivering more than six and a half million pounds of fuel to coalition aircraft. That is absolutely stunning. By delivering fuel to fighters in the air, it acts as a force multiplier by allowing these aircraft to lengthen their sorties and fly further into the battle space. Our Polaris is helping the coalition to maintain pressure on ISIL throughout Iraq. Moreover, our special operations forces on the ground are working to advise and assist the Iraqi forces to make them more effective. They are increasing their confidence and ability to plan, to mount and to execute operations against ISIL, and they are making a real difference, a difference that both opposition parties oppose.

● (1650)

Given all of this overwhelming evidence, I quite frankly do not understand how the opposition opposes what clearly is the right thing to do. The contributions of the Canadian Armed Forces have not only been highly effective, but highly valued by the coalition. For the past six months the coalition is seeing real signs of progress. Through the aerial campaign, the coalition has hit ISIL targets in Central Iraq and northwest of Baghdad in areas that are both controlled and contested by ISIL. These efforts have reduced ISIL's freedom of movement and ability to make territorial gains.

Meanwhile, the Iraqi forces have wrestled the city of Al-Baghdadi back from ISIL control and are working to regain Fallujah. In northern Iraq, Iraqi forces are gradually taking back the ground east of Mosul where ISIL is in a defensive posture. This demonstrates improvement, but there is still much more to do. Our participation in this multinational mission is in line with Canadian values and Canadian interests.

As the Prime Minister has said, it is not the Canadian way to sit on the sidelines and let others do the heavy lifting for us. Indeed, a broad international coalition of more than 60 partners, approximately 30 of which are contributing to military efforts led by the United States, is working together to confront ISIL head-on.

Canada is collaborating with some of our closest allies and partners, including the governments of the United States, France, Netherlands, Denmark and many others, which are all committed to degrade and to defeat ISIL. This fight against ISIL is not about the politics of right or left, as the opposition would have people believe. It is about doing the right thing and acting in Canada's national interest. Many of our allies are left-of-centre governments and they are fully committed.

Government Orders

Moreover, Middle Eastern countries are playing a vital role in the coalition, demonstrating that this is not a western conflict against Islam, but rather a fight that pits broad international concern for Iraq and Syria, regional stability and humanitarian assistance against murderous extremism. Most of ISIL's victims are other Muslims, including its own members who fall out of favour with the leadership.

Any mission carries with it a degree of risk, but the men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces are prepared so they can face these challenges. They are rigorously trained prior to deployment overseas, equipped to the highest standards and operate within specific rules of engagement that mitigate risks wherever feasible.

I would also note that the risks to Canadian personnel will be alleviated by dedicated personnel recovery capability, which is provided by the coalition and includes a high readiness combat search and rescue capacity prepared to respond should it prove necessary.

ISIL is a group that decries modern civilization and it equally abhors anything that does not accord with its world view. As part of this relentless campaign to eradicate culture over the last few weeks, we have borne witness to the destruction of the 3,000 year old Assyrian city of Nimrud, the seventh century statues from the ancient city of Nineveh, housed in a museum in Mosul, and most recent, the bulldozing of the ancient city of Hatra, which is dated the second or third third century BC.

The head of UNESCO has declared that this deliberate destruction of cultural heritage constitutes a war crime.

ISIL is not merely content to threaten the present and the future of the people of the Middle East. It is determined to erase their culture and their past in an attempt to revise history. We must prevent and contain this peril before it leads to the entrenchment of oppressive rules across this region.

As the Prime Minister has said, we have helped feed 1.7 million people in Iraq, provided shelter and relief supplies to 1.25 million people and given education to at least half a million children. We have also helped to support 200,000 refugees in Iraq with food, water, shelter and protection.

The choice between military action and humanitarian aid is not a one or the other proposition as the Liberals and NDP would have people believe. Our experience in the recent past has shown that we cannot expect quick and decisive victories and if we falter now, ISIL will continue to gain strength, increase its brutality and ruthlessness.

We must remain resolute in our determination to assist the people and the government of Iraq, and remain firm in our belief that innocent lives must be saved.

• (1655)

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened with some astonishment to my colleague. The debate before us is about us expanding this war into Syria. In order to expand a war into someone else's territory, there are fundamental rules of international law.

My colleague talked about this huge coalition, but I did not hear any mention of Security Council mandate. I did not hear any

mention that this was a NATO mission, or that the United Nations had not even been contacted by Canada, which I find is an egregious oversight. We saw the Prime Minister laughing the other day about the question of whether we were meeting the basic requirements of international law. This is serious.

The allies that the member speaks of, besides the United States, are not bombing in Syria. The British will not go into Syria. The French are not in Syria. No western ally is in Syria. The countries that are in Syria, however, are the Middle Eastern countries that have been fighting a proxy Sunni-Shia war for months and years.

I would like to ask my hon. colleague a simple question. Has this been passed in any capacity through the United Nations, or are we tacitly supporting Bashar al-Assad in his murderous regime?

• (1700)

Mr. Ted Opitz: Mr. Speaker, the opposition continues to be astonished and amazed because, quite frankly, it does not understand the threat posed to the world. It is a threat that we have seen on our TVs. It is a threat that the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs has laid out in terms of the humanitarian cost that faces the indigenous people there.

We are expanding this mission into Syria because it is the right thing to do. We must degrade the opportunities for ISIL to carry out warfare. To do that, we have to destroy the assets it has on the ground. If it is hiding them in Syria, that must be addressed.

Along with our American colleagues and others, we will address this issue as we engage in sorties in Syria. That has all been taken care of through our allies and ourselves. We are not tacitly supporting anybody. We are supporting the Canadian people. We are supporting freedom, peace and democracy, and the right of people everywhere, including those people in the Middle East—the Yazidis, the Christians, the Chaldeans and others—to live in peace and raise their families without the fear of terrorism.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives have failed to clearly articulate the mission's objectives. We heard the Minister of National Defence talk about precision guided bombs the other day in numerous media outlets. It took a general to correct the minister.

We have the Prime Minister and his office, the Minister of National Defence, again, with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and depending on who we talk to will determine what the combat role is or how long the mission will be.

Why does the member believe the Conservative government, particularly the Prime Minister, has failed to be straightforward with Canadians on the actual objectives of this mission?

Mr. Ted Opitz: Mr. Speaker, from an air force officer to an infantryman, the role of the air force is to support the ground forces, in this case, the Iraqi ground forces, the equipment and the advantages that ISIL currently maintains on the ground, and enable the Iraqi troops to move forward and retake their own territory. The role, quite simply, is to destroy ISIL so it is no longer be effective and pose a threat to Canada.

Government Orders

Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me begin by saying that even in a debate as divisive as this one, there is one thing that all parties and all members have in common. We are all committed to keeping Canadians safe. It is therefore disappointing, even if predictable, to hear the government suggest that members who disagree with it are failing to uphold Canadian values.

[Translation]

As I said a few weeks ago in Calgary, we can be very critical of each other's policies without debating each other's patriotism.

That is certainly true when it comes to the debate on the motion before us today. We must confront ISIL. We all agree on that. Where we disagree is on the most effective way for Canada to intervene.

[English]

The Liberal Party will not support the government's motion to extend Canada's combat role in Iraq and expand it into Syria.

I wish to use my time today to put our opposition into a broader context, to describe what Liberals believe would be a more effective course of action in the region and here at home.

Our approach to this mission, indeed to any military engagement, centres around four core principles.

First, Canada does have a role to play in responding to humanitarian crises and security threats in the world. As I have already stated, there is consensus in the House on that point.

Second, when we deploy the Canadian Forces, especially into combat operations, there must be a clear mission and a clear role for Canada. Here is where our disagreement begins. A full week has passed since the Prime Minister first rose on this issue, and the government still has not clearly articulated this mission's objectives. Indeed, as we saw last week, there is not even consensus as to what the ultimate goal is.

Are we only seeking to degrade ISIL's capabilities, as the Prime Minister stated, or are we attempting to defeat them outright, as the Minister of National Defence suggested? If it is to defeat them, are we willing to admit that it may take more than air strikes? Are we willing to admit that it may well mean bombing in Yemen and other countries? Will our involvement in this mission end next March, or was the Minister of Foreign Affairs being more truthful when he explicitly compared this war to Afghanistan, saying that we were in this for the longer term? Let us remember, in Afghanistan the longer term meant 10 years not 12 months.

We cannot allow rhetorical appeals to moral clarity to disguise the absence of a plan.

• (1705)

[Translation]

Third, the Liberal Party cannot support any military mission when the arguments to support it have not been presented in an open and transparent manner.

When we supported the first phase of the mission, it was with the understanding that the length and scope of the mission would be limited, in other words, that it would end after 30 days and it would be limited to non-combat support.

[English]

The Prime Minister told Canadians that the purpose of the mission would be to advise and to assist, and that the Canadian troops were not accompanying the Iraqi forces into combat. We now know that Canadian troops have been at the front lines, calling in air strikes and engaging in several direct firefights.

In a matter of months, despite assurances to the contrary, the government steadily and stealthily drew Canada into a deeper ground combat role in Iraq. With this motion, it seeks to deepen our involvement even further.

[Translation]

How can we trust a government that so deliberately misleads Canadians, first on the nature of our role and now on the duration of our commitment?

The government wants to increase Canada's participation in a vague and possibly endless combat mission. We cannot support this proposal.

[English]

Finally, we believe that any time Canada engages in a military mission, our role must reflect the broad scope of Canadian capabilities and how best we can help, something this motion, with its singular focus on a military solution, fails to do. We know that the men and women who serve in our military are well-trained professionals, deeply committed to our country and very good at what they do.

[Translation]

Canada has a duty to act here at home and around the world. We can provide our police and intelligence services with the resources they need to do their jobs, while ensuring that the appropriate oversight mechanisms are in place, because we all agree that anyone who commits a terrorist act in Canada or conspires to commit such an act should be dealt with by our courts in the toughest possible way.

[English]

We can stop shortchanging our armed forces. The government's pattern of demanding more while offering less, of cutting defence spending and allowing billions already budgeted for defence to go unspent must stop. We can work closely with our international partners to starve ISIL of its resources, including by preventing it from using the international financial system.

We can urge the Iraqi government to continue its political reforms and its outreach to the country's Sunni community. We can work with communities in Canada to reduce the risk of radicalization among young people. We can do that without singling out or stigmatizing any one group of Canadians.

•(1710)

[*Translation*]

The atrocities that Islamic State militants have committed are widely known. They are killing innocent civilians, ethnic and religious minorities, humanitarian workers and journalists. The Assad regime in Syria has committed similar horrific acts. The UN has confirmed numerous incidents where chemical weapons were used against civilians. The acts committed by ISIL and by Assad are horrendous, and we have every reason to be outraged.

[*English*]

However, in a situation as complex and volatile as the one that the world faces in Syria and Iraq, we must not allow our outrage to cloud our judgment. Canada and its allies have learned some important lessons in recent years, at great cost. We have learned about the dangers of drifting into expanded combat roles without a clear idea of how the fighting will eventually end. We have learned that deploying western combat forces in this region can lead to what President Obama has called “unintended consequences”. We have learned that unless we approach a mission like this with a clear understanding of its political and military environment, and unless we match our goals to that reality, we risk making the situation worse, not better.

Responsibility to protect, a doctrine to which the Minister of National Defence has seemingly become a recent convert, spells this out clearly. Intervention must not make matters worse.

[*Translation*]

In Syria, after four years of all-out war, over 11 million Syrians—over half the population—have been driven from their homes. Syrians have fled their country by the millions, causing a refugee crisis throughout the region. In five years of combat, over 210,000 Syrians have been killed, including over 10,000 children. This is the result of the civil war, a war during which the Syrian people have been terrorized and killed by their own government.

We cannot support a mission that could very well further consolidate Assad's power in Syria.

[*English*]

Rather than continuing to deepen our combat mission in Iraq and Syria, Canada's interests are better served by an approach that combines military training for Iraqi forces fighting ISIL with humanitarian aid and expanded resettlement efforts here in Canada.

Our military training should take place away from the front lines, as our allies have been doing. We did this in Afghanistan and we can do it in Iraq. We should also be realistic about the timelines involved. Training local forces to fight ISIL will take time, not just six months, as we have seen, or even one year.

[*Translation*]

The government owes it to Canadians to be more honest about how long this mission will truly last. In addition to building on the training we are providing to Iraqi forces, Canada should intensify its support through adequately funded and well-planned humanitarian aid, together with our allies and under the auspices of the United Nations.

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Enhancing our humanitarian aid effort will do more than just provide assistance and bring renewed hope to those who desperately need it. Intensifying our effort will also support political and economic security in the neighbouring countries, such as Jordan, Lebanon and our NATO ally, Turkey, countries whose ability to take care of millions of Syrian refugees has already been severely tested.

[*English*]

Here at home, we also have an opportunity to significantly expand our refugee targets and give more victims of war the opportunity to start a new life in Canada. The government's plan to sponsor 4,000 Syrian refugees over three years was a good start, but it follows on a poor track record and does not go nearly far enough.

To quote Britain's former foreign secretary:

Resettlement will not end the war, but it can rescue some of the most vulnerable victims of the fighting — the raped and tortured, at-risk women and children, those with acute medical needs.

Canada has an opportunity to help these victims of war and a moral obligation to do more than token assistance. To that end, we believe that the federal government should immediately expand to 25,000 the number of refugees that it commits to accept, and that it directly sponsor all of those refugees. That target, and the cost associated with it, should be in addition to our existing global refugee intake targets and the resources dedicated to meeting them.

To put that number in context, under the leadership of former prime minister Joe Clark, Canada resettled 60,000 Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Laotian refugees. The target I am suggesting today also reflects the scale of effort that Canada should undertake in a world with the largest number of refugees since the end of the Second World War. Of course, the Canadian refugee system must continue to be secure, and we must take all steps required to verify refugee claims.

Let us always remember that when we open our doors to those who seek refuge, it is not a one-sided deal. Our own Canadian experience is made better by everything they bring with them: their intelligence, their hard work, their resilience, their language, culture, and religion. We know that when we welcome those who have turned to Canada for help in times of desperation, we are strengthened, not in spite of our differences but because of them.

Training, humanitarian aid, and resettlement help for refugees are the elements of a serious, smart, and sustained approach to the crises in Iraq and Syria. We would also encourage the government to take a broader, less reactive approach to security challenges. We need to work on preventing threats before they materialize rather than just reacting to them after the fact.

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• (1715)

[*Translation*]

I am not saying that just because humanitarian crises often occur in fragile countries, but also because the chronic lack of political and economic security in those countries makes it more likely that they will attract transnational militants who may use them as a base from where they can organize, grow and recruit. That is what the Islamic State is doing at present.

When it makes sense to do so, we should help strengthen the security forces in those regions so they can counter such threats. However, history has shown us that military action alone does not create lasting stability because it only deals with the symptoms of the instability and not the root cause.

[*English*]

We will make little headway in ending conflict and radicalization if we do not address the underlying causes of both—the root causes—including more governance and lack of economic opportunity. That is not just my opinion. NATO's supreme commander, U.S. Air Force General Philip Breedlove, put the same concerns solidly on the record last December.

I would like to end on something that the Minister of Foreign Affairs said in the House last week. When he stood to introduce this motion, he said something that I do not think we can let stand unchallenged. He said that those who oppose this mission are “dismissing Canadian values”.

I suspect that the government has, and not for the first time, mistaken the values of the Conservative Party of Canada for the values of the people of Canada.

[*Translation*]

The values of openness and honesty, which the government has failed to demonstrate since the start of this mission last October, are important to Canadians. Canadians like to learn from past experience, something the government has chosen not to do. Canadians cherish our country's longstanding tradition of helping those in need and showing leadership in diplomatic and humanitarian efforts. This government puts military action first and provides much less than what is required to help people in need.

• (1720)

[*English*]

It is not surprising that the government is attempting to shift this to a debate on Canadian values or moral clarity. That is what the current government always does when it knows that its policy cannot bear scrutiny.

Canada has an interest in training and helping Iraqi forces to fight and defeat ISIL, but we should not fight this war for them. We should not drift deeper and deeper into a civil war that may well go on for a very long time. Our position is clear: expanding this mission into Syria, committing our armed forces to the dangers of an ill-defined combat mission, does not serve our national interest. We believe this, come what may.

Canadians did not send us to this House to read polls and to guess at what they want. They did not put us here to stick a finger in the

wind and follow whichever way it seems to be blowing. They put us here to stand on principle and lead. That is exactly what we intend to do.

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of National Defence and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that member continues his shambolic, embarrassing, fatuous flip-flopping on this matter of essential international security. This is the member who characterized the policy of the Government of Canada, in responding positively to a request from the Government of Iraq to coordinate with dozens of other nations in a military action against a genocidal terrorist organization, as the Prime Minister wanting to “whip out [his] CF-18s and show [us] how big they are”.

This comes from a leader who is so profoundly unserious on such matters of national security, who ridiculed the equipment of the Royal Canadian Air Force as a bunch of “aging warplanes”. We ought not to be surprised. It is the same leader who said that the country in the world that he most admires is the “basic dictatorship” of China, and who joked about innocent civilians being shot in Kiev because of a hockey game. That is the seriousness of this member for Papineau.

He talks about refugees. He does not acknowledge that the largest refugee resettlement program to this country since the boat people was the 20,000-plus Iraqi refugees resettled by this government. That is a community that I know well. The Assyrians, the Kurds, and all of them, say to us to please continue with the military action.

Why does the member not understand that we cannot stop further humanitarian victims of ISIL's genocide without military action?

Mr. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his comments and the question at the end of it.

What I would like to highlight is that the Liberal Party has always stood firmly that Canada does have a role to play in combatting ISIL. We believe that is something we need to continue to do. We need to do it in a way that is thoughtful and based on honest, open plans and success.

I find it quite ironic that this is the minister getting up to mention some of my misspeaks, many of which I have fully acknowledged and owned up to, at the same time as he has refused to apologize for completely mischaracterizing a religious ritual as being ISIS enslavement. He has consistently misled in terms of precision bombing, in terms of misspeaking. He is now referred to as more gaff-prone than any other MP in this House.

Quite frankly, that is not the kind of rigour that we need from a defence minister, and it is certainly not the kind of rigour that until now this minister had a reputation for. He is completely out of his depth in this particular portfolio, and I think we all see it.

• (1725)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Papineau for his speech. Obviously he was trying to clarify the Liberal Party's position on the mission in Iraq and Syria.

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His efforts are all the more commendable and necessary given that the members of the Liberal caucus have been issuing all sorts of opinions and constantly changing their minds. I hope that we have heard the almost final version today, even though there are still some points that require clarification. That being said, despite the hesitation and confusion, I am pleased to see that the third party has finally gotten on board with some of the positions that we have been defending for months.

I would like to ask the member for Papineau if he is going to support the amendment that we proposed. The amendment suggests that the government end the participation of Canadian Forces troops in combat, boost humanitarian aid in the region, work with our allies in the region to stabilize neighbouring countries, provide assistance to investigations and prosecution of war crimes, increase assistance for refugees and work to prevent the flow of foreign fighters, finances and resources to ISIL.

Mr. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her question.

The Liberal Party's position has been clear from the start. We supported the government when it approached us last August with its proposal to send Canadian troops to Iraq to conduct training. We supported the 30-day mission that was Canada's first commitment to Iraq.

Since then, we have stayed the course. We are saying no to a combat mission. We are saying yes to our soldiers' involvement in a training mission and to increasing humanitarian aid and assistance for refugees. That has always been our position.

The motion, the position and the amendment of our official opposition friends clearly indicate that the Canadian army and our soldiers have no role to play. We do not agree with that. We think that our armed forces have the capacity to provide real training assistance. That is why we are taking the same position we have from the start.

[English]

Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I heard the Liberal Party leader and member for Papineau speak about the Canadian national interest and Canadian values, and I note that the mission that has been put forward for discussion has four actions, but those actions do not have a single word about or a single dollar added for humanitarian assistance or assistance with refugees.

I would like to ask the member for his thoughts about how the national interest and Canadian values have been served in the past by welcoming victims of war to Canada.

Mr. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague and friend for her question. I thank her as well for the extraordinary work she has done on this file as the Liberal critic for national defence.

The fact of the matter is that Canada has a long tradition of being a safe haven for people in war-torn parts of the world. It is not just out of the goodness of our hearts. It has also been because it has been tremendously beneficial to have a country built on the hopes and dreams of people trying to create a better future for themselves, their community, and mostly, future generations.

Time and time again, Canada has stepped up and has done way more than its size would mandate in the community of nations, whether it was drawing in the boat people, as I recognized, or whether it was Ismaili Muslims fleeing the ravages of East Africa under Idi Amin, or in more recent times, Tamils fleeing the civil war. More recently it was Iraqis. The fact is, Canada is a country that welcomes people from the world and understands how important it is.

It is unfortunate that the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration has not been able, over the past year, to be very clear about how many Syrian refugees we have accepted and how many more we will accept, which is why Liberals have been unequivocal that we need to accept 25,000 more refugees from this area.

• (1730)

Mr. David Anderson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Consular, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite says that the Liberal's position has been clear. Nothing could be further from the truth and the revisionism this afternoon is not going to solve that issue.

I want him to clarify some comments we heard earlier.

At the outset I'd like to make it clear where my party stands on Iraq and ISIS.

...if we don't want these refugee camps to become permanent fixtures on the landscape, then ISIS has to be dislodged and eventually defeated. ISIS is indeed a threat to world security and Canada can't just say it's not our problem, because it is our problem.

Those comments were made by his foreign affairs critic, the member for Westmount—Ville-Marie.

I would like to ask him, if Canadians are not going to solve that problem, who should solve it? When is he going to actually step up and say that we need to actively engage in solving this problem and give up the hopeless naiveté he has displayed this afternoon?

Mr. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for the question, because it gives me an opportunity to highlight the extraordinary work done by the member for Westmount—Ville-Marie, our foreign affairs critic, highlighting, indeed, that ISIL needs to be prevented from continuing to destabilize the region, going after civilians, and posing a threat to Canada and countries around the world.

My disagreement with the government is on the way to do it. An ill-defined mission that may well involve reinforcing Bashar al-Assad's bloody hold over Syria is not the best use of Canada's involvement. I have always been unequivocal, as has the Liberal Party, that Canada has a role to play in combatting ISIL, like the 60-some other members of the coalition. We will step up on refugees, on humanitarian, and on significant training, the way we developed capacities to do so in our years in Afghanistan. We can be proud of our strong men and women.

Hon. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me say at the outset that I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

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I welcome the opportunity to add to the debate on our continuing mission against the Islamic State, or ISIS, or ISIL, or Daesh. One can take one's pick. A lot of ink has been spilled and a lot of emotion has been expended, but I submit that it is not all that complicated. To understand why we are there in the first place, people only have to google images of ISIS, but they should be prepared with a strong stomach.

The list of ISIS atrocities is so long, one barely knows where to begin, whether it is with the beheadings, the crucifixions, the enslavements, or its inspiration of others. It is in the latter that ISIS represents a threat to Canada. The perpetrators of murders against members of the Canadian Armed Forces last October were not members of ISIS per se, but they were ideal recruits.

We know that about 70 Canadians have gone to Iraq and Syria to fight with ISIS, and we know that CSIS is looking closely at about 140 more. We know that if CSIS says 140, the real number is much higher.

The October terrorist-inspired murders were carried out by people who had been radicalized. Some want to chalk it up to simple mental illness. To be sure, they had to be mentally ill to carry out those murders, but they were the type of people who make ideal ISIS hand grenades simply waiting for their pins to be pulled at random.

There are more of them out there, and we simply must remain vigilant and give our security forces the capacity they need to keep us as safe as possible from those threats. ISIS has singled out Canada, and we would be very foolish not to take them at their word. Some have glibly said that there are more people killed by lightning or other causes in Canada than by terrorists. That is true, and I want to keep it that way.

ISIS's crimes are crimes against humanity. This is not any one leader's war; this is humanity's war. There are indeed other movements that may be equally bad but not that approach ISIS's codified evil, made possible by its pretensions to be a state. It is an ideology that can be defeated, but the first step must be to eliminate the state structure that supports the ideology and whose very existence is what draws others to it.

Sixty-two countries are now supporting the U.S.-led operation, including all 26 NATO countries and many in the region. People speak of international law and the United Nations. I would remind members of the responsibility to protect doctrine that was adopted by the United Nations at the urging of Canada, and especially by former Prime Minister Paul Martin. Where a government cannot or will not protect its citizens, the international community has a responsibility to step in. It seems that the current Liberal leadership has lost sight of its past.

Would we be advocating a formal responsibility to protect? No, we would not, because that would subordinate our foreign policy to Russia and China. However, do we stand by the essence of the responsibility to protect? Absolutely, we do. That is one of the reasons we are there.

As well, under article 51, a nation or nations may take action as a right of self-defence. Due to the actions threatened, and in fact carried out by ISIS and its adherents, the coalition was justified in

taking action. The U.S. made that clear to the United Nations with respect to operations in Syria, and Canada will do the same.

Operations in Iraq are more straightforward with the invitation from the Government of Iraq to help them in their fight against ISIS. The alternative, if the allied countries had not begun to take action against ISIS, both in Iraq and eastern Syria, is that we would have today an organization in control of most of Iraq and roughly half of Syria, with its own energy revenues and its military expansion unchecked.

Our mission, as originally conducted, and the expansion into air operations in Syria, is not about supporting Bashar al-Assad. It is about saving lives and eliminating a virulent threat to humanity. The threat of ISIS will be eliminated when it can no longer use Syria or Iraq as a base from which to launch attacks directly or by proxy against people around the world. That does not mean that Bashar al-Assad is now our friend. He is still a war criminal, mass murderer, ethnic cleanser, and deadly fanatic. He must be dealt with at a later time, but the most pressing priority is what to do about ISIS.

Benjamin Netanyahu said it well before the U.S. Congress when, in reference to Iran, he said that "the enemy of your enemy is still your enemy". That applies in spades to Bashar al-Assad.

Let us talk for a few minutes about the mission itself. For the past six months, we have had 69 special forces personnel helping to train Iraqi Kurdish military elements in the conduct of combat operations. We are not there in a ground combat mission of our own. If we were, we would have an awful lot more troops there and an awful lot more equipment.

Iraq is a dangerous place, and there will always be risk in any mission in a hostile environment. Canadian soldiers accept that risk willingly. If we were to use the current verbiage by the opposition and the media to define combat mission, then I would suggest that virtually every one of our peacekeeping missions was, in fact, a combat mission.

• (1735)

Wherever we operate, our soldiers are always prepared to provide self-defence, and that is what they do when they are with the Kurdish forces, away from the garrison.

Our snipers are, arguably, the best in the business. When they use pinpoint fire to provide a safe extraction from a dangerous situation, that is not a real firefight, as much as the media and the opposition love to use exciting language.

The rules are simple. When the bad guys shoot at the good guys, the good guys get to kill the bad guys. Tragically, from time to time, in any war, the good guys occasionally shoot at the good guys. When that happens, thorough investigations will identify causes and corrective action, but wars will always be subject to uncertainties.

That training mission will continue unchanged by this motion. Only two things will change as a result of this motion. Operations will be extended for 12 months, and that is an entirely logical and justified position. The job will be done when the job is done. People need to remember that the enemy has a vote on when that happens. On September 3, 1939, did anyone know that war in Europe would be over in May 1945, or in the Pacific in August 1945?

The only other thing that will change is that six CF-18 Hornets, two CP-140 Auroras surveillance aircraft, and one CC-150 Polaris air refuelling aircraft will support the air operation mission over Syria as well as Iraq. The Iraq-Syria border has been effectively erased by the successes of ISIS' territorial operations. Operations by the forces of Bashar al-Assad are confined to western Syria, and our area of operations will be in the eastern part of the country. All three types of aircraft that the Royal Canadian Air Force has committed are ideally suited to the task.

The CF-18 Hornets are obviously the teeth of the operation, and the level of mission effectiveness with their systems and weapons available make them a key part of a much larger coalition operation. I would remind anyone who still needs to know that the aircraft is 56 feet long, 40 feet wide, 15 feet tall, and weighs 52,000 pounds.

This past weekend, I spent some time with one of the pilots from 409 Tactical Fighter Squadron based at Cold Lake, who had recently returned from his first tour of combat operations in Iraq.

As Canada has done in other conflicts, it can wield a big stick, but it does so with great care and restraint to avoid collateral damage and civilian casualties to the maximum extent possible. Throughout the mission planning process, and indeed, throughout the missions, which can last six to eight hours, there is constant contact and verification that an attack is appropriate in all respects. There is a "red card holder" on the ground with all of the electronic and human information who has the final authority to allow a weapons release to proceed. The pilot, of course, has the ultimate final authority when he presses the pickle button. Very often, pilots return with their weapons if there is any doubt at all.

The CC-150 refuellers play a key role with the fighters from Canada and our allies to give our aircraft the legs to conduct all operations. The CP-140 Auroras' capabilities have been, perhaps, the wild card in Canada's contribution. Their capability to provide intelligence gathering, surveillance, and targeting support have been remarkable and highly praised by everyone with whom they operate. To use a common expression, they are magic.

This mission is not just about bringing ISIS to its knees militarily; it is also about bringing relief to the innocent people of the region caught up in the conflict. Just as we are in a kinetic mission, Canada is doing more than its share in the humanitarian mission as well. Canada is the sixth largest contributor to the humanitarian mission in Syria, and the fifth largest contributor in Iraq. Some 1.7 million Iraqis are eating because of Canada. Another 1.2 million have shelter because of Canada. Some 500,000 children are going to school because of Canada. There is much more.

Somebody across the way wanted numbers. Canada has contributed \$700 million to humanitarian aid in Syria since 2011. That is not chump change. More recently, Canada has contributed

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\$67.4 million to humanitarian aid in Iraq. They wanted numbers, so they got numbers.

It is not an either/or mission. Canada will continue to exercise its humanitarian and security obligations on the international stage.

I am disappointed but not surprised that the NDP members oppose the motion and the mission. I do not say that unkindly, because that is simply who they are, and that is their right, even as they are offside with the majority of Canadians. I must admit to more disappointment and some surprise at the opposition of the Liberal Party. I believe that people like Mackenzie King may be looking down in dismay at the moment. I believe there are at least a few among the Liberal éminences grises who are shaking their heads today.

Canada has the capacity to exercise strength and compassion, and that is what it has done proudly throughout its history. That is what makes me proud to be a Canadian and proud to support this motion to help bring at least some measure of safety and stability to a very troubled part of our world, and security to Canadians here in the greatest country in the world.

• (1740)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have two very simple questions for my colleague.

First, what is the legal justification for intervening in Syria? How does the member explain the fact that our NATO partners, aside from the United States, will not participate in the mission in Syria? That is the first part of my question.

The second part is also very simple. Who will represent Canada at the pledging conference for Syria, which starts tomorrow in Kuwait?

[*English*]

Hon. Laurie Hawn: Mr. Speaker, in respect to the second question, I just do not know. I am sorry. That answer can come from somebody else.

With respect to the first question about reasons or justification for it, Canada will lead, as Canada has done in the past.

The U.S. is in Syria for a number of reasons: one, the responsibility to protect, which they take seriously and we take seriously; two, the Iraqi government asked the U.S. and their allies for help in Iraq and Syria.

The NATO allies are in fact participating in other areas. When Canada joins the U.S. and the Arab countries in Syria, I would not be surprised at all to see other NATO allies follow.

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Mr. Adam Vaughan (Trinity—Spadina, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the member opposite define the military scope of this mission in very defined and stark geographic terms, but fighting terrorism is fighting an idea. It is fighting a mindset. No sooner do we bomb one part of the world than the very same idea pops up in another part of the world. In fact, we are seeing this with ISIL and ISIS right now. It claims to have on-the-ground representation in a half dozen countries in the region and across North Africa. In fact, we have seen people take arms up in this country.

If it is an idea we are fighting, how do we bomb an idea out of existence?

Hon. Laurie Hawn: Mr. Speaker, if we could deal with ideas and ideology and simply solve it by education or pointing out how wrong they are, how evil they are, we would never have gone to war with the Nazis in World War II.

The simple fact is we cannot just fight an idea with words. We have to fight the people who are spreading the ideology with the only thing they understand, and that is military force. It does not mean we ignore root causes, which we are happy to talk about. I agree that there are root causes and we have to deal with those root causes, but in the meantime, there are things that must be done militarily to allow the kind of humanitarian aid and dealing with root causes to actually take effect. We cannot take a Pollyanna attitude that we just yell at them or tell them how wrong they are and somehow they are going to change. ISIS will not change.

I was asked by Julie Van Dusen back in September what to do about ISIS, and my comment was simple: kill them. That is what we have to do with those particular people, not everybody, but those folks, because we cannot negotiate with those kinds of people; we simply cannot.

To defeat an ideology, we also have to defeat the people who are spreading the ideology and will continue to do that regardless of what we do in this part of the world.

• (1745)

Ms. Lois Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased that my colleague outlined the things that Canada is doing as far as humanitarian assistance is concerned. This is not an either/or mission. We have to do both, and we have to degrade ISIS so that we can continue to get the humanitarian assistance in there. People who live in Iraq want their own country back.

A week ago in *The Economist*, there was an article under “Leaders”. I want to read a little bit of this paragraph. It says:

Syria will not be pacified soon—possibly not for many years. Until that moment, IS can lurk there, controlling swathes in the east, destabilising Sunni areas of Iraq and biding its time until it has another chance to rise up.

It goes on at the end:

It would still pose a grave threat to the outside world and would need constant watching. But degradation would make it easier to contain than it is today.

I wonder if my colleague has any comments on that paragraph.

Hon. Laurie Hawn: Mr. Speaker, the point of dealing with ISIS in Iraq and Syria is so that they do not have the base from which to launch attacks, either directly or by proxy, on people in that area or

people around the world. That is why we went into Afghanistan, frankly, in the first place.

I would repeat one thing I said during my comments. If anybody wants to know why we are in Iraq and now Syria doing that, for goodness' sake, just google images of ISIS. If one can stand it, one will see very clearly why we are there.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Maria Mourani (Ahuntsic, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, I want to start by expressing my respect for our Canadian soldiers who risk their lives every day on the many missions carried out around the world.

I am pleased to speak today to this government motion to extend the military mission in Iraq. I think that as parliamentarians, we should always ask ourselves what role our country should play in the world in response to conflict and threats. We also have a duty to ask ourselves whether we have the resources to serve our ambitions and, most importantly, whether we are acting in our own best interests or in the best interests of others.

Since this Conservative government was elected in 2006, it has actively worked to redefine Canada as a military country. Is that truly the role we should play in the world, when we have just over 35 million people?

In the recent past, Canadians were known around the world as a country of peacekeepers and peacemakers. Our country was also known for its humanitarian assistance. At the UN, Canada even championed development by calling for an overall contribution equivalent to 0.7% of the GNP of the richest countries in the global fight against poverty.

There are currently only about 300 Canadian peacekeepers left on missions around the world. In 2013, CIDA was absorbed by Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada. Canada's image has been changing bit by bit. When I participated in foreign missions, most of the elected representatives and ministers I met in those countries, particularly in the Middle East, asked me what was going on with Canada. This rebranding of who Canadians are in the eyes of the world must stop.

Here is another question: the Prime Minister wants to get involved in conflicts, but do we have the means to go to war? Do we have the means to fulfill the Prime Minister's ambitions? This March, Canada's remaining troops are coming back from Afghanistan. How much did the mission in Afghanistan cost us? That is a good question. In 2008, the Parliamentary Budget Officer, Kevin Page, predicted that the mission would cost \$18.1 billion. When I hear that number, I think of everything we could have done with \$18 billion. That is incredible. He also said it would take years to get final numbers on what Afghanistan cost us.

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According to the Parliamentary Budget Officer's very recent analysis in the report of February 17, 2015, entitled "Cost Estimate of Operation IMPACT in Iraq", which deals with the Prime Minister's first six-month mission, the estimated incremental cost of Operation IMPACT ranges between a high of \$166.4 million and a low of \$128.8 million. That is for six months, and furthermore, the Parliamentary Budget Officer did not have all the figures.

Accordingly, the estimated incremental cost of Operation IMPACT for a 12-month mission, which is what the Prime Minister wants, since the motion calls for extending the mission until March 30, 2016, ranges between a high of \$351.2 million and a low of \$242.7 million. That is on top of the more than \$166.4 million the first six-month mission cost us. It is worth noting that the full costs for Canada's most recent overseas mission, which was Operation Mobile in Libya, were almost six times the reported incremental costs for the mission.

• (1750)

The actual cost is always greater than the estimated cost. The government can certainly tell us that it will cost x dollars, but we can expect there to be a gap, if not an abyss, between the actual cost and the estimated cost.

According to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, for the government to be able to wage its wars, it would have to inject funds into defence or simply reduce its military ambitions. However, that does not fit with its ideology.

All these billions of dollars that the government wasted on useless and ineffective military missions could have been invested in humanitarian aid. Yes, it handed out a few crumbs, we can all agree on that, but it could have given more because those activities work in the long term. It also could have helped lift the local populations out of poverty and injustice. That is what Canada is good at.

Instead of all those nice things, this government chooses to go to war. It wants to be the champion of fighting terrorism, but for now, unfortunately, the people are just being lulled by the government into believing that it is working for their security. It wants to create a sense of security, but this is not security. The government is creating bogus laws to distract people and have them believe that it is protecting them.

If this government invested just 10% of all the billions of dollars it is investing in the war to help prevent violent extremism, a lot fewer young people would leave Canada to join Jihadist groups in Iraq, Syria or even Somalia.

Moreover, whose interests are we defending on these missions? Is it truly the interests of Canadians? Canada belongs to a coalition led by the United States, but what is the goal of the United States, which is in negotiations with Iran?

Last Wednesday, the American-led coalition launched air strikes to officially help the Iraqi forces recapture Tikrit from Daesh. I urge my colleagues to use "Daesh" instead of "Islamic State" because it is not an Islamic state. It is a terrorist group known as Daesh.

The international community knows that the Iraqi offensive in Tikrit, which started on March 2, involves soldiers and police officers, but also paramilitary groups, including the notorious

popular mobilization forces, groups essentially made up of Shia militias backed by Iran. The Iranians have provided artillery and advice to these Shia militias.

However, there is an Iranian general, Ghasem Soleimani, on the ground leading the Quds, a unit of the Iranian revolutionary guard. If Canada participates, will the Iranians be our allies?

There are also questions about some coalition allies with respect to porous borders, the acquisition of weapons by Daesh, the sale of oil to Daesh and stolen archeological artifacts.

Members will also recall the al-Nusra jihadists, who have ties to al-Qaeda and who allegedly crossed the Turkish border to attack the Syrian city of Kessab, which has a majority Armenian population, as well as the city of Maaloula, a Christian city.

There is also the issue of the Kurds, not to mention the war in Yemen.

• (1755)

My major question is this: are we going to get involved in these conflicts between the Shia and Sunni Muslims or are we going to help them to sit down at the same table and come to an agreement?

These are very complex conflicts. It is important to have a clear foreign policy to guide our national defence policy, but what is our foreign policy—

The Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. member's time has expired.

The hon. Minister of National Defence.

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of National Defence and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member. I know that she has a keen interest in the safety of the people in the Middle East, but I need to correct what she said.

She said that Shia militias were involved in the counteroffensive in Tikrit, Iraq, but I have good news in that regard. Three or four days ago, Iranian-led Shia militias withdrew from the battle in Tikrit. In addition, the United States said that it refused to continue bombings against Daesh near Tikrit unless these militias pulled back.

Obviously, the current situation in the Middle East is complex. There is a conflict between the Shia and the Sunnis. It is also important to note that the Shia, including Iran, and all of the Sunni Arab nations, including Iraq, are all opposed to Daesh. That is the only thing they can agree on in the face of this serious threat.

Like me, the hon. member knows people from the Assyrian, Chaldean, Kurdish and perhaps even the Yazidi communities. Last week, we met with the leaders of these communities, and they all called for Canada's involvement in the allied military campaign against Daesh because they want to put an end to genocide perpetrated by Daesh.

Does my colleague not agree with the members of the Canadian-Iraqi community?

• (1800)

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague. Perhaps we are not meeting the same people.

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I have also met people from the Syrian and the Iraqi communities. One thing is certain: Daesh is an entity that elicits strong reactions from everyone. The vast majority of people agree on that, whether they are Muslims or Christians, from the Middle East or elsewhere.

I do not like to use the term “enemy” because I am basically a pacifist. I would prefer to use a criminology term. I would say that it is a criminal group, and we must do everything we can to stop it. That will depend on the strategy we adopt. What I am seeing is that, on the ground, the war unfortunately is pointless and does not solve anything. We fought al-Qaeda, which turned into something else known as Daesh and al-Nusra.

What people want is for Canadians to be agents of peace, to provide humanitarian assistance, to work to unite those people, the Shia and Sunni Muslims who may be in conflict. Most importantly, combatting violent extremism does not mean dropping bombs, but rather working here, in Canada, to combat this ideology. We are not doing that.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we recognize that Canada has a clear interest in training Iraqi forces to fight ISIL. We can and should do this training away from the front lines as our allies have been doing in many cases.

The NDP has taken the position that Canada has no role to play, or virtually—

Mr. Charlie Angus: Thus transmits misinformation.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Well, Mr. Speaker, they can expand on that. The question I have for the member—

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. If the member is going to misrepresent the motion, then he is lying in the House. I do not think he would want to lie, so I would like to actually read the motion.

The Deputy Speaker: It clearly is not a point of order; it is a point of debate.

We will return to the member for Winnipeg North. Perhaps he could wrap up his question quickly.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the member, who claims to have experience, stood on a point of order. Another member could ultimately have risen on a point of order given the language he just used. That is a classic example of the type of language he has used in the past.

Does the member believe that Canada has any role in fighting ISIL?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Mr. Speaker, I certainly believe that we have a role to play in Iraq and that our role should be humanitarian, as I have said. Our role should be as agents of peace who can enable different groups to speak to each other.

Most importantly, we have to help our allies on the ground, especially in terms of providing weapons. That might seem like military action, but it is not really. Still, that is also something we really have to think about. I recently read a statement by a UN mediator:

Everyone says there is no military solution to the Syrian conflict, but the fact is that everyone is working toward a military solution. Everyone is supplying weapons and training someone or other. The Secretary-General of the United Nations is the only one asking countries to stop sending arms to Syria.

Will having more weapons serve any purpose whatsoever? Will more war solve the problem? I do not think so. There are things we must do, but not that kind of thing.

• (1805)

[*English*]

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, I am pleased to address the House on the extension of Canada's contribution to the multinational effort against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, or ISIL. Canadian Forces Base Petawawa is in my riding of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke. I take my duty to represent the interests of the women and men in uniform as a serious moral obligation, just as this debate is a serious moral debate.

It is always an honour to contribute to any discussion as their member of Parliament. With the significant Canadian Forces presence in my riding, I, perhaps better than many of my colleagues participating in this event, understand the human dimension when we commit fellow citizens to go into harm's way for their country and the effect it has on their families. However, until I walk in their shoes, I will never fully appreciate the angst that families feel every time a loved one is called to arms.

ISIL is a dangerous, organized, armed death cult, with radical jihadist and expansionist aims. It has demonstrated time and time again its willingness, even eagerness, to use extreme violence for political and economic gain. Let me give a few examples of this appalling brutality. I know it is not pleasant to discuss these things, but I think we all need to understand the reality of the situation.

ISIL has arbitrarily detained, tortured, and executed thousands of innocent civilians, displacing millions, and creating a massive humanitarian crisis. Anyone, including the Sunni Muslims, who is perceived as contradicting its twisted version of Islam is subjected to horrific treatment.

There have been savage drawn-out beheadings using blunt knives. There have been crucifixions, including of rebel fighters perceived as being too moderate. There have been mass executions, such as the shooting of 600 Shia, Christian, and Yazidi prisoners near Mosul last October, and the beheading of 21 Coptic Christians from Egypt in February. There have been reports of torture by electric shock and lashings with generator cables.

It saddens me to report that children are also suffering abhorrent treatment under ISIL's reign of terror. There have been reports of young people being buried alive, and others used as suicide bombers and bomb makers. The children of minority groups are being sold into sex slavery to service ISIL soldiers. They are being auctioned at the market like animals.

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I think most of us have a hard time even imagining such a base level of depravity. Yet, ISIL not only commits these acts but revels in its own evil by filming and publishing them on the Internet, as though such unbearable cruelty and wanton destruction of human life is nothing more than an entertaining joke.

It is difficult to believe that such barbarity exists in the modern world, yet it does. It constitutes a major threat not only to Iraq and the Middle East, but also to other countries around the world, including Canada. Indeed, ISIL has been actively recruiting in the west through the Internet and the social media. It has called on sympathizers around the globe to carry out attacks, including against Canadians whom it deems as unbelievers.

It is inciting other groups and individuals with similar inclinations, such as Boko Haram in Nigeria, which has purportedly pledged its allegiance to ISIL. The global reach and impact of terrorist organizations like these in today's interconnected world, combined with a fanatical intolerance and rampant use of horrific violence, are what make them so utterly corrosive to our way of life, hinging as it does on respect for human rights and the rule of law, the democratic resolution of differences, and the peaceful co-existence of various religious and ethnic groups.

We cannot be complacent or naive in the face of this terrorist threat. This is a direct threat to Canada and to Canadians, despite the opposition's unwillingness to accept the truth.

• (1810)

Our armed forces possess unique capabilities that can be used to counter the terrorist threat, for example, domestically, by conducting domestic patrol and air surveillance of Canada's sea and air approach, and assisting civilian authorities with emergency response and security; as well as internationally, by collecting, analyzing, and disseminating defence intelligence, engaging in counter-proliferation and arms control efforts, and contributing to lateral efforts, such as the Middle East Stabilization Force.

In addition to these broad capabilities, the Canadian Armed Forces also offer a dedicated counter-terrorism capability through its Canadian Special Operations Forces Command, or CANSOFCOM.

I am proud of the role I played to stand up the Canadian Special Operations Regiment situated in base Petawawa, the first new unit since the politically motivated, bad decision by the old Chrétien regime to disband the Canadian airborne regiment, and the decade of darkness of cutbacks for Canada's military that followed. CSOR is not the Canadian airborne; it did, however, fill some of the operational gaps that Canada faced after the airborne regiment was disbanded.

CANSOFCOM maintains a very high readiness special operations forces that can respond to domestic and global terrorism on a moment's notice by conducting rapid and effective operations in specialized areas such as hostage rescue and direct action.

The troops at CANSOFCOM's disposal include Joint Task Force 2, the highest readiness and most precise combat unit in Canada and arguably the world; the Canadian Special Operations Regiment, which combines mobility, fire power, and special operations capabilities; the 427 Special Operations Aviation Squadron based in Petawawa, which provides aerospace effects; and the Canadian

Joint Incident Response Unit, which provides rapid response to chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear events.

The personnel who form these units are highly educated, highly skilled, and battle-tested in some of the most dangerous environments in the world. They are trained and equipped to operate in small teams without large, logistical chains, and to respond quickly to evolving needs on the ground. At the same time, they are experienced in coordinating their efforts seamlessly with those of other special operations forces. Most importantly, they know their basics inside out, enabling them to go into even the most unfamiliar and unstable areas and get the job done fast.

CANSOFCOM has earned international respect for its skills and its professionalism, particularly for the key role it played in fighting insurgence in Afghanistan, and training and mentoring the Afghan National Army special forces. In 2008, the command began to expand its international training to meet the demand for the developing world, as well as to support broader Canadian and global counterterrorism initiatives.

To date, CANSOFCOM has instructed personnel from Jamaica, Niger, Kenya, Mali, Belize, Afghanistan, and Iraq on various aspects of counterterrorism, from intelligence to planning, staff training, command and control, communications, battle skills, equipment use, maintenance and repair, ground navigation, and combat medical care.

The military expertise, training, experience, grit, and tenacity of our special forces personnel are what make them so invaluable in the fight against ISIL.

As members know, we have had some 69 members on the ground in Iraq since last fall in an advisory-and-assistance capacity, helping the Iraqi security forces to conduct strategic and tactical planning, and to adapt to the modern coalition warfare so they can win the type of battles they are now engaged in against ISIL.

By all accounts, our people are making a huge difference in this role, contributing in a meaningful way to the coalition success on the ground. That success is considerable. ISIL's advance has been halted and pushed back. It is no longer able to operate freely in around 20% to 25% of the populated areas where it once held the initiative.

We can not falter at this stage, or everything we have gained will be lost. ISIL will be free to terrorize and murder the local population at will and continue to pose a threat to Canadians. That is why I strongly encourage the House to support the government's decision to extend and expand Canada's military contribution to the multinational coalition's fight against ISIL.

Government Orders

•(1815)

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am sure everyone in the House agrees that the crimes of ISIS are absolutely appalling and horrific. There would certainly be unanimity on that. However, let us remember that the Assad regime in Syria has cost more than a hundred times the loss of life than ISIS. There is, nevertheless, a crying need for much greater humanitarian aid. There are more than five million people today in desperate need of humanitarian aid.

I want to ask the member about the responsibility to protect. Several of her colleagues on the Conservative side over the course of the day have mentioned the responsibility to protect. I am sure she knows that the authority for intervening in another country under the responsibility to protect rests solely with the UN, through a UN Security Council resolution. Is the member aware that there is no UN Security Council resolution for this mission and therefore there is no legal authority for Canada to intervene in Syria? Can she answer that?

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, Canada is concerned regarding the inaction from the UN Security Council. However, China and Russia do not hold a veto over Canada's foreign policy.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is hard at times to listen to the member comment about former Liberal days. I should remind her that the jets we are flying today, the F-18s, were purchased by Pierre Trudeau's government. This government has not been able to acquire a new replacement for the F-18 due to pure incompetence.

I do have a question. The government has failed to demonstrate to Canadians that there is any sort of clear objective here. The Minister of Defence, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Prime Minister and his office are all saying different things in terms of the objectives, how long our forces will be engaged, and what sort of role they will potentially be playing. Does she believe that Canadians do not deserve a clear picture from the government, as opposed to getting different answers depending on who one talks to?

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, as far as procurement goes, we will all remember who put the hell in helicopters, with the cancellation of the EH101 during the 1993 election. One of the versions included the heavy lift, and once we got the heavy-lift helicopter in Afghanistan, many lives were spared. Had we had that capability beforehand, there is no telling what number of casualties we would not have suffered.

Insofar as when we would know that we have succeeded in overcoming ISIL, we will continue to work until we degrade them so they no longer have the capacity to attack other countries, including Canada.

Mr. Brad Butt (Mississauga—Streetsville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know the member is a very passionate supporter of our brave women and men who serve in our Canadian Armed Forces, and she represents a riding where one of our strongest bases is located.

I have had an opportunity to speak to some of the Canadian Forces members who are passionate about the work they do for Canadian interests. I would like to ask the hon. member to take an opportunity to share with the House what she is hearing from the men and women she represents, on why it is important that Canada

play a role in this effort to make sure that Iraq, Syria, and other parts of the Middle East are safe from the efforts of ISIL trying to destroy these countries and people's lives. I would like to give her an opportunity to share her views from the men and women she meets with on a regular basis.

•(1820)

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, last summer, before Canada became engaged in this conflict, I was speaking to members from legions and Armed Forces personnel. In the fall, before we got involved in this, I gathered the ecumenical communities together and asked them what their opinion was and what they thought Canada should do about it. Without question, the decision was that all it takes for evil to prosper is for good men to do nothing. With that, I had the moral authority from the ecumenical community to go forward. There is no question in both the minds of civilians and our military personnel: they know we have to go there, attack ISIL at its point where it is, and prevent it from coming to Canada.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, from the beginning, we have been concerned about the mission proposed by the Conservatives. We are afraid of getting dragged into a quagmire similar to the one in Afghanistan. Indeed, this really reminds us of that mission. We were right.

I will give an example. The Prime Minister told us that there would be no ground combat, and yet Canadians have been involved in firefights and one Canadian soldier has even died. Now he wants our soldiers to go into Syria. Many experts are already beginning to wonder about the effectiveness of air strikes in Syria. On top of that, this also raises some very important ethical questions. Our actions in Syria could actually benefit the Bashar al-Assad regime, which, as we know, has committed its own share of terrible atrocities. We might think we are helping, but we could end up doing things that are extremely harmful. I would like to quote our former ambassador to the United Nations Security Council, Paul Heinbecker, who had this to say about intervention in Syria:

If out of fear of Islamic State and of a desire to stop them, the Coalition were to ally itself, *de facto* or *de jure*, with Bashar al-Assad for fleeting tactical advantage, it would be the ultimate betrayal of the Syrian innocents. And of our own values.

Our men and women in uniform simply do not belong in Iraq and they certainly do not belong in Syria.

The intervention in Syria also raises very important legal questions. I must say that one of the worst moments I have experienced since I became a member of the House of Commons was when the Prime Minister joked about a question posed by the Leader of the Opposition regarding the legal basis for the intervention in Syria. I found that really shameful. This is not something to joke about. The issues are very real and that is why our NATO partners—other than the United States, obviously—are not intervening in Syria and are not helping the Americans.

Government Orders

During debate, the Conservatives have often talked about the responsibility to protect. We have to be careful: the responsibility to protect is a very clear and well-established doctrine. To be put into action, we need a UN Security Council resolution, which we do not have. When it comes to the entire legal basis for intervening in Syria, the government has shown its complete lack of knowledge of and total disregard for international law, which is terrible. International law is the best guarantee of our collective security.

● (1825)

We obviously all want to combat the Islamic State. There is no doubt about that. However, we must ask ourselves what is the best way to do that and where Canada could be the most useful and truly bring about change. Obviously, we could work through diplomatic channels to try to resolve impasses in the region. Unfortunately we have lost so much credibility in the Middle East that we are no longer in a position to contribute to these efforts. We also need to actively implement the United Nations resolutions and push very hard to advance them in order to combat the Islamic State, prevent funding for this group and prevent it from recruiting fighters all over the world and in Canada. We have proposed very concrete measures to achieve this.

Lastly, we must provide humanitarian assistance. Yes, Canada was fairly generous last year, but we could do more. We could encourage other countries to give and to give more, and we could continue to give and expedite that assistance. I want to share a quote from the humanitarian manager of Oxfam, who said this today:

● (1830)

[*English*]

Our leaders have been focused on the military mission in the region debating what role Canada should play. The humanitarian crisis has not been given the vital importance needed in this debate. Ensuring that human needs are met should be the top priority for Canada in the international community.

[*Translation*]

We are also wondering—I asked the question today but I did not get an answer—whether Canada will attend the donor conference tomorrow in Kuwait. We know that the United Kingdom and Sweden have already made commitments and we are wondering what Canada is waiting for. This is extremely important because there is so much that needs to be done.

A few weeks ago, I was in Turkey and I had the opportunity to visit a refugee camp where the World Food Programme sometimes gives out food vouchers. However, it is also sometimes forced to suspend the program because of a lack of funding.

I met with the authorities from the City of Gaziantep, which is the size of Montreal and currently houses 300,000 refugees. They shared with me their concerns about the mounting tension and instability in the region. We can help these people.

In that regard, Jordan and Lebanon have received a staggering number of refugees and could very well also become destabilized. If we want to prevent even greater destabilization in the region, we need to provide a lot more humanitarian aid.

In that respect, the Conservatives and the Minister of National Defence initially told us that their air strikes are actually a means of providing humanitarian aid because humanitarian aid and military

involvement go hand in hand. Either the Conservatives do not understand anything or they are once again trying to create a smokescreen at the expense of the safety and lives of humanitarian workers.

I would like to read what Conrad Sauvé, the Secretary General and Chief Executive Officer of the Canadian Red Cross, and Yves Daccord, the Director General of the International Committee of the Red Cross, have been saying, even today, I believe. They said, and I quote:

[*English*]

As Canada debates military action in the region, the Canadian Red Cross and the International Committee of the Red Cross...call for a debate that clearly separates political and military issues from humanitarian aid. For us, it is a matter of life or death.

Blurring the lines around aid and military action threatens the lives and safety of all humanitarian workers currently working around the clock to provide relief in an already volatile environment. Humanitarian workers can not afford to be linked to any military effort. If humanitarian aid is perceived to be aligned to a military agenda, humanitarian workers become targets and there will be further unnecessary casualties of war...

Humanitarian aid must be delivered solely for the purpose of helping those who are in need, and the Red Cross Movement cannot be a part of efforts that attempt to provide humanitarian aid in conjunction with any military agenda...

We urge leaders to help address the humanitarian needs by first and foremost understanding the utmost importance of keeping humanitarian aid independent and neutral.

[*Translation*]

I have quoted these people extensively because so many humanitarian workers and organizations have said the same thing in recent days. People are terrified. The lives of humanitarian workers are in danger. I solemnly ask the government to try to stop blurring the line between these two issues, as it has been doing recently.

In closing, I would like to quote Ban Ki-moon, whom we should listen to carefully: “Over the longer-term, the biggest threat to terrorists is not the power of missiles—it is the politics of inclusion.”

That should be the focus of Canada's efforts.

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of National Defence and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, at the end of her speech, the hon. member suggested that the government has blurred the line between humanitarian aid and military action. That is not at all true. What I said was that we have a humanitarian and thus a moral obligation to stop genocide, sexual slavery, the murder of homosexuals and genocide against ethnic and religious minorities.

Without military action, without concrete efforts to stop Daesh's campaign of violence and genocide, there will be more victims and a humanitarian disaster. That means that the two cannot be completely separated. The humanitarian crisis is caused by the violent, terrorist, paramilitary action of Daesh.

Does the NDP not understand, does the member not understand that we must take action to stop Daesh's campaign of genocide? Does she not agree that if we do not there will be more victims of Daesh in the Middle East?

Government Orders

Ms. Hélène Laverdière: Mr. Speaker, my answer will be very short. We have to deal with this crisis, this situation. The big question is: how? Not only is the government's proposal not clear, but it is unlikely to achieve the government's objectives. We have to think of an intelligent response to the problem.

In answer to his other point, I am saying that the minister is not connecting humanitarian aid and military assistance. I have received countless messages from people working in humanitarian aid who are really very concerned about statements made by several members of the Conservative caucus, several members of government and most importantly the minister himself.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, could the member provide the House with some clarity in regard to the NDP positioning? First let me clearly indicate, as I did in a previous question, that we in the Liberal Party believe Canada has a clear interest in training Iraqi forces to fight ISIL. We can and should do this training away from the front lines as many of our allies have been doing.

Could the member provide clarity to the House and to Canadians whether the New Democrats believe Canadian Forces have any role whatsoever in regard to the training of Iraqi forces to fight ISIL?

• (1835)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Hélène Laverdière: Mr. Speaker, maybe it is fatigue or whatever, but it is always ironic to hear a member of the Liberal Party talk about clarity in connection with our position on this mission, considering that the Liberals wavered for weeks and months. Nevertheless, if my colleague has not already done so, I would encourage him to read the amendment we proposed, particularly point d.: “contribute to the fight against ISIL, including military support for the transportation of weapons”.

[*English*]

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour to rise in this place, in this instance, to speak about our government's motion seeking the extension and expansion of Canada's military contribution to Operation Impact, the global fight against ISIL, and the defence of those whom ISIL would behead, enslave, rape, torture and murder. This decision is a clear repudiation of that barbaric behaviour and a stoic rejection of the nihilism it represents.

Truly, there is no debate that in recent times, certainly in my generation, we have not seen this type of wanton violence against individuals. As it was stated in the House many times, and by the Prime Minister recently, to have much of this uploaded to the Internet and made available for all to see is truly a shock to our senses and sensibilities. Some of the stories of ISIL are almost too gruesome to even repeat, however, we cannot turn a blind eye to these atrocities, their inhumanity and amorality.

ISIL is a truly detestable group with deplorable ambitions to ruthlessly continue oppressing those who do not have the same values that it espouses, if we can even call them values. They are values of destroying democracy and crushing freedom. It really signals a respect for nothing. It is pure evil and godless.

Not engaging in this fight against these psychotic killers would be cowardly on our part, and it would put this country and our allies in further danger. We need to join our allies. We need to fight for our freedoms and theirs, freedoms that we have always stood for in our history since Confederation, freedoms that so many of our veterans and current serving members of the armed forces have honourably stood for. Throughout our storied history as a nation, we have never expected others to do the heavy lifting for us, while we have stood idly by.

If people know the lyrics of our national anthem, which I know everyone in the House does, they know what we are fighting for when we signal our desire to join this global struggle. It is a desire to protect Canadians and the democratic, glorious and free country in which we live and love so much.

There are instances in history when countries had the freedoms that we enjoy in Canada and lost them to the destruction of attacks of force. I just met members of the Ukrainian community who are joining us on Parliament Hill. Theirs is a perfect example of a country that was sovereign and moving in the direction of greater freedoms and transparency, free of corruption and oppression from external forces, yet we know what has happened and conspired there. We know that it makes a difference for countries like Ukraine and many around the world when they have a country like Canada come to their aid and speak out openly about protecting their rights and freedoms.

Why would we have the temerity to think that if we did not participate in this fight against ISIL that other countries should come to our rescue when we become a target, as we have recently, when our two brave soldiers and this very House of Parliament came under terrorist attack? Members on all sides of the House will remember and will have lived the terror of that day. We were terrified because it was very deliberate and murderous in its intent, yet how soon we forget. How quickly we can slide back to complacency, careless bliss and wilful blindness.

We can never forget that ISIL cannot have safe haven to wage continuous attacks against women, children, refugees, minorities and all of us. It has, in fact, sought greater cover in Syria, a place where it emerged. We know that it has wreaked havoc on Iraq from that region, from a strong point there. It has moved equipment into Syria and sought safe haven.

Operation Impact is part of the United States led international coalition against ISIL, composed of over 60 countries. Out of those 60 countries, many have been directly threatened by ISIL. Most, if not all, have been. Canada has certainly repeatedly stood up and partnered with these nations, while ISIL has called for, encouraged and helped orchestrate violence in countries like ours.

This is our mission. There is no denying it. For our families, for our communities and for all of humanity, Canada is part of this fight.

Government Orders

• (1840)

As Canadians, we believe in the rule of law and religious freedoms. The values are fundamental to our identity, and we will continue to protect and promote them around the world. We will not shy away from that duty; we will do what is right. Honouring our Canadian history is about preserving our future.

What would opting out of this fight against ISIL say to Canadians and like-minded nations about what we value in our country, what we value of security, of freedom, if we were to say we did not care, we were not willing to fight to protect it? Clearly we do care. Innocent people are being subjected to a campaign of murder, sexual violence and intimidation. It is a return to the dark ages. That is why, under this proposal, Operation Impact would be extended by up to 12 months and remain a counterterrorism operation, exclusively targeting ISIL.

Coalition military efforts to date have succeeded in blunting ISIL's capacity. Our Royal Canadian Air Force is weakening ISIL's operations as we gather in the safety of this chamber, and ISIL continues to present a serious threat to global and regional security.

Our proposed mandate would also authorize Canada's CF-18 fighter aircraft to join coalition partners in attacking ISIL targets within Syrian territory. ISIL fighters and equipment have been moving freely across the Iraqi-Syrian border without interference for some time, so our allies have been attacking ISIL in Syria without resistance from the Syrian government for over six months. We propose similarly to conduct air strikes against ISIL in that region on the same legal and operational basis as our allies.

As the United States has reported to the United Nations, it is taking necessary and proportionate military action in Syria to eliminate the ongoing threat to Iraq.

It should not be interpreted in any way as support for the illegitimate regime of Bashar al-Assad. It is not. Taking part in armed conflict is perhaps the most serious decision for any government to take. It involves careful consideration of all matters, including the legal basis for action, and know this, we have been considering this carefully for some time.

In Canada, decisions as to the use of force are never taken lightly. We carefully consider what international law requires and how we can best support our partners in maintaining international peace and security. The government of Iraq, which has a legal right to self defence under international law and article 51 of the United Nations charter, has officially requested international military assistance in its fight against ISIL. It said in its request to the United Nations that it requested assistance from the UN and said that it believed ISIL must be completely eradicated, an optimistic goal to say the least. ISIL has shown no shred of conscience and has waged a brutal, inhumane war.

Canada will support Iraq's right to collective self defence and as members of the global community, we have a broader responsibility. An expansion into Syria where ISIL has moved, moved equipment and taken safe haven, is part of that action, which is critical.

Canada's humanitarian assistance, and there has been important discussion on this subject, goes hand in hand with that military

mission. We will fight ISIL and help its victims. We will continue to provide much needed relief to millions of vulnerable and innocent civilians affected by ISIL's expansion and barbarity.

We are among the top five donors when it comes to food, shelter, education, essentials for refugees displaced by the millions, and we will also continue to assist through accelerated immigration. Almost \$68 million has been committed to this cause. In fact, we are working closely with the United Nations and the Red Cross.

Our government is deeply grateful for the incredible support of the Canadian Armed Forces in Iraq and our allies, those who have served and continue to combat or work in peacekeeping efforts. This is among our greatest effort and among our greatest citizens when it comes in this regard.

To conclude, the highest priority of any government must be to protect its citizens from harm. Canadians expect no less. That is a commitment we have made to all Canadians. We are also continuing that important Canadian tradition of compassion and care for those less fortunate who find themselves in harm's way.

The motion is to expand and extend the mission to fight ISIL, sponsored by our esteemed Minister of Foreign Affairs. It is debated and voted in a democratic way here. I would encourage everyone in the House to put aside political and other ambitions and support Canada's interests first, and those of the people of Iraq and Syria.

• (1845)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marc-André Morin (Laurentides—Labelle, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there is one thing I do not understand because we are already seeing the results of that tactic in Libya and Yemen, and the cause is always the same. What started in Iraq has spread throughout the region and contaminated it.

The Conservatives need to realize that the movie *Top Gun* was not based on historical fact, and that if they want to find the real causes of the situation, they should watch *Lawrence of Arabia* instead. That would help them understand how the artificial borders that were created led to chaos throughout the 20th century.

We cannot wage war without a contingency plan. If we do not know what we are going to do after the war, the inevitable result will be even more chaos without end.

[*English*]

Hon. Peter MacKay: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure I understand the relevance of the film references.

Government Orders

I can tell my hon. colleague that to suggest somehow that because there is no end in sight in this conflict, when clearly we are seeing improvements on the ground, certain improvements in terms of the ability of the Iraqi forces, their army, the peshmerga, those who are benefiting from the training of which Canada is a part in hopes that they will have the capacity in the future to do more to protect their own people, their own sovereignty, to suggest that somehow the continued cover provided by military efforts to deliver humanitarian aid is not worthwhile, to suggest that somehow because we cannot say with precision when this effort will end, that that is somehow an excuse to stay on the sidelines, to stay out of the fight, to put our heads in the sand and hope that terrorism will not come here, well, it is too late. It has come here. We know that the recruiting of Canadian citizens is ongoing. The radicalization and recruitment is a serious problem.

The legislative efforts in addition to our humanitarian and military efforts are part and parcel of what is expected of a government when it comes to the protection they are promoting and projecting outwards in the world, and certainly that which covers our entire country.

Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think we all agree that ultimately, with respect to Iraq, ISIS will only be defeated if it is defeated on the ground by Iraqi forces, and I include peshmerga in that.

The training role is an extremely important one. When we talk about them doing the defeating, and at this point we do not know about Shiite tribal militia, with the help of Iranian Quds forces, as they have certainly played a role in Amerli and they have certainly played a role in the outskirts of Tikrit, but we will see what happens there. Ultimately, it is Iraqi ground forces and peshmerga that will have to do the job. We have trained 650 so far. It seems to me that with what lies ahead in Iraq, for example, the re-taking of Mosul, their second largest city, there is an enormous task ahead. We know that Americans and other allies have been training Iraqi forces.

The government, in its extension, has not decided to put a greater emphasis on a role that Canada could play in terms of training, such as it did in Afghanistan. Could the minister tell us what sort of thinking the government went through to make the decision that that was not something it would put an emphasis on?

• (1850)

Hon. Peter MacKay: Mr. Speaker, I know the member has a demonstrated knowledge of military matters and had a distinguished military career himself, so I say this with great respect. The member is certainly correct in suggesting that continued efforts by the Americans and others, including Canada, to raise the capacity of the Iraqi forces, including peshmerga and Kurdish forces, really is one of the ultimate end goals, to raise their capacity and ability to conduct ground operations and repel ISIL attacks on many communities.

The difficulty, of course, is that they are not respecting orders. They are moving quite freely in certain areas between Syria and Iraq. They have obviously been able to in many ways wreak havoc on many of those communities, because there is not sufficient ground force.

Like Afghanistan, this is an enormous task. We are starting behind the eight ball and trying to bring these forces to a level of

professionalism. We have special operation forces there, some with Afghan experience, so that they can impart the type of skills that are necessary. Equipment is obviously going to be part of that equation going forward.

We know there are other countries in the region that are contributing mightily to this training effort, but also to the supply that will be necessary to repel ISIL as we continue this global struggle.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to the motion to extend and expand the mission in Iraq and, now, into Syria. The Islamic State terrorist organization has committed atrocious acts of violence in Iraq and Syria. The violence has displaced 2.5 million civilians in Iraq alone, and 5.2 million people require humanitarian assistance. Over 5,000 people have been killed by ISIL.

Needless to say, the official opposition acknowledges that ISIL is committing unprecedented atrocities. We find them extremely upsetting. Of course, that organization has demonstrated the kind of cruelty it is capable of on many occasions.

With respect to this mission, we have gone from a mission focused on advice and support to a six-month bombing mission, and now, a front-line combat mission. The Conservatives can have fun playing their word games, but when one of our soldiers is 200 metres from the front lines, that means that he is within range of the basic weapons of any soldier. Any soldier is capable of hitting a target that is 200 metres away with a basic weapon, which, for the Canadian Forces is the C7 rifle. When our soldiers are 200 metres from the front lines, that looks very much like a combat mission. We are now entering a conflict that will last a year and a half, without any specific or clearly defined plan or objective and with no exit strategy.

By choosing to bomb Iraq, and now Syria, I unfortunately get the feeling that we are just playing into ISIL's hands. They would not just brazenly provoke the enemy by showing the beheadings of Canadians or citizens of allied countries without hoping for retaliation. No one can tell me that ISIL did these things thinking there would be no retaliation. On top of that, they send out messages calling on members of ISIL who are abroad to carry out attacks against those who would fight this group. Clearly, Canada is already on ISIL's list of enemies and, unfortunately, it is clear that ISIL wanted retaliation, that it wanted to provoke something by committing such atrocities in such a brazen way.

Another thing that seems clear to me is that ISIL wanted there to be air strikes. It knew full well that we would not attack them on the ground and that an attack from the air is much easier to manage. This allows them to adjust their strategy, continue to advance and make gains if they are patient enough and, while the air strikes are being conducted, plan overseas operations.

ISIL reacted to the air campaign by dispersing its troops, sheltering in civilian areas and frequently changing location. While the first air strikes targeted ISIL's bases and camps, more recent efforts targeted vehicles and the industrial infrastructure controlled by the militants.

Government Orders

•(1855)

From the beginning of the conflict, several Canadian and American veterans made it clear that air strikes have their limitations and that at some point it would become increasingly difficult to conduct air strikes on targets without running the risk of causing collateral damage that would obviously have a very negative impact on the local population.

We have to understand that the Islamic State realizes full well that the Iraqi and Syrian people would be very averse to the presence of foreign troops on their soil. When the enemy only carries out air strikes, it is easy to use that against us with the civilian population. The enemy tells the local people to look at what the coalition is doing: destroying their institutions and attacking them. The enemy tries to manipulate the local population in order to win it over. Unfortunately, when the local population is sleep-deprived, cold and hungry, it is much easier to manipulate, especially if, at the same time, some help is offered.

We have to understand that the more we bomb, the more innocent civilians risk being killed or injured and the more we risk helping the Islamic State obtain recruits or convince people to join its cause. Every bomb could aggravate the problem we are trying to solve.

What is worse is that, even if we succeed in completely eliminating the Islamic State, there is a high risk that we will have helped one of our enemies who is also an enemy of our enemy, the Islamic State. Right now, we are fighting the Islamic State with countries such as Iran, for example. Most members and I can easily see that Canada and Iran have very different views on human rights. Is it really a good idea to fight the enemies of our enemies? Is that our strategy in the Middle East, to ensure that only the least offensive of our enemies remains? If we think we are going to solve the problem in the Middle East with violence, then we may as well announce the beginning of the third world war. Do I have to remind members why they need to remember World War II? It is precisely because when that war ended, humanity realized that, if there were a third world war one day, it was quite likely that the human race would not survive it.

If we want to eliminate the problem in the Middle East through violence then we will have to eliminate nearly all of the terrorist organizations there. However, as soon as we eliminate one group, another one rises up to take its place. When will it end? When we find the perfect recipe for self-destruction?

There are other ways of engaging in war that do not necessarily include bombs. Those ways would not make us play into the hands of ISIL. To wage any war, there needs to be money, resources, weapons and support, or at least public disengagement. There has to be some means of communication, fighters, an organization and an enemy. To eliminate the conflict, or at least work on it, there has to be a strategy to prevent these groups from obtaining the funding they need.

The vast majority of these groups raise money by selling resources such as oil and conflict stones, as well as growing and producing drugs. Currently, in the case of ISIL, we are also seeing the sale of historical artifacts. Of course, these groups have no regard for environmental principles when conducting these activities.

ISIL is currently still able to sell oil to fund itself. Imagine if we managed to stop them from getting money. No organization can survive when its soldiers have nothing to eat.

•(1900)

There are many other things we could be doing, including blocking access to weapons and supporting the local population. Imagine if we could help all of the refugees by getting all of them to NATO countries, and just think what could happen if Turkey could control its border and prevent radicalized people from entering Syria. There is so much we could do. We could fight, disrupt the organization and prevent it from communicating.

In closing, as long as the coalition is considered an enemy, ISIL will be able to continue recruiting more fighters. In contrast, if we could be perceived as a potential partner for peace, that would strike a much harder blow against ISIL than the bombs we are dropping. That strategy has its limits.

[*English*]

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for the wishful thinking contained in her remarks. They remind me of what we have heard from the opposition benches today: the excuses, the justification, to look the other way with regard to the threat against Iraq and Syria, the other countries of the Levant, our coalition partners, and indeed Canada itself. I must say that these excuses simply do not cover the stench of isolationism wafting across the chamber today.

I wonder if my hon. colleague would recognize and accept why action is required, with regard to Iraq's plea, under article 51 of the United Nations charter and why we must recognize why the United Nations Security Council is incapable of taking the action the New Democrats and the Liberals seem so fixated upon.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Moore: Mr. Speaker, there are many other things we could be doing besides dropping bombs. Unfortunately, I did not have enough time to explain all of them. However, I can assure the House that there are many such things.

Does the member opposite believe that in order to take action against ISIL, we must close our eyes to those we are taking action against and the people we could be helping?

Is it right that the member wants to send our soldiers into combat alongside Saudi Arabia and Iran, for example, when their policies fly in the face of what Canada has always stood for?

Is it right that the government is sticking its head in the sand, rather than thinking about what other terrorist groups could be next to replace this one?

Is it right that the government is sticking its head in the sand, knowing that it will be fighting alongside Bashar al-Assad, even though he has killed thousands of people?

The government is sticking its head in the sand. It refuses to see that this is a quagmire, that the situation in Iraq and Syria is far from being simple and the solution is nowhere near as simple as dropping bombs.

Government Orders

• (1905)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the leader of the New Democratic Party was on CTV, and he stated, and it was really clear: “We think it’s wrong for Canada to be involved”. That is what he said. He has indicated that we should pull the troops out of Iraq.

I have asked members of the NDP caucus, and I would ask this member. We believe that Canada has a clear interest in training Iraqi forces to fight ISIL. I am interested in what the NDP position is on that particular issue. Do the New Democrats believe that there is a role for Canada in fighting ISIL, in particular in training Iraqi forces?

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Moore: Mr. Speaker, I completely agree with what my leader said. We should not be in Iraq, let alone in Syria. We have no business there.

Is dropping bombs and training soldiers on site the only way to fight ISIL? I hardly think so.

Unfortunately, government members and, it would seem, the Liberal Party, believe that the only way to fight a scourge such as ISIL is by dropping bombs. I do not believe that. I believe that there are many diplomatic and humanitarian options available, and that is a much more appropriate role for us.

Several countries in the coalition have chosen to play that kind of role. One example is Norway, which is limiting its involvement to humanitarian work.

Fighting ISIL is not just about dropping bombs and training soldiers. This is a much more complex matter that needs to be seen from a big-picture perspective.

[English]

Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is certainly an honour to be in the chamber to address these very weighty and important issues for Canada and on behalf of my constituents in Parry Sound—Muskoka.

What I want to do with my brief time standing is try to give my perspective on four basic questions that frame the debate in the way it should be framed. This pertains to the Islamic State, ISIL, ISIS, or whatever moniker one wants to use. First, what is its purpose? Second, how is it doing? Third, how do we respond? Fourth, what if we do not? Answering those questions certainly encapsulates the reason I will be supporting the motion later on this evening.

First, what is its purpose?

[Translation]

The international jihadist movement has declared war on Canada, its values, its citizens and all westerners.

[English]

It is very clear that this international jihadist ideology was the first mover. They were the ones who declared that Canada was an enemy to their purposes and that our values were antagonistic to their purposes. This makes this a matter of national security here as well

as of our humanitarian interests in the sphere of their operations in the Middle East.

What is their purpose? Quite frankly, they have stated their purpose quite clearly. They want to establish an international jihadist caliphate. One can only look at the example they are setting in the territory they currently control of beheadings, of murders, and of crushing minorities, particularly Christian minorities, but not exclusively, and other Muslim groups as well.

We look to not only their words in identifying the national interest but to their deeds. Their deeds are contrary to humanity. They are contrary to our national interests and the safety of our citizens. That is their purpose. Their purpose is clearly enunciated by their leadership and by their ruthless actions to date.

Then we go on to step two. How are they doing? They are recruiting. They have money. They have organization. They have territory. These are things that are helping them in achieving their jihadist terrorist internationalistic goals.

I was here in the chamber when my friend, the hon. Minister of Justice, was explaining that we have had success to date in being part of a 60-member coalition that has had some success in degrading ISIL’s ability to achieve their purposes. There is no doubt about that, and nothing I am saying detracts from that record to date. However, I think we all agree, and this is why we are standing in this place debating in favour of the resolution on this side of the House, that those goals are not completely accomplished yet. We have to stick to those goals, because they are still recruiting, they still have the financial means to project their terror, they still have an organization that exists and that in some parts of the region is growing, and of course, they still have their mission, which is not only within the sphere of their current influence but is an internationalist mission.

One hon. member from the Liberal Party mentioned ISIL’s control of Mosul. That is the size of Vancouver. These are not individuals in tents in the desert. This is a large city they still control. We can only hope that it will only be for a short time longer. However, that tells us that this mission is still important and that it is yet to be completely accomplished. That is why we have to be part of that mission.

It is also because their mission is international. It extends to disrupting our way of life here in Canada. It is clear that this is not just a local mission in the Middle East. It is clear that part of their ideology extends to projecting their force, projecting their terror, and projecting their violence on our peaceable shores as well.

• (1910)

That leads to the third question: How do we respond?

First of all, I believe that we must respond with moral clarity. The fact of the matter is that because of the purpose this group of international jihadists have, and because of the means by which they are deploying against us and innocent civilians, both in this country and overseas, I believe that the moral argument is that we have to respond. We have to continue with the mission, and I believe that we have to extend the mission.

Government Orders

There is no point in continuing the mission in one region, which is to say within Iraq, and not be part of the mission in Syria. The two are interlinked. Certainly the jihadists, Islamic State, do not see any difference or differentiate between the borders. Therefore, our role and responsibility is to be part of this 60-member coalition in all areas of activity in Syria and Iraq.

The way we contribute is with the Royal Canadian Air Force, with the training we are doing with the peshmerga, and of course, and let me repeat, as has been endlessly repeated, through our humanitarian mission and aid to those who are in distress and are fleeing from these murderous individuals.

We do respond, and we will respond, and that is what this mission is all about.

This leads to me to the fourth and final question that should be on our minds and on our list. What if we did not respond? What if we took the advice of certain members of the opposition in this place and others who are helpfully providing their advice on the other side of this argument throughout the country?

Well, clearly what will happen is that we will not be part of a group of people, a group of nations, that is seeking to end the genocidal violence that is occurring overseas: the beheadings, the persecution of minority groups, such as Christians and other Muslims, and of course, the absolute deprivation that goes along with that. That is clear. However, it also probably means more attacks here. If we fail to degrade the terrorists' ability to project their violence, it means that the national security of our nation, Canada, is compromised. Why do I say that? I say that because they have made it clear that if they have the means, they will continue to attack us at home. That is their goal. That is part of how they see their millenarian mission.

For those who say that we are provoking them with our actions, I would reply that we would actually provoke them more with inaction. That is why it is important that we do something rather than do nothing.

● (1915)

[*Translation*]

Throughout our nation's history, brave Canadians have fought for what is right despite considerable difficulty. We will not turn our backs on that tradition now.

[*English*]

We should not renounce our enviable and honourable history of working with allies to preserve the values Canadians desire and expect and to preserve the national security of our nation.

For all of these reasons, for the questions I have posed and for the answers I have given, I intend to support the motion.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Giguère (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened closely to my colleague's learned remarks.

The problem is not with what he is saying, but with what he is not saying. The best way for a coalition to defeat an enemy is to starve it of munitions and money. Turkey is currently providing sanctuary to ISIL. Combatants who want to enter Syria can go through Turkey.

Unfortunately, many Canadian citizens are doing just that. Some countries are providing this group with weapons and others are buying its oil.

What is the point in creating a coalition to bomb enemies, when so-called friends are giving them food, weapons and volunteers?

Hon. Tony Clement: Mr. Speaker, there are certainly many challenges. It is important to have a partnership with all the countries in that region in order to win the battle.

[*English*]

However, I would say this to the hon. member at the same time. The hon. member says, why bother. I say, use means that are available to us to degrade their ability to utilize the methodologies they are using to expand the territory they seek to expand into.

When I look at the challenges that the hon. member has raised, I do not say why bother; I say, what if we do nothing? The response to that question is that the situation would be far worse.

Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I remember reading something that General Dempsey said, who is a very central figure in Iraq. He was talking about when the offensive on Tikrit would possibly occur, and of course that is already underway. Later on he talked about Mosul. Originally he talked about it being maybe late spring for Mosul, and then in a more recent article he said it might have to be delayed until a little later. Very clearly this is because the Iraqi security forces still require more training before they undertake this enormous challenge.

We in the Liberal Party have proposed that a very constructive and useful contribution that Canada could make would be on the side of training, as we have done in the past in places like Afghanistan. We are talking about soldiers, not special forces, training other soldiers behind the lines.

I would like to hear what the President of the Treasury Board thinks of this idea from the Liberal Party.

● (1920)

Hon. Tony Clement: Mr. Speaker, I am always interested in whatever day's evolution of the Liberal position is, so I thank the hon. member for today's position. However, I would say that it is important to understand that training cannot work if the enemy keeps increasing their territory without a degrading of their ability to do so. We cannot train in a highly kinetic situation where the enemy is on the offence and there is no response to that.

I would say to the hon. member that it is very good that we want to train the Iraqi army. I have no difficulty with that, but the Liberals' position is naive if they think that can be accomplished with any degree of success without having the RCAF and other special forces available for the general intent of the mission at hand.

Mr. Dan Albas (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the president's message to the House today. One of the things I find personally alarming about the situation in Iraq and Syria is that not only is ISIL a terrorist-like group, but what it has assembled in almost a quasi-state. It is getting traffic revenues, oil refinery money, selling on the black market. It is pulling money in to buy weapons and to basically advance its aim.

Government Orders

Does the president agree that if we do not deal with this kind of rogue proto-state that not only will it destabilize the whole region but it will inspire similar processes throughout the whole world? To me, that is the most alarming part here. We are not just dealing with one small group; it will have the machinery of government behind it.

Hon. Tony Clement: Mr. Speaker, I agree with the hon. member's analysis. I would go further to say that through the use of social media and other means, the militant, terrorist, jihadist internationalists are using their propaganda methodology to dupe individuals and to train individuals to be part of this international jihadist movement. This is not only an issue of over there; it is also an issue of here and now as well.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, again today we are debating the Prime Minister's military adventures. The Prime Minister is again preparing to ask our brave troops to risk their lives overseas. This issue has come before the House a number of times already. As the official opposition, we have asked the questions that needed to be asked.

Many of these questions remain unanswered, but others forced the government's hand. They forced the government to do or redo its homework. For example, not six months ago, I specifically asked the Prime Minister whether Canadian soldiers would be involved in directing air strikes in Iraq and painting targets on the ground. Hon. members no doubt remember that.

In fact, I asked him the same question twice. Both times, the Prime Minister answered with a resounding no. Now we know that was simply not true. I also asked the Prime Minister whether Canadian soldiers would be on the front lines. Again, the Prime Minister answered with a resounding no. Unfortunately, again, we know that was simply not true.

[*English*]

The very foundation of this House, the foundation of everything we do here, is prescribed by law, not just the laws of Canada, but international law as well. These laws are put in place precisely to guide us to reason in the face of danger, to protect us not just from those who seek to harm us, but from our own missteps. To abandon the law so recklessly for the sake of political expediency, as the Prime Minister seems eager to do, threatens the very principles we were sent here to defend.

Last week, the Prime Minister stood in the House and sought permission to extend the misguided war in Iraq to a dangerous new phase in Syria, a country already torn apart by years of bloody civil war, ruled by a brutal dictator and war criminal. I asked the Prime Minister repeatedly what his legal basis was for this dangerous new escalation. As members will remember, he thought his lawyer answer was quite clever and funny. I put it to members that was, in fact, his "whip out your CF-18" moment. I can assure the House that the families of the brave women and men whose lives he seeks to put on the line do not find this a laughing matter.

Depending on the day, in fact depending on the time of day, the government gives differing and contradictory legal grounds for expanding the Prime Minister's war: maybe it is criminality; maybe it is the genocide convention; maybe it is section 51 of the UN charter;

or maybe, as the Prime Minister suggested, international law does not apply to us at all. That is simply ludicrous.

• (1925)

[*Translation*]

The Conservatives' propensity for attacking the United Nations has led to extraordinary improvisation by the Prime Minister, his Minister of National Defence—the number of blunders he has made this week is incredible—the Minister of Foreign Affairs and various parliamentary secretaries. The NDP, the official opposition, has had to ask specific questions, and I have had to personally expose the Prime Minister's ridiculous position in order to force the government to do its homework and to inform the UN in writing of its intentions.

[*English*]

Here is what we know. Canada does not have permission to conduct air strikes in Syria, a basic requirement under international law. Let me say that again, because contrary to what the Prime Minister thinks, this is vitally important. Canada does not have the legal grounds to conduct air strikes in Syria, full stop. "But our friends are doing it" is actually not a legal defence. That sort of childish reasoning is more suitable to the schoolyard than it is to the House of Commons, and the Prime Minister should know better.

The fact is that what the government is proposing will put our Canadian Forces in the dubious position of acting outside of international law. The New Democrats will not stand for it.

As I outlined last week, our view is that this is simply not Canada's war to fight. It is not a UN mission. It is not a NATO mission, despite the government's attempts to give it that aura with a visit last week. The United Nations Security Council has passed three resolutions dealing with the situation in Iraq, and not one of those resolutions authorized military action.

The fact is that the Americans have been fighting in Iraq for over a decade with very little success. Canada should have no part in it. We were right to stay out of that fight in 2003, despite the Prime Minister's objections at the time when he was in opposition. He wanted us to be there, and he wrote in United States' newspapers that Canada should have been involved since 2003. He is trying to grant his own wish today.

It did not make sense for Canada then and it does not make sense for Canada today. That does not seem to matter to the government or to the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister is intent on sleepwalking Canada into this war, and he is misleading Canadians to get his way.

Remember, this operation began as a 30-day mission. That transformed into a 6-month mission. Now we are looking at a year or more. Just last week, officials from the Department of National Defence said that they expected the mission in Iraq and Syria to last for many years, not one year but years. That the Prime Minister has not said a word about that is most troubling.

Government Orders

Members will recall that Canadian forces were only supposed to advising and assisting Iraqi troops, not accompanying them. The Prime Minister said that there would be no combat role for us on the front lines. Now we know that not only are Canadian troops on the front lines, but they are exchanging gunfire with ISIL militants. The death of Sergeant Doiron is a tragic reminder of the kind of danger they are in.

The Prime Minister also said that Canadian forces would not be painting targets for air strikes, something that even the U.S. military is unwilling to do. Of course, we now know that they are doing exactly that.

• (1930)

[*Translation*]

Military strategists tell us that to be successful a mission requires two specific things: a clear objective and an exit strategy. The Conservatives have neither for the deployment in Iraq and Syria. They simply do not have a plan. They have no strategy other than their domestic political agenda, and everything they say betrays it. This jeopardizes not just Canada's credibility, but also the safety of our troops.

Our soldiers are exchanging gunfire with the Islamic State in the theatre of operations, contrary to what the Prime Minister himself promised here in the House of Commons. The fact that the Prime Minister continues to deny that Canadian soldiers are involved in combat is simply ridiculous. Soldiers deployed to the front are very much at risk. The death of Sergeant Doiron reminded us that the risks are all too real.

At the same time, our allies are not even going near the front lines. Canadian soldiers have to go to the front to identify the targets for air strikes. Americans are not doing that. U.S. headquarters will not allow them to go there.

Why are the Conservatives allowing this, despite all their promises? They have never given a reason.

[*English*]

It is difficult to have faith in anything the government says when everything it has told us so far has been false. When the Minister of National Defence, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Chief of the Defence Staff and the Prime Minister contradict each other on an almost daily basis, how is the public to judge?

It is clear that the government has no plan and no long-term strategy, yet it is asking our women and men in uniform to shoulder the burden of its improvisation.

Today, one of Canada's most respected defence journalists, David Pugliese, wrote an extraordinary article in the *Ottawa Citizen* with the heading, "General Tom Lawson tries to dig" the Minister of National Defence "out of a bomb crater of his own making". It is quite extraordinary because what he proves black on white is that the Minister of National Defence has made statements to the Canadian people on mainstream television that are demonstrably patently false. Canadians deserve better. Our brave women and men in uniform deserve better.

There is simply too much at stake for this type of utter mismanagement. The decisions we are making here are literally life and death decisions. It is time the government started taking that job seriously.

The fact is that after 12 years of war, more bombs are not the answer. Worse still, going into Syria could backfire. Civilian casualties could be higher because Canadian pilots would not have the ground support to direct precision bombings. ISIL would only use any civilian casualties as another recruitment tool.

Air strikes in Syria implicate Canada in Syria's civil war. Bashar al-Assad has brutally murdered masses of peaceful protesters. He has used chemical weapons against his own people. He has been using snipers against women and children. He deliberately fuelled the rise of violent extremists in order to weaken the moderate Syrian opposition. We know that he co-operated with ISIL. He released its prisoners. We know that he is benefiting from air strikes to seize more territory in Syria. That is why his foreign minister said that Assad and the west are now aligned. Let us not forget that this was a charter member of George W. Bush's axis of evil. Who else is aligning with us other than Syria? Iran, which is another charter member. All we are missing is North Korea.

This is a serious ethical problem for Canada. Dismissing it betrays the government's lack of knowledge about a region that could suck Canada into decades of conflict. The Prime Minister tells Canadians that we can either bomb Iraq and Syria or sit on the sidelines. That is another of his false choices. Over 60 countries are united against ISIL. The vast majority of our allies are not taking part in air strikes. There are only six, the United States and a small group of Arab countries, that are bombing Syria. Surely the Prime Minister would not want to suggest that all other allies are sitting on the sidelines.

Our choice is not between bombing or nothing. The NDP has put forward serious alternatives, a plan that emphasizes what Canada was asked to do, a plan that emphasizes what we can do best and most effectively. Our limited resources can be much more effective in fighting ISIL and its ideology if we avoid sleepwalking into an ever-expanding military conflict and focus on a robust humanitarian mission.

Security Council resolutions on ISIL require action to prevent the flow of foreign fighters, financing and resources to ISIL. Canada can take leadership to meet these international obligations. The government has completely failed to do so. The NDP amendment would change that. Canada should finally sign and ratify the arms trade treaty to help end the flow of weapons to illegal armed groups. Canada remains the only NATO country that refuses to sign this important international agreement. That is a black mark on Canada's record. Canada should also partner with domestic communities to develop a strategy to counter radicalization.

Above all, there is a desperate need for increased humanitarian support. A quarter of Lebanon's population is in fact Syrian refugees. The crisis is pushing an already fragile country to the brink.

Government Orders

• (1935)

A majority of UN humanitarian appeals for Iraq and Syria remain unfunded. The World Food Programme has said that its operations in Iraq are only financially viable until May. The same program had to suspend food aid to 1.7 million Syrian refugees just last December.

On the governance front, Canada can also help build sustainable governance in Iraq. Sunni frustrations with the central government in Baghdad facilitated the rise of ISIL. Iraq needs inclusive and representative governance to remove the conditions for violent extremism to take root.

[*Translation*]

Local frustrations led to the increase in radicalization. Only a competent, inclusive and representative local government that is in a position to communicate effectively can put an end to the extremist threat in this region. Obviously, a strong campaign is needed to counter the extremist messages, either here at home or over there. However, this will be impossible to achieve with the Prime Minister targeting the Muslim community and using Muslims as scapegoats instead of reaching out to them.

Canada can play a positive role in the region. We can help our Turkish ally, a NATO member, take care of 1.5 million refugees. We can use the diplomatic, humanitarian and financial channels at our disposal to strengthen the political institutions in Iraq and also in Syria. We cannot simply say that we will do something. We must take action. However, it is not a matter of choosing between combat and inaction. That is yet another false choice from the Conservatives.

People are in desperate need of humanitarian assistance. We know that children died of cold this winter in refugee camps, which is completely unacceptable. These are Iraqi, Syrian and Kurdish children who had fled the Islamic State. Canada has the expertise and could have helped winterize these camps. We are no strangers to winter. We could have saved these children. It is a matter of priorities. A matter of choice.

[*English*]

Our choice is not between bombing or doing nothing. Our choice is between the Prime Minister's ever expanding war or the New Democrats' focus on a robust and effective humanitarian role. Canadians will have that choice, a new government, a new mandate in October 2015. The New Democrats will immediately end Canada's participation in this war.

• (1940)

Mr. James Bezan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am disappointed but not surprised by the position just laid out by the leader of the NDP. He talks about doing more humanitarian aid. Canada has already contributed over \$700 million in the region during the crisis we have been experiencing over the last four years.

Canada is the fifth largest donor in Iraq and the sixth largest donor in Syria. We have fed 1.7 million refugees, clothed 1.25 million people, given educational opportunities to over half a million students, and we will continue to do more. That is one thing the opposition does not seem to recognize.

We cannot put an end to the humanitarian crisis unless we put an end to ISIL itself. Why do the New Democrats continue to say we will sacrifice ethnic and religious minorities at the hand of ISIL? We witness it all too often on television where Christians are being crucified, the Yazidis are being beheaded, other ethnic and religious minorities are being killed off and shot by firing squad, yet we do not see the New Democrats trying to deal with putting an end to that.

The Leader of the Opposition talked about legality. I will read for him article 51 from the UN charter, which says:

Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security.

We are going in there under article 51 with the government of Iraq, with our coalition partners. Why can he not recognize that? We have a right to collective self defence with the Iraqis to protect ethnic minorities, protect religious minorities and protect Canadians at home.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair: Mr. Speaker, I waited patiently for the question, but I did not hear one. However, I will try to provide some elements of information for the benefit of my esteemed colleague across the way.

We think the government's problem is that since the beginning it has failed to tell the truth to Canadians. In the fall, I asked the Prime Minister, for example, whether our troops would be on the front lines, and he said that they would not. That was false. I asked if they would be painting targets for air strikes, and he said that they would not. That was false.

The parliamentary secretary stands in this House today and tells us that he has certain figures on humanitarian aid. I wonder if he could provide us with the figure that everyone is asking for that the Conservatives will not provide, which is the total cost of this war compared to that humanitarian aid.

• (1945)

Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the Leader of the Opposition.

We in the Liberal Party share the concern that he has expressed with respect to the need for humanitarian assistance. Last September, I had the pleasure of going to Iraq with his foreign affairs critic. Last May, I also went to a camp in northern Jordan which had Syrian refugees. There was no question about that.

Today our party, through our leader, made a commitment, if we are the government, to take 25,000 government-sponsored refugees into Canada.

One additional element that does differentiate our parties is the fact that we have also said it is important to provide a training capability to Iraqi security forces.

I would like to hear from the Leader of the Opposition on what he thinks of that idea.

Government Orders

[Translation]

Hon. Thomas Mulcair: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question, but I also want to point out that there is another major difference between our political parties: our statements have been consistent from the beginning. We do not change our minds.

[English]

Another fundamental difference between our two political parties is that the NDP has been consistent since day one. The flip-flops we have seen on the Liberal side are enough to give us whiplash.

Since the beginning, the Liberals have been saying that they were in favour of the war as long as it was the ground war, but then they were against the air war. Last Tuesday, March 24, their official spokesperson, the member of Parliament for Vancouver Quadra, stood and informed everyone that if the Liberals, in the unlikely event, form government, they were going to keep the war going. Now he is trying to tell us that their leader said on March 25 that they might end the war but they are going to keep the war going for the training part. Honestly.

[Translation]

I cannot make heads or tails of it.

[English]

One either has a position of principle or one does not. Our position of principle is that we are against this war.

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, during this debate we heard the Minister of Foreign Affairs say that Canadians were under siege by ISIL. We heard the Prime Minister and many others opposite say that ISIL had declared war on Canada. We had the Minister of National Defence actually say that Canada had an independent right of self-defence as one of the justifications for our going into Syria with a bombing campaign.

First, I wonder whether the Leader of the Opposition thinks these are reasonable and proportional responses by a G8 country to the actual direct threat to Canadians represented by ISIL.

Second, I wonder what signal the member thinks the Prime Minister was sending in his speech last week when he said we have made some important deployments but we can easily change them. Does that give the member any comfort about the future of this mission?

Hon. Thomas Mulcair: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for that important question. The best way to answer it is to refer to the article today by David Pugliese, which informs everyone in this House that despite the oratorical overreach of the high-school valedictorian Minister of Foreign Affairs, we have a Minister of National Defence who is having his government's classic problem of informing Canadians with any veracity.

This of course is the same person who one day in question period said that there was no 15% rule allowing employers to pay temporary foreign workers 15% less and then an hour and a half later announced that he was putting an end to the same 15% rule that he had just said did not exist. He is of course the same person who said that Gary Freeman had killed an American police officer. He is back in this country, thankfully, despite the best efforts of that minister to keep him out. Of course, he is the same one who told a real whopper

with regard to women who were taking part in a religious procession, saying that this was a picture of women who had been enslaved by ISIS.

The best thing to do is to summarize in one sentence the minister's claim that, also repeated on two other occasions on different TV programs, was pretty sweeping. It was also completely false.

That is what we have been getting from the current government. That has been the case from the beginning. This article is from today, March 30, and everything the government has been telling the public about this exercise has proven to be completely false.

• (1950)

Mr. Dan Albas (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite says that this is a question of principle for the NDP. For organized labour, one of its key principles is solidarity. Why is the NDP so hell-bent on dismissing the concept of standing with our allies and dealing with those threats that not only pose a danger to Iraq and the Iraqi population but also to the West?

Hon. Thomas Mulcair: Mr. Speaker, Bashar al-Assad might be their ally; he is not ours.

More important, as I had occasion to point out during my speech, despite the government's best efforts to portray it as a NATO mission, this is not a NATO mission. NATO has wisely stayed out of this mission. That individual countries that are allied with us and allies are involved in it is a fact. That NATO has refused to take that position and get involved is also a fact that they should finally acknowledge. This is neither a NATO mission nor a United Nations mission. Canada can be playing a robust role to come to the aid of the millions of people affected by the conflict in that region.

No one is trying to understate the horrors that we have seen and we know that it is important to fight terrorism. However, all of the horrors we see now playing out in that region are the direct result of the last misguided war. The Conservatives are dead wrong saying that Canada should get involved in this misguided war.

Hon. John Duncan (Minister of State and Chief Government Whip, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I speak today to stress the significance of why we are extending and expanding our military mission against the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant. ISIL is a direct threat not only to Iraq and its surrounding region but also to Canada and our allies worldwide.

The NDP objects to the ISIL mission because NATO is not leading it and the UN never authorized it. This is incomprehensible and completely hypocritical, given that Canada's engagement in Afghanistan was NATO-led and UN-authorized, and the NDP opposed it and instead promoted negotiations with the Taliban.

Nevertheless, for most people the incoherent NDP position was no surprise. The surprise is the Liberal position.

Government Orders

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Hon. John Duncan: Mr. Speaker, we were quite well behaved when the leader of the NDP was speaking. It would be nice if the behaviour would continue.

The Deputy Speaker: The Minister of State has a very valid point about keeping the order and decorum on both sides of the House, but at this point, on the opposition side of the House.

Hon. John Duncan: I appreciate that, Mr. Speaker.

As recently as March 15, the Liberal leader was assuring the Kurdish community in Toronto of support to end the inhumanities committed by ISIL. The reaction of this same community to the position of the Liberal leader on March 24 when he opposed the Canadian military mission was one of shock, dismay and extreme surprise. The Liberal and NDP positions are considered to be an embarrassment. This community agrees that the military capability of ISIL must be degraded, and the position that the Liberals have taken does not address the profound humanitarian situation, because ISIL must be degraded to successfully deal with the humanitarian needs.

Our principal concern remains the safety and security of all Canadians.

We are proud to be part of the global military alliance committed to degrading ISIL. Violent takeovers of towns and cities in the region by ISIL militants and other armed opposition groups have displaced an estimated two and a half million people since June of last year. The United Nations estimates that more than 840,000 children in the region now face severe deprivation, exposure to violence and abuse, and lost opportunities for education.

Through expanding our mission, we are committed to stabilizing the region and degrading one of the worst threats to human life in the world today. We are not sitting on the sidelines. We must all cooperate to move forward in the most effective manner.

A Global News and Ipsos Reid poll found that by last week, three-quarters of Canadians support our country's participation in the anti-ISIL campaign. Two-thirds of respondents also said they would support a mission extension. In that poll, fewer than half of NDP supporters support the NDP leader's position, and two-thirds of Liberal supporters do not support their leader's position.

Canada is in a unique position to join the military alliance and to provide humanitarian relief simultaneously.

Since 2012, a Canadian initiative headed by a humanitarian group in my riding of Vancouver Island North, called Medical Hope for Syria, has raised over \$200,000 to provide medical aid to Syrian refugees. Medical Hope for Syria purchases physician travel packs from Health Partners International of Canada. These packs contain 600 treatments and it figures that each pack saves at least 120 lives.

This group is in a unique position, as in Israel, to deliver medical aid and other aid to refugee camps. It buys its medications for 10% of retail, and that is matched by a donor in Calgary. This group supports the expansion and extension of our mission, because it knows that delivering humanitarian aid requires the degradation of ISIL.

Those who are most affected by ISIL's actions are the most vulnerable, including women, children, the elderly, and the disabled. Ethnic and religious minorities have also been targeted.

There are horrific reports of violence against women and girls. Sexual violence continues to be widespread, particularly among girls and women who are vulnerable because of conflict and displacement. Rape and sexual violence are being used as reprisals and to create fear.

In the face of this ongoing humanitarian catastrophe, we take pride in our commitment to expanding our mission and eradicating ISIL.

We have all seen the reports. Among other acts of brutality, ISIL is carrying out a systematic campaign, one that disproportionately targets ethnic and religious minorities. ISIL rapes women and girls, enslaves them for sexual purposes, sells and traffics them, marries them off to their soldiers, and uses them as a recruiting tool.

● (1955)

We can only imagine the suffering of the women and girls who remain in ISIL hands. We do know of the suffering of the survivors who have escaped and sought refuge in camps and communities outside of ISIL areas.

Such is the magnitude of displacements that survivors often continue to suffer. Families in conflict situations may use child, early and forced marriage as a desperate coping mechanism in an attempt to better provide for and protect their daughters. Others feel pressure to marry off daughters who are survivors of rape in an effort to reduce the social stigma they face.

Recent reports reveal how violent extremist groups like ISIL use sexual violence and the enslavement of women and girls as an integral strategy to pursue their perverse aims. Their abuse of women and girls from religious and ethnic minorities is used to so-called "cleanse" territory that they wish to dominate. They also use the enslaved women and girls to attract recruits and raise revenue through trafficking and ransom.

ISIL actions toward women are an affront to Canada and to the world. Equality between women and men, the empowerment of women and girls, the respect for and promotion of their dignity and human rights, and the prevention and response to sexual violence against them are fundamental Canadian values.

It is my honour to describe some of the actions and policies of the Government of Canada to promote the empowerment, the human rights and the well-being of women and girls in countries of concern. Canada has been instrumental in bringing world attention and action to this issue.

In 2013, Canada played an active role in the development of the first resolution focused on child, early and forced marriage at the UN human rights council. In 2014, we co-led a UN resolution on child, early and forced marriage. We are advocating for a specific target on ending child, early and forced marriage in the post-2015 development agenda. We have intensified our programming efforts to end child, early and forced marriage globally. We are supporting UN efforts to support some 640,000 displaced women and girls, including survivors of sexual violence.

We are committed to supporting survivors of sexual violence in conflict and to holding perpetrators to account. We will continue this important work. Canada will continue to deliver humanitarian aid and join our allies in this essential military mission to degrade the military capability of ISIL to make this all possible.

● (2000)

The Deputy Speaker: It being 8:03 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of Government Business No. 17 now before the House.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the amendment will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

● (2035)

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

(Division No. 367)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Angus
Ashton	Atamanenko
Aubin	Ayala
Bellavance	Benskin
Blanchette	Blanchette-Lamothe
Boivin	Borg
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet
Brahmi	Brousseau
Caron	Cash
Charlton	Chicoine
Chisholm	Choquette
Christopherson	Cleary
Comartin	Côté
Crowder	Cullen
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)	Day
Dewar	Dionne Labelle
Donnelly	Doré Lefebvre
Dubé	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Dusseault	Freeman

Garrison
Genest-Jourdain
Godin
Groguhé
Harris (St. John's East)
Julian
Lapointe
Laverdière
Leslie
Mai
Martin
Mathysen
Michaud
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Mourani
Nantel
Nicholls
Papillon
Péclet
Plamondon
Rafferty
Ravignat
Saganash
Scott
Sims (Newton—North Delta)
Stewart
Sullivan
Tremblay

Ablonczy
Adler
Albas
Alexander
Allison
Ambrose
Anderson
Armstrong
Barlow
Bélanger
Bergen
Blaney
Boughen
Brisson
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Bruinooge
Byrne
Cannan
Carrie
Chisu
Clarke
Cotler
Cuzner
Davidson
Dion
Dubourg
Dykstra
Eglinski
Falk
Fast
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Foote
Freeland
Galipeau
Garneau
Glover
Goldring
Goodyear
Gourde
Hawn
Hiebert
Holder
James
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kent
Komarnicki
Lake
Lauzon
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
Lemieux

Government Orders

Genest
Giguère
Gravelle
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Hyer
Kellway
Latendresse
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Liu
Marston
Masse
May
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
Mulcair
Nash
Nunez-Melo
Patry
Pilon
Quach
Rankin
Rousseau
Sandhu
Sellah
Sitsabaiesan
Stoffer
Toone
Turmel — 96

NAYS

Members

Adams
Aglukkaq
Albrecht
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Ambler
Anders
Andrews
Aspin
Bateman
Bennett
Bezan
Block
Braid
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Barrie)
Butt
Calandra
Carmichael
Casey
Chong
Clement
Crockatt
Daniel
Devolin
Dreeshen
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Easter
Eyking
Fantino
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Fletcher
Fortin
Fry
Gallant
Gill
Goguen
Goodale
Gosal
Harper
Hayes
Hoback
Hsu
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kerr
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lamoureux
Lebel
Leitch
Leung

Government Orders

Lizon	Lobb
Lukiwski	Lunney
MacAulay	MacKay (Central Nova)
MacKenzie	Maguire
Mayes	McCallum
McColeman	McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
McLeod	Menegakis
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Moore (Fundy Royal)	
Murray	Nicholson
Norlock	Obhrai
Oliver	O'Neill Gordon
Opitz	O'Toole
Paradis	Payne
Perkins	Poilievre
Preston	Raitt
Rajotte	Rathgeber
Regan	Reid
Rempel	Saxton
Scarpaleggia	Schellenberger
Sgro	Shea
Shipley	Shory
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)	
Smith	
Sopuck	Sorenson
Stanton	St-Denis
Storseth	Sweet
Tilson	Toet
Trost	Trottier
Trudeau	Truppe
Uppal	Valcourt
Valerioté	Van Loan
Vaughan	Vellacott
Wallace	Warawa
Warkentin	Watson
Weston (Saint John)	Wilks
Williamson	Wong
Woodworth	Yelich
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Yurdiga	Zimmer — 176

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the amendment defeated.

The hon. chief government whip is rising on a point of order.

Hon. John Duncan: Mr. Speaker, the member for Vancouver Kingsway was not in his seat when you read a good part of the question, so I question whether he actually heard the amendment.

Mr. Don Davies: Mr. Speaker, I was in my seat during the bulk of the reading of the motion and I did hear the substance of the motion and cast my vote in an intelligent and informed manner.

The Speaker: Order, please. I am not sure if the member for Winnipeg Centre has some advice for the member for Vancouver Kingsway. We have had a few of these.

I do want to inform hon. members that the chair occupants usually wait a few moments after the whips sit down in order to accommodate the last few members arriving at their seats. I will take the hon. member for Vancouver Kingsway at his word that he heard the question. He said he was in the chamber to hear the bulk of the question.

However, I will say that members would be doing a great service to the Speaker and the deputy speakers if they were promptly in their seats. The bells do ring for a long period of time and it is meant to give members enough time to come to the chamber and sit in their seats. Therefore, I would urge members to do so without pushing the envelope.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

• (2045)

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

(Division No. 368)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy	Adler
Aglukkaq	Albas
Albrecht	Alexander
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Ambler	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson
Andrews	Armstrong
Aspin	Barlow
Bateman	Bergen
Bezan	Blaney
Block	Boughen
Braid	Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)	Brown (Barrie)
Bruinooge	Butt
Calandra	Cannan
Carmichael	Carrie
Chisu	Chong
Clarke	Clement
Crockatt	Daniel
Davidson	Devolin
Dreeshen	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Dykstra	Eglini
Falk	Fantino
Fast	Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Fletcher
Galipeau	Gallant
Gill	Glover
Goguen	Goldring
Goodyear	Gosal
Gourde	Harper
Hawn	Hayes
Hiebert	Hoback
Holder	James
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Kent
Kerr	Komarnicki
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake
Lauzon	Lebel
Leitch	Lemieux
Leung	Lizon
Lobb	Lukiwski
Lunney	MacKay (Central Nova)
MacKenzie	Maguire
Mayes	McColeman
McLeod	Menegakis
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Moore (Fundy Royal)	
Nicholson	Norlock
Obhrai	Oliver
O'Neill Gordon	Opitz
O'Toole	Paradis
Payne	Perkins
Poilievre	Preston

Government Orders

Raitt
Reid
Saxton
Shea
Shory
Sopuck
Stanton
Sweet
Toet
Trotter
Uppal
Van Loan
Wallace
Warkentin
Weston (Saint John)
Williamson
Woodworth
Young (Oakville)
Yurdiga

Rajotte
Rempel
Schellenberger
Shipley
Smith
Sorenson
Storseth
Tilson
Trost
Truppe
Valcourt
Vellacott
Warawa
Watson
Wilks
Wong
Yelich
Young (Vancouver South)
Zimmer — 142

Garrison
Genest-Jourdain
Godin
Gravelle
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Hsu
Julian
Lamoureux
Latendresse
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
Leslie
MacAulay
Marston
Masse
May
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue)
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
Mulcair
Nantel
Nicholls
Papillon
Péclet
Plamondon
Rafferty
Rathgeber
Regan
Saganash
Scarpaleggia
Sellah
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)
Sims (Newton—North Delta)
Sitsabaiesan
Stewart
Sullivan
Tremblay
Turmel
Vaughan — 129

Genest
Giguère
Goodale
Grogouhé
Harris (St. John's East)
Hyer
Kellway
Lapointe
Laverdière
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Liu
Mai
Martin
Mathysen
McCallum
Michaud
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Mourani
Murray
Nash
Nunez-Melo
Patry
Pilon
Quach
Rankin
Ravignat
Rousseau
Sandhu
Scott
Sgro
St-Denis
Stoffer
Toone
Trudeau
Valeriote

NAYS

Members

Adams
Angus
Atamanenko
Ayala
Bellavance
Benskin
Blanchette-Lamothe
Borg
Boutin-Sweet
Brisson
Byrne
Casey
Charlton
Chisholm
Christopherson
Comartin
Crowder
Cuzner
Day
Dion
Donnelly
Dubé
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Easter
Foote
Freeland
Fry

Allen (Welland)
Ashton
Aubin
Bélangier
Bennett
Blanchette
Boivin
Boulerice
Brahmi
Brosseau
Caron
Cash
Chicoine
Choquette
Cleary
Côté
Cullen
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Dewar
Dionne Labelle
Doré Lefebvre
Dubourg
Dusseau
Eyking
Fortin
Freeman
Garneau

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

It being 8:46 p.m., this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 8:46 p.m.)

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