



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

House of Commons Debates

VOLUME 147 • NUMBER 105 • 2nd SESSION • 41st PARLIAMENT

OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Tuesday, June 17, 2014



Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer

CONTENTS

(Table of Contents appears at back of this issue.)

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, June 17, 2014

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1005)

[*Translation*]

JAMES BAY AND NORTHERN QUEBEC AGREEMENT AND THE NORTHEASTERN QUEBEC AGREEMENT

Mr. Mark Strahl (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, copies of the 2008-09 and 2009-10 annual report on the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement and the Northeastern Quebec Agreement.

* * *

[*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 26 petitions.

* * *

DIGITAL PRIVACY ACT

Hon. John Duncan (for the Minister of Industry) moved that Bill S-4, An Act to amend the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act and to make a consequential amendment to another Act, be read the first time.

(Motion agreed to and bill read the first time)

Hon. John Duncan: Mr. Speaker, I would like to seek unanimous consent for travel motions for committees.

The first is in that, in relation to the annual conference of the Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees and the Canadian Council of Legislative Auditors' annual conference, ten members of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts be authorized to travel to St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, in August 2014, and that the necessary staff accompany the committee.

Second, that in relation to the pre-budget consultations, 2014, ten members of the Standing Committee on Finance be authorized to travel to Halifax, Nova Scotia and Montreal, Quebec in the fall of 2014 and the winter of 2015, and that the necessary staff accompany the committee.

Third, that in relation to the pre-budget consultations, 2014, ten members of the Standing Committee on Finance be authorized to travel to Toronto, Ontario in the fall of 2014 and the winter of 2015, and that the necessary staff accompany the committee.

Fourth, that in relation to the pre-budget consultations, 2014, ten members of the Standing Committee on Finance be authorized to travel to Winnipeg, Edmonton, Yellowknife, and Vancouver in the fall of 2014 and the winter of 2015, and that the necessary staff accompany the committee.

Fifth, that in relation to its study of the defence of North America, ten members of the Standing Committee on National Defence be authorized to travel to Winnipeg, Yellowknife, Cambridge Bay, Resolute Bay, and Iqaluit, Nunavut in the fall of 2014 and the winter of 2015, and that the necessary staff accompany the committee.

Sixth, that in relation to its study of the defence of North America, ten members of the Standing Committee on National Defence be authorized to travel to Bagotville, Quebec; Gagetown, New Brunswick; and Halifax, Nova Scotia in the spring and fall of 2014, and that the necessary staff accompany the committee.

Seventh, that in relation to its study of the defence of North America, ten members of the Standing Committee on National Defence be authorized to travel to Trenton, Ontario; Thule, Greenland; and Alert, Nunavut in the spring and fall of 2014, and that the necessary staff accompany the committee.

Finally, that in relation to its study of northern and Arctic fisheries, ten members of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans be authorized to travel to Whitehorse and Dawson City, Yukon; and Inuvik, Hay River, and Yellowknife, Northwest Territories in the spring and fall of 2014, and that the necessary staff accompany the committee.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: There does not seem to be consent.

*Government Orders***PETITIONS**

PAN-CANADIAN CONCUSSION STRATEGY

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present eight petitions regarding concussions. The signatures were collected by two extraordinary young women in my riding, Sandhya and Swapna Mylabathula, who are doing their Ph.D. in concussion research. They have spent almost three years working on a bill proposal for a pan-Canadian concussion strategy.

Concussion can deeply impact individuals psychologically, neuropsychologically, socially, and economically. Those living with this brain injury deserve comprehensive action and support.

The petitioners call upon the government to enact a pan-Canadian concussion awareness week; a pan-Canadian strategy for prevention, diagnosis and management; and a centre of excellence in concussion research.

CANADA POST

Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present.

The first petition calls upon the government to reverse its recent cuts to Canada Post services and look instead for ways to innovate in areas such as postal banking.

PUBLIC MONUMENTS

Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition calls upon the government to withdraw its support and endorsement for the construction of the Never Forgotten memorial monument in Green Cove, Nova Scotia.

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

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

From residents of Salt Spring Island within my riding, I present a petition calling for this House to protect and ensure stable and predictable funding for the nation's public broadcaster, the CBC.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I also present petitions from residents of my riding and beyond, from Qualicum Beach and Campbell River, calling for the Conservative government to refuse to approve the Northern Gateway pipeline as long as there are so many significant scientific questions that have not been resolved.

ANIMAL WELFARE

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud today to present petitions from almost 18,000 people across Canada. Members might ask what the issue is that has generated such enthusiasm from Canadians. There is a desire to strengthen our laws to protect animals. These petitions are in support of two bills to strengthen our laws against animal cruelty.

Animals are not just property and they are not just working animals. Animals are sentient beings capable of thinking and feeling pain. They should not be treated as property and they should be better protected under our animal cruelty legislation. We need

significant penalties and a greater likelihood of conviction in the case of an offence.

On behalf of the almost 18,000 people who have signed these petitions, and on behalf of the many other Canadians who support the well-being of Canada's companion animals and other animals, I do submit these petitions. I urge my colleagues on all sides of the House to support our bills to strengthen our animal cruelty legislation.

• (1010)

FALUN GONG

Mr. James Rajotte (Edmonton—Leduc, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to stand today and present a petition on behalf of many Albertans who are calling upon the government to act to stop the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners in China.

CANADA POST

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this is an issue that has struck at the heart of many Canadians across the country.

I am presenting one of some dozens of petitions that have been presented by the NDP, the official opposition, decrying the cuts to Canada Post that have come at the hands of the Conservative government.

Small towns across rural Canada rely on their post offices. Therefore, people from Smithers, Houston, Telkwa, and the surrounding areas are asking the government to reverse its draconian cuts to Canada's postal service, return it to its once proper service, and to in fact expand service to allow Canada Post to continue being viable and strong into the future.

* * *

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]

AGRICULTURAL GROWTH ACT

The House resumed from June 16 consideration of the motion that Bill C-18, An Act to amend certain Acts relating to agriculture and agri-food, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Glenn Thibeault (Sudbury, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it truly is my pleasure to rise in the House today to speak to Bill C-18, an act to amend certain acts relating to agriculture and agri-food.

Government Orders

I am sure many in the House are scratching their head and wondering why the MP for Sudbury, whose community is known for mining and being a hard rock city, would speak to this legislation. We have a lot of farmers in my community, and agriculture is important. This is an important bill for us to debate in the House and I am honoured to speak to it. I also want to thank my hon. colleague, the MP for Welland, for his hard work on this file. He is our excellent critic for agriculture.

It is important for me to say that we support this legislation. We want to ensure that it gets to committee but we do have concerns. This is once again another Conservative omnibus bill. I guess I could merge those two words together; “consermibus” is what I was trying to say a minute ago.

This legislation would make changes to nine different pieces of legislation. As with previous omnibus bills, there are measures that we support in Bill C-18 and there are those that we see as posing significant concerns for the agriculture sector.

Many of the proposed changes requested by various stakeholders deserve thorough debate and consideration. As I mentioned, we support the bill going to committee but we may not support it at further stages. We hope we can make some amendments. We hope to be able to bring forward some of the changes requested by stakeholders as well as some of their concerns.

It is important to recognize that when it comes to plant breeders' rights, New Democrats believe that we need to look at a balanced approach. A balanced approach to this is essential. We want to protect Canada's farmers and the public researchers who are involved in this. We understand the role of intellectual property rights. We understand it is important to encourage innovation. We want to ensure that all Canadians can access and benefit from our agriculture legacy. We need to ensure that the bill is studied in more detail so we can find out how producers would be impacted by some of the proposed changes.

There are concerns about safety controls over seeds, plants, and animals. The CFIA would likely require additional resources. The cuts made by the Conservative government in the past to CFIA are concerning. We want to ensure that this is addressed and that there would no longer be any gaps in enforcement, especially when it comes to some of the safety measures that are involved in this.

We would all agree that farmers are the backbone of Canada's food system. It does not matter ultimately the colour of one's tie, such as the one I am wearing today, as to how we perceive our farmers. Members of all parties want our farmers to earn a decent living and produce quality food for Canadian families.

We have a great organization in my riding of Sudbury called Eat Local. Approximately 30 to 40 local producers provide food to Eat Local in Sudbury. Let me just talk about a few of them.

Les jardins Blondin specializes in ecologically grown greens, radishes, and assorted produce. Rowantree Farms, Heart and Soil Gardens, Piebird and Soggy Creek Seed, Ouelette et Fils, and Mountain Lake Bison Range are other producers that provide food to Eat Local. Many of these great organizations in my riding are doing great work when it comes to ensuring that we have local produce. It is important for us to ensure that farmers and companies like those

that I mentioned in my riding and those right across the country continue to prosper.

Many of those I have met at Eat Local are modern farmers as well. As parliamentarians we need to ensure that we link them to cutting-edge research and technology. Canadians deserve practical policies that can grow our rural economies and foster sustainable agricultural communities.

As I mentioned earlier, when it comes to plant breeders' rights, the official opposition believes that balance is essential.

• (1015)

However, we do have some concerns when it comes to public research. We want to ensure that the incredible contributions that are being made by our agriculture sector remain competitive and benefit all Canadians. Therefore, it is essential that the federal government support publicly funded research, especially for farmers.

I am going to talk a bit now about some of the specifics of the bill. Bill C-18 would protect the rights of researchers to use patent materials for non-commercial uses. However, given the government's defunding of public research and its focus on public-private funding partnerships and linking research to commercialization, it is our opinion on this side of the House that it is unclear if the provisions as written would effectively protect research. Public plant research has made numerous contributions to the Canadian agriculture community, and it is our opinion that it is essential that support for public research be maintained. Therefore, one of the things we want to ensure is that the government will continue to support public research and it would not be hindered in the bill at all.

Canada is moving toward ratification of the 1991 model law of the international union for the protection of new varieties of plants, UPOV '91, which expands the rights afforded to plant breeders for varieties they develop and increases the places along the value chain where plant breeders can collect royalties. Bill C-18 includes the following new exclusion rights for plant breeders: reproduction, conditioning, sale, export or import, and repeated use to produce commercially another plant variety if the repetition is necessary for that purpose. It also includes stocking for the purpose of any other protected acts. The term of the grant of plant breeders' rights would also be increased from 18 years to 20 years, or 25 years in the case of a tree, vine, or any other category listed by the regulations. This also includes a new clause that would grant farmers' privilege. That would allow farmers to save seed and condition seed for purposes of production and reproduction on their own farm. We see that as important. This privilege would not be extended to the storing of seed, or to the sale of harvested material from protected seed.

Bill C-18 would grant CFIA the ability to make changes through regulation to which circumstances and classes of farmers and varieties would not be covered under the farmers' privilege. It would also protect the rights of researchers to use patented materials as the basis for developing a new variety or another research use, and it would enhance the public accessibility to the registry of plant varieties. This is a major change from the previous act.

Government Orders

One of the benefits we see in the bill is that granting farmers' privilege, to allow farmers to save and condition seed for use on their own farms, really would promote access. That is one of the important things for Canadian farmers, especially if we are looking at the results of private breeding research in Canada and other countries through effective intellectual property rights.

This is an important bill for all of us, all parties and all members, to stand up and speak to and debate. Even though I come from what many perceive as a mining community, we do also have some great local producers. I also tip my hat to Eat Local Sudbury, which is doing such a great job of promoting local produce and local foods and making sure that, if we needed to, we could survive on what we are growing in northern Ontario.

I look forward to questions and comments.

• (1020)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, I must recognize that the member did coin an interesting word, "Conservabus". That is a word we might be able to use on several pieces of legislation. It is a valid point in regard to the number of pieces of legislation that would actually be changed within this one piece of legislation. Bill C-18 would amend nine separate pieces of agriculture-related legislation, affecting plant breeders' rights, feed, seed, fertilizer, animal health, plant protection, monetary penalties, agriculture marketing programs, and farm debt mediation. It is a fairly all-encompassing piece of legislation.

Given the members remarks in regard to the importance of our farmers—and I think we underestimate the valuable contribution they make—it would have been more appropriate to have had several pieces of legislation brought in so that the farmers and other stakeholders would have been afforded the opportunity to have more direct input on those aspects of the legislation that are of critical importance to our communities.

I wonder if the member might want to add to that?

Mr. Glenn Thibeault: Mr. Speaker, my little stumble did create a new word that I think we will all be able to use moving forward.

We do not like omnibus bills. We in the opposition would be in agreement that it is important to be able to bring bills forward, have debate, and be able to hear from stakeholders when we get these bills to committee.

We are supporting this to get to committee. However, that is where the support may end, because we need to ensure we are doing what we believe is right for our farmers. I will tip my hat to my hon. colleague from Welland for the work he has been doing with farmers through the Prairies and up in Sudbury. He had the opportunity of meeting with the folks in Sudbury at Eat Local. We need to find ways to ensure that we are helping him with new technology and research. This bill has some of those, but we need to ensure that, once it gets to committee, we are able to see the advancements move forward.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the speech by my friend from Sudbury.

We need to look at Bill C-18 in the larger context of trends. I am concerned with what we have seen happening under this administration, which is a steady trend away from publicly funded research

into new seed varieties. That is how we got canola and Laird lentils. There was public investment in coming up with new varieties of seeds, which were then available to everyone. We are shifting to private breeders only and moving more toward Monsanto and less toward Agriculture Canada.

The Conservatives call it the agricultural growth act. They might as well call it the agriculture concentration of corporate ownership act. I am concerned with the specifics of the bill. I know it will go to committee, because the Conservatives have the votes; but the agricultural community is split on this, and it would help us all if we were to look at the larger question.

Since budget 2012, we have seen a reduction in available funding for public research into better seed varieties, and we see through Bill C-18 the opportunity for the Monsantos of the world to keep collecting royalties over which the farmers would have no say as to how that money is spent.

It is not an agricultural growth act; it is removing the rights of farmers.

• (1025)

Mr. Glenn Thibeault: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague is hitting the nail on the head when it comes to the specifics of the bill. While we do see that there are some positives in this bill, and while there are a few aspects that we think are good, there are many that raise some warning flags for us.

I will talk about my farmers in Sudbury, the folks who are providing the food and the produce to Eat Local Sudbury. These are the folks who we need to ensure can continue to grow and continue to prosper. If what we are seeing in this is the slow elimination of the resources that farmers could utilize and the support of the larger farming corporations, then that is heading in the wrong direction.

I will rely on great MPs like my colleague from Welland, who is working on this file, to make sure we get this right.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am not my party's critic in this area, but I do have an interest in this bill because Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing is a large riding with many farmers. I think that it is important to review the bill and take a look at the laws it will affect.

The bill proposes amendments to laws that the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, the CFIA, is responsible for enforcing. The laws affected are the Plant Breeders' Rights Act, the Feeds Act, the Fertilizers Act, the Seeds Act, the Health of Animals Act, the Plant Protection Act, the Agriculture and Agri-Food Administrative Monetary Penalties Act, the Agricultural Marketing Programs Act and the Farm Debt Mediation Act.

Government Orders

As my colleague said, the government has introduced yet another omnibus bill and is taking an unbalanced approach. When the government combines an omnibus bill with limited debate, it is easy to lose sight of some very important aspects that will negatively impact farmers and producers as well as the government. That is why the government often finds itself before the courts. We have seen this government go to court many times to defend measures it has put in place; it keeps losing. That is not an effective way to be spending the money it collects through our taxes.

When the government wants to introduce legislative measures, instead of wasting taxpayers' money, it should ensure that its legislation will be accepted and do everything in its power to ensure that it is good legislation.

• (1030)

[*English*]

As I said, this piece of legislation in particular would change nine different acts. One of them is the Plant Breeders' Rights Act. There are some positive changes in the bill; however, sometimes we have to see if the benefits actually outweigh the concerns and look at the impact they would have.

This particular piece, amendments to the Plant Breeders' Rights Act, would actually ensure that a variety of developers are able to see a return on investment for their plant breeding research efforts, providing incentives for an important sector of Canadian agribusiness. It would grant farmers' privilege to allow farmers to save and condition seed for use on their own farms, and promote access for Canadian farmers to the results of private breeding research from Canada and other countries through effective intellectual property.

There are a few other benefits we can see: to protect researchers from infringement on plant breeders rights, enhance public accessibility and transparency when it comes to plant breeding, and maintain the existing compulsory licence system, providing some assurances that varieties can be made available at reasonable prices, widely distributed, and kept at high quality.

However, when we look at the concerns that the farmers have raised, we have to take those seriously, and that is why we have a concern. Yes, we want to move this to committee, and yes, we are supportive of having a good debate on this here and making sure that our piece of legislation will be a proper one. However, we have a big question mark when it comes to sending stuff to committee as well. We do not know whether or not the government would be supportive of changes that would actually strengthen the bill, because over and over again we have seen a government that wants to push everything forward and not take any suggestions into account—really good suggestions, changes, and amendments.

Here are the concerns about the amendments to the Plant Breeders' Rights Act. People have raised concerns on this particular piece of legislation and this particular area, even in the riding of Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking. I hear about it in Manitoulin Island and along the Highway 17 corridor, including from people in the agricultural sector in Thessalon.

Here are some of the concerns. There are a few major concerns regarding the clauses on the farmers' privilege. The farmers' privilege does not include the stocking of propagating material for any use.

Even if farmers are able to save seed for the purpose of reproduction, it appears in this legislation that they may have to pay to store it, which would effectively negate the privilege.

Farmers' privilege does not extend to the sale of harvested material. This means that farmers will likely still be required to pay for the sale of the crops grown from farm-saved seed. It also means that plant breeders could potentially generate revenue on a farmers' entire production rather than just on the seed purchased to grow the crop. This could have significant impacts on the profit margin of farmers.

Farmers are already having a tough time, especially when it is not a good season. To add another risk would be very detrimental to them.

Bill C-18 also includes amendments that would allow the CFIA to make changes through regulation, not through legislation, to farmers' privilege. This means that the government could significantly hinder these rights at any time, without parliamentary oversight. We know how the Conservative government is about parliamentary oversight. Obviously it is not very good. We have to take that into consideration.

Allowing for farm-saved seed is an optional exception under UPOV 91, meaning that Canada could disallow farm-saved seed and still fulfill its international obligations under the agreement.

There are other concerns raised here regarding the potential legal burden for producers. The Canadian Federation of Agriculture has called for protections for producers from claims of patent infringement with respect to natural, accidental spreading of patented plant genetic material. However, these protections are not included in Bill C-18.

Given the expansion of plant breeders' rights under Bill C-18, it is likely that farmers will face increases in expensive litigation. As I said before, a lot of these farmers are already experiencing some tough times. If we want to encourage new young folks to take on farming, we need to make sure that there is no such hindrance in place, or we have to limit them.

While our producers may well be on an extremely uneven financial playing field in relation to plant breeders, there are no provisions in Bill C-18 to ensure that legal fees do not impede a farmer's defence in such cases.

Government Orders

Other changes in this bill, as I mentioned, were the amendments to the Agricultural Marketing Programs Act and the advance payments program. Again, there are some benefits, but we also have to look at the concerns. The Canadian Federation of Agriculture has called for an increase to the maximum amount in advances to address rising farm expenses. Unfortunately, such increases are not included in Bill C-18. This is exactly why the government has to be open to amendments.

When we look at the amendments to the Feeds Act, the Fertilizers Act, the Seeds Act, the Health of Animals Act, and the Plant Protection Act, one of the key concerns is that the amendments to the FDMA may require additional resources from Agriculture Canada, as the minister will now be involved in mediation cases. The government has yet to address whether it currently has the resources it needs to fulfill this new duty.

Under Bill C-18, the minister will not be required to review the operations of the FDMA as often. Given that the proposed changes to the FDMA involve an expanded role for the minister in the mediation process, this review period should not be extended.

Again, we cannot ignore some of the significant concerns about the provisions in this bill. I want to finish off by indicating that I think it is important to recognize how important farmers are to our communities and to Canada's food system.

• (1035)

New Democrats believe that farmers must be able to earn a decent living producing quality food for Canadians. That is why the government needs to make sure that when it introduces legislation, it takes the time to listen to the farmers, the opposition parties, and the professionals, whether it is the researchers or the farmers themselves, to make sure we get it right.

Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have to say that Bill C-18 is one of the most sought after pieces of legislation by the agriculture community. I come from farming. I live in a farming riding, which is very diverse. It has livestock, grains and oil seeds, horticulture, and greenhouses, and I have not yet come across any farmers who are not waiting for this bill to get to committee, because it means so much to them.

We have to remember that 45% of breeding rights applications are from public breeders. The rest come together because there is an incredible advantage. We have been able to increase the production level and the quality level of our products. Not only are they public but they bring with them public-private partnerships. That is why the farming community is so interested in this bill and in the flexibility of advance payments and being able to save seeds, which is something that was not there before. We want to make sure that still exists.

I would ask the member if she would encourage everyone to get this bill wrapped up and get it to committee. Does she support that?

Mrs. Carol Hughes: Obviously, Mr. Speaker, the member was not listening. I said that New Democrats are prepared to move it to committee. However, we need to make sure that there is proper debate.

Canadians send us here to be their voices. When we look at this particular bill, we need to make sure we protect Canada's farmers

and public researchers. While we understand the role of intellectual property rights and encouraging innovation, we need to ensure that all Canadians can access and benefit from our agricultural legacy.

We know that the government has tabled many bills that have been problematic, and it has found itself before the court. Will the Conservatives actually allow us to debate this bill properly, bring witnesses to committee and not rush them through, and make the proper amendments, even if those amendments are the bright ideas of the opposition, because that is where they come from?

• (1040)

Mr. Frank Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for her informative comments. She raised some questions in her previous answer about whether the government would do this or that. As a former member of the agriculture committee, I can advise the member that hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars have been cut from public research, particularly on the breeding of seeds. I am truly alarmed by it.

The member for Saanich—Gulf Islands brought to our attention the fact that now we are moving public research away from the public and into private industry. It is clear that the intention of the government is the corporatization of this kind of research, which is enhanced by parts of this bill that basically restrict the right of farmers to keep and save their seeds.

I am wondering, notwithstanding the rhetoric of the government, if the member is as alarmed as I am by the tenor of this bill.

Mrs. Carol Hughes: Mr. Speaker, again I agree that the government's direction might not be the right one, and that is why we need to make sure it goes to committee. However, we need Conservatives to be open-minded. Unfortunately, it has been very difficult to get an open-minded Conservative at committee.

The Conservatives see the summer coming, and they are trying to get as much under their belts as possible, but at what risk? We need to have proper debate on this bill. I can say that people have raised concerns.

[*Translation*]

According to Dominique Bernier of AmiEs de la Terre de Québec, this bill considerably weakens farmers' ancestral rights by forcing them to pay compensation to agro-industrial giants on the entirety of their harvest. However, the marketing of new crop varieties by the big breeders rests on a world heritage, the patient selection, over thousands of years, of crops by succeeding generations of farmers.

Government Orders

We heard from many witnesses on the changes that must be made to this bill, and when it is examined in committee, I hope that the Conservatives will listen to people's concerns and make the necessary improvements to the bill.

Mr. François Lapointe (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in my riding of Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, farming is a long-standing tradition that spans many generations.

The Institut de technologie agroalimentaire, for example, has been teaching young people who want to become farmers about leading-edge technologies in the industry for generations. Biopterre's Bioproducts Development Center, which is extremely successful and innovative, supports companies as they innovate and develop products related to agriculture—

The Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development.

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Strahl: Mr. Speaker, I believe the standing orders clearly indicate that the member should be wearing a tie if he wants to speak in the House.

The Deputy Speaker: Of course, the parliamentary secretary is correct.

[*Translation*]

We are going to wait a few seconds so that the member can put on his tie.

The hon. member for Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup.

• (1045)

Mr. François Lapointe: Mr. Speaker, the Bioproducts Development Center supports companies as they innovate and develop agricultural and agroforestry bioproducts. We are still debating a government bill, but we are all suited up this time. Another gag order has been imposed. The reason why I had to run into the chamber to debate this bill is that no members on the government side want to speak. The only government speakers who are in the House rise on points of order that are rather minor when compared to the importance of the bill that is before us.

On this side of the House, we are debating Bill C-18, An Act to amend certain Acts relating to agriculture and agri-food. This is yet another omnibus bill because it seeks to amend nine laws associated with agriculture. This morning, we heard some relatively good news, and that is that the nine laws that will be amended by the bill all deal with agriculture. With that, the government is taking a step in a more reasonable direction. Previous omnibus bills that addressed elements of this bill were even broader and pertained to areas other than agriculture.

Among other things, this bill protects plant breeders' rights and strengthens border controls. It also expands access to the advance payments program. I will not have time to talk about all nine of the laws amended by this bill so I will focus on just two of them.

I will talk about the amendments to the Plant Breeders' Rights Act. This is probably the most important part of this bill. If this bill is passed, plant breeders will have new exclusive rights. We will

support this bill at second reading. I would like to explain something for those watching on CPAC to ensure they understand the legislative process. Supporting the bill at this stage does not make it law. It will be sent to the relevant committee, which is the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food in this case. MPs who are members of the committee will be able to ask witnesses questions about the bill, and they will be able to convey the main concerns of several farmers' associations in Canada. At third reading, the final voting stage, we will see if we support the bill. We are ready to participate in the committee process at second reading to see if there is a way to turn the material in Bill C-18 into something that will work for Canada's farmers.

This bill talks about new exclusive rights for plant breeders to protect them. These include the right to reproduction, conditioning, sale, export or import, repeated use to produce commercially another plant variety if the repetition is necessary for that purpose, and stocking for the purpose of any of the other protected acts.

The term of the grant of plant breeders' rights has been increased from 18 to 20 years, or 20 years in the case of trees, vines and other categories listed by the regulations.

I will be consulting with my constituents about this. In my riding, there is an organization called the UPA de la Côte-du-Sud, which knows these amendments and is 100 years old too. I will be sure to find out how these people and the people at Biopterre see this bill. They might like the fact that the patent is a little stronger. I will be talking to them before we get to third reading of Bill C-18.

There is one thing that I find interesting. A new provision gives farmers a privilege, in that they can save seeds and condition them to produce and reproduce plants on their farms. If that is properly presented, it might be a good thing. Selecting seeds is an ancient occupation, but it is recognized as being a trade. Someone who naturally encourages the genetics of a wheat or barley plant to improve it is carrying on a trade that has been recognized since the 19th century. There is a long history there that dates back to well before people started talking about intellectual rights and living product rights. This has been around for a very long time. We need to thoroughly and carefully consider the potential impact of this legislation on thousands of years of tradition and acquired rights for producers who must not be affected by our decisions.

• (1050)

This point may seem worthwhile. It is a provision that gives farmers a privilege, in that they will be able to save seeds and condition them in order to produce and reproduce plants. It gives them rights so that they can continue that tradition.

We will protect the rights of researchers to use patented materials to develop new varieties or do other research. We are getting into Biopterre territory. This may be good for people from my region and for the industry in general.

Government Orders

The increased public access to the registry of plant varieties is a major change from previous suggestions. We need to ensure that with all these changes, access to these great innovations will still be easy. We do not want to end up with monster over-regulated industries because the rights holders would make agricultural production extremely difficult.

As currently drafted, the bill nevertheless has some advantages in that regard. It would ensure that those responsible for developing varieties will profit from their investment in research. Once again, I am thinking of Biopterre. That is an encouraging element for an important agri-food sector in Canada that is innovative and conducts research. The bill would also maintain a compulsory licence system, providing some assurance that varieties are available at reasonable prices, are widely distributed and maintain high quality.

There is one further point that concerns the notion of high quality. People must not be able to claim, even indirectly, that they have created a new category or new species when it is on all accounts similar to what already exists. That would lead to a producer being prosecuted for the use of a species that already exists. We must do our due diligence with this element to prevent such a disastrous scenario from occurring.

Innovations must be easily accessible, but not to the extent that they can be used in an underhanded way to impose fees on existing species and varieties. There is a very delicate balance to be struck and we must be very careful about that.

There are concerns. This privilege does not include the stocking of propagating material for any use. Even if farmers are able to save seed for the purpose of reproduction, it appears they may have to pay to store it. The bill does not resolve this issue. An individual can store seeds and use them the following year, and even help with natural selection to improve the variety. However, will the breeder of this variety be able to charge that person for keeping seeds in his possession? This is another issue that must be examined.

I must speak to another of the nine laws that are affected by the changes in this bill. It is a law that is very important to the people in my region.

There will be amendments to the Agricultural Marketing Programs Act and the advance payments program, or APP. The APP is a loan guarantee program that gives producers easier access to credit through cash advances.

I question this aspect of the bill. Pork producers in my region have had a great deal of difficulty. The pork industry in Quebec has gone through years of tough times. The APP was one of the programs that supported pork producers. The terms imposed on the producers under this program were quite rigid when it came time to settle the many bankruptcies. If I understand the reasoning behind this bill correctly, not only would it be easier to access the APP, but the conditions of payment would be more flexible. If that is the case, that is an excellent idea. This is very important for businesses that run into difficulties from time to time, as was the case for the pork producers in my region for far too many years.

[*English*]

Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my riding of Lambton—Kent—Middlesex is an agricultural

riding. I met with my constituents and made part of the announcement when Bill C-18 was tabled. I have had the opportunity to talk to the commodity, fertilizer and livestock people because of their involvement in the advanced payment component of the bill. Of the farm organizations, only one has not yet come on side.

Agriculture in Ontario has had some blips in the beef and pork sectors, which we know about, but one should never take the notion that agriculture is not a significant industry for our economy.

How much dialogue has the member had with the farmers, the commodity people, and the organizations in his riding, so we can get this, in a positive attitude, to our committee?

• (1055)

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Lapointe: Mr. Speaker, back home in recent years, we have been busy with our communications and dialogue with various groups like UPA and Biopterre, which have a vested interest in the farming industry.

Pressing matters had to do with what was happening in the discussions with the European Union and the bilateral trade.

There was a lot of concern among the producers, dairy processors and fine cheese producers. The bulk of our work and the public's reaction back home had to do with files like those and the APP, which I was just talking about.

As I was saying in my speech, I can sense just as much concern among some of the UPA producers. I will have more meetings with them to see if we can come up with some constructive contributions for the upcoming discussions between second reading and third reading. It would be my pleasure.

I also want to point out that people like those at Biopterre and the innovation centre will certainly be interested in this bill. I will connect with all these people, and we will try to adopt a constructive approach.

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by congratulating my colleague on his fine speech.

This bill is extremely important for Canada and Quebec. As deputy critic in this area and together with the member for Welland, I launched a number of consultations on Bill C-18. All we keep hearing are concerns. A number of members have tabled petitions in the House on issues related to Bill C-18. It is really important that this bill be sent to committee.

I would like my colleague to elaborate on the importance of a long-term vision for agriculture and the fact that the NDP is the only party with a Canada-wide agriculture platform and a more balanced approach to agriculture. We know that agriculture represents one in eight jobs.

Mr. François Lapointe: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, who works very hard on agricultural issues and who is very appreciated by the industry.

Government Orders

The Canadian Federation of Agriculture has called for protections for producers from claims of patent infringement with respect to natural or accidental spreading of a patented plant genetic material. This example is along the lines of what my colleague said. These are extremely sensitive issues that can lead to serious consequences if they are not resolved and if there is no long-term vision. In some cases, major seed producers have sued people who partially and inadvertently grew protected sprouts in their fields.

We can see the terrible mess producers could end up in if these issues are not cleared up and if producers, not just rights holders, are not well protected by our future decisions.

• (1100)

[*English*]

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure I rise today to address Bill C-18, the most recent omnibus bill from the Conservatives. They seem to have grown somewhat addicted to this particular way of doing business, of writing legislation that encompasses many laws all in one bill. It is a kitchen sink approach to writing legislation in government. In their previous incarnation in opposition, they had some sort of ethic around democracy and accountability in the process of law and they questioned this approach significantly when Liberals did the same thing.

This omnibus bill is certainly not the worst. It only affects nine different pieces of Canadian law at once. Some might say that is a lot, but we have to see that in comparison to the massive omnibus bills the Conservatives have introduced, which sometimes affected upwards of 50 or 60 different Canadian laws all at the same time.

It is a challenge for those not familiar with parliamentary business, and why should they be? It is a technical and complicated thing. The challenge for parliamentarians from all sides is that our primary job here in this place is to analyze and dissect bills as well as we are able in order to understand what is being presented and what the impacts are likely to be.

We can never know fully what the impacts of any piece of legislation might be once it applies in the real world, since once the civil servants and industry get hold of it, there is a to and fro. However, as parliamentarians we can at least try to do our best to anticipate, by hearing the best advice from witnesses and experts who do know things like the farming industry much better than most members of Parliament. We can hear their input, bring the legislation into effect, and go through a process.

The challenge we have had with the current government is twofold. One is that the Conservatives tend to use the technique they are using here today, an omnibus bill that addresses several or many laws at once. In this case it is nine different laws at once, and separating them is incredibly difficult.

The second challenge is that the Conservatives have grown quite addicted to a technique called time allocation. What that means is that rather than negotiating with the opposition to decide how many days of debate a certain piece of legislation might get, the government invokes and enforces the shutting down of debate even as the bill is being introduced.

This is the most common tendency we see now from the Conservatives. They introduce a new bill, and before anybody in the place other than the minister has cracked a single page, they then follow the introduction of that bill with a technique called time allocation, which means debate will then be shut down.

The Conservatives do not just shut down debate at one stage. As we all know, bills go through several stages of debate, but the Conservatives shut it down at every single stage. They shut down debate again and again.

This has two effects on what happens in Parliament. One is it limits the number of MPs who can speak to a bill and understand what is being presented. I and all of my colleagues find that one of the best ways to understand a bill is to compose a 10-minute or 20-minute speech on it or to study it at committee. We consult with our constituents and hear from experts in order to form up what we will say.

The second thing is that it breeds a natural suspicion, a suspicion the Conservatives used to feel when Liberals did the same thing. When Liberals used time allocation and closure to shut down debate, Conservatives said the Liberals were doing so because they had bad legislation that they did not want the public to fully understand.

I think the Conservatives have now applied this technique over 70 times since the last election, which is breaking all the records set by any government in Canadian history. They do it even on bills like this one, bills that the official opposition has said it would support to second reading. Throughout Canadian history, the natural consequence of being assured of that support is that the government, as a next step, would sit down with the opposition and essentially negotiate. Acknowledging that the opposition wanted to see the bill pass second reading and go to committee stage, the Conservatives would ask approximately how many speakers the opposition wanted to have speak to the bill. That is because every party has a certain number of requirements. Each party has certain members from certain agricultural districts, as is applicable in this case, and those members need to speak to the bill. It is perfect common sense and it is required of Parliament.

Instead, the Conservatives have been invoking time allocation right away. It builds suspicion and opposition from New Democrats and from others, as it did when Conservatives were in opposition, so they know exactly what this feels like, but they do it anyway.

Let us get to the merits and the demerits of the bill itself.

Bill C-18 is attempting to strike a difficult balance on the rights of plant breeders. Plant breeders innovate and develop new seeds, new technologies, and new approaches to farming, growing, and raising food in Canada. It is an incredibly important endeavour, because innovation has always been at the heart of agriculture. In Canada we have had incredible experience and success in innovation, not only in breeding livestock but also in developing plant varieties that are more weather resistant and require less water and less fertilizer. All of that is incredibly important.

Government Orders

●(1105)

Protecting intellectual property rights is important for us as New Democrats because it would provide a shield over those who innovate, protecting them so that they would have some benefit from their innovation. Many regimes in the world have very low standards of intellectual property. China is constantly struggling with this problem, and India as well. If we have very little protection, innovators are not encouraged, and if the innovators are not encouraged, they do not innovate, because it is often very expensive for innovators to test and retest until they achieve something that the market will actually reward.

On the other side of the balance we have farmers' rights, which are incredibly important as well. Farmers are raising some legitimate concerns, and I hope my Conservative colleagues across the way recognize the legitimacy of those concerns. If the balance is placed too far on the side of the intellectual property regime, on the side of those doing the innovating, and as a result farmers pay more or pay in ways that hurt their ability to make an income, it is a significant and valid concern. If farmers have to pay to store seeds or to replant seeds that they have kept from the previous harvest, those are legitimate concerns.

As we know, the farming community is not a unified body. There are obviously many different types of people working in the farming industry, growing and raising different types of crops and cattle and livestock, yet there are great divisions within that farming community in prosperity. Some farmers have extraordinarily large farms that are very profitable, both on the livestock side and on the plant side, on the pulses and grains and whatnot. Other farmers are more on the margin and are just trying to make it. They are in niche markets, with smaller farms that are servicing a nearly urban economy. Those farms may be affected by this bill in disproportionate ways.

Therefore, New Democrats are seeking to get the balance right. In supporting the bill at second reading, we are saying we have some concerns over the new powers of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency around regulating and licensing. While those new powers might be quite needed for the innovative farm industry that we want to continue to grow, there are no resources attached to it. The CFIA has had massive cutbacks over the year. It is a department that has seen multiple rounds of cutbacks to its ability to deliver services to farmers and Canadians. The government is going to give it new powers and responsibilities, so one of our legitimate questions for the government is whether, with the new powers and the new work that will be required, the government is attaching any more resources or any new people to do the work.

We do not want to create these new powers and give farmers hope that this, this, and this program are now going to be a part of reality, and then not have anybody in the department actually assigned to do it. That is a false hope, and too often what we have seen from the current government is false hope.

I speak to the bill as a representative of the riding I represent in northwestern British Columbia, Skeena—Bulkley Valley, which incorporates a great variety of people in the agricultural industry. It does not include the full sweep that we see in some of the ridings around Canada, the so-called mega-farms, but we have very large

agricultural operations, those growing the pulses and seeds side of things, as well as an extensive and diversified group of farmers who are raising cattle, pig, sheep, and whatnot, who are occupying this conversation in completely different ways.

We have a growing and extensive local farmers' market system in the northwest, which is incredibly important, because regions like mine are very far from some of the high-production areas of the country. As a result, food security is an enormous issue for us because of the great distances, the impacts of climate change, and the need to move food farther to the consumer. We know that the average bushel of produce is moving farther afield. That has serious food security questions, because we have a system that is called "just-in-time delivery". Many of our retailers depend on food that has to be ready and delivered just in time for the consumer to buy. That creates, unfortunately, a certain level of food insecurity.

The farming community is enormous in Canada. It contributes more than \$100 billion to the GDP. One in eight workers going to work this morning went to work in the agricultural sector. In scale it dwarfs many of the other sectors of our industry that get a lot of attention, so it is good that the government is paying this amount of attention.

There are other aspects of the bill that we quite favour. We are raising concerns because we think it is our job. We are raising concerns because that is what Canadians want us to do. In such an important industry in Canada, getting the balance right by allowing for the innovators to innovate while allowing for farmers to earn a living as they feed over 35 million Canadians seems to us a worthwhile cause and an exercise worth doing.

●(1110)

We look forward to the debate at committee. We hope that for once the government will be open to amendments based on the information and the expert testimony that we hear. That would be a welcome relief, as the government so often rejects all science and evidence that comes before us. It is something we think is possible, because hope springs eternal. We believe we can make this bill better than it is right now. We believe we can make it one that an even broader number of Canadians and Canadian farmers can support.

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I enjoyed the member's well-thought-out remarks, and he is absolutely right: this has been a government of reckless decisions, especially when it comes to agriculture. We now know that there has been a \$5 billion loss in sales through the Canadian Wheat Board changes and that the farmer's share of the export dollar has dropped dramatically while the grain companies take excessive profits. The new government-controlled Canadian Wheat Board was supposed to report its financial condition on March 31; that has not been seen yet. We have to wonder what the government is hiding.

We know the Conservatives cut AgriStability in just about half. They cut AgriInvest in terms of the amount of investment that producers could put in. They have cut public researchers dramatically. The list goes on and on.

Government Orders

The member talked about finding the balance. I would say the government's record in terms of abuse of the farm community is about the worst of any government in Canadian history. Given that record, how can we trust that the government will not maintain the balance of power on the corporate side of things and give the corporate sector the rights to seed reproduction, while providing farmers merely with the privilege? What farmers need is the right to retain seed and to reproduce it.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that the new Liberal Party is suddenly very suspicious of corporate Canada. It is an interesting conversation to have.

I suppose I am remembering some lessons from Sundays, one of which is to hate the sin, not the sinner. While we have deep trouble with the way the Conservatives have moved a series of bills through the House while ignoring expert testimony, we see some initiatives within this bill that are highly supported by farmers. I did not get to mention the advance payments program in my speech. We know the expansion of that program would help farmers. It would allow more types of farmers to get into the advance payments program. In my area, the so-called part-time farmers, those who have to seek income off-farm, will now be encouraged to be in this program. That helps the cashflow and investments that farmers need over the year.

To the specific question regarding the balance between the rights of farmers and the corporate rights of those who develop seeds and innovate, we do not think the exact balance we are seeking to achieve has been established in this bill.

Obviously, we do not trust the government. I do not think anyone doubts the resolve and determination of the New Democrats in standing up to the government. The challenge is that when omnibus legislation comes through, we do not get to pick and choose, so all we can do is encourage the good initiatives, discourage the bad, and try to amend them at committee. If the Conservatives refuse those amendments, if they are determined to ignore all of the witnesses and the experts we hear, as they so often do, then we will have to reconsider our position coming out of committee and going into third reading.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a rather simple question for my colleague, who likely remembers the history of agriculture.

The topic of seeds is a very sensitive one. Since humans have participated in agriculture, producers have held the historic right to save their seed.

We definitely want this bill to be studied at second reading. However, we are concerned about the fact that farmers could be held responsible if their fields are contaminated because of the existence of seed registration, where a company owns the intellectual property rights to a seed. They are not personally responsible, but they could ultimately end up being legally responsible.

I remind members of the case of Percy Schmeiser, who was accused by Monsanto. The case made it all the way to the Supreme Court and Mr. Schmeiser had to compensate Monsanto for the contamination of his field, even though he had not planted those seeds.

I would like to hear what my colleague thinks about that situation, about the scope of the bill and about what potential impact it could have on similar situations.

• (1115)

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Mr. Speaker, farmers must absolutely retain their historic right to their seed.

The problem now between farmers and people who invent and create new seeds is a matter of rights. The government is giving rights to the companies, but what about farmers' rights? They are in no way equivalent.

We will keep and protect our farmers' rights. At the same time, we will try to keep the portions of the bill that improve the lives of Canadian farmers.

The Deputy Speaker: Order. It being 11:17 a.m., pursuant to an order adopted Wednesday, June 4, 2014, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill now before the House.

[*English*]

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

The Deputy Speaker: The motion is carried on division. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food.

(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

* * *

SAFEGUARDING CANADA'S SEAS AND SKIES ACT

The House resumed from May 8 consideration of the motion that Bill C-3, An Act to enact the Aviation Industry Indemnity Act, to amend the Aeronautics Act, the Canada Marine Act, the Marine Liability Act and the Canada Shipping Act, 2001 and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the third time and passed.

The Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate. The hon. member for Surrey North had five minutes left for questions and comments.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing.

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when we are looking at the bill, we know there are still some concerns. We see that this is a bill that certainly goes in the right direction. However, because there has been a gap of time here, maybe my colleague can refresh our memories with respect to some of the concerns we see with this particular piece of legislation.

Government Orders

Mr. Jasbir Sandhu (Surrey North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the bill would actually make very modest improvements to our marine safety issues, which are particularly important to British Columbia. Off the west coast of British Columbia, we have pristine waters that provide a lot of jobs for local communities throughout the coast, and we also have a large tourism industry that depends on navigation through those waters in northern British Columbia and along the coast in southern British Columbia.

If the government truly wanted to improve marine traffic safety in British Columbia, it would be looking at a number of improvements to which the Conservatives have actually cut funding; for example, the Kitsilano Coast Guard, environmental regulations, and emergency response programs not only in British Columbia but on the east coast of Canada as well.

Therefore, even though the Conservatives pretend that the bill would improve the safety of our marine life off the coast, it does not go far enough.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I want to refer to my hon. colleague's point about the bill making modest improvements. The bill would put into legislative form changes that have been anticipated for quite a while due to international agreements for liability in relation to maritime incidents.

However, I find that one of the more amusing things about the bill is the title, that it would somehow be safeguarding our skies. Perhaps the hon. member can refer to legislation, but as I recall, the only thing in Bill C-3 about the skies is changes to the Aeronautics Act, which are purely procedural and have absolutely nothing to do with environment, pollution, or anything one might conjure up with a notion of safeguarding our skies. It is hyperbole masking as a legislative title.

• (1120)

Mr. Jasbir Sandhu: Mr. Speaker, I have to give one thing to the Conservatives. They come out with these wonderful titles for bills that have nothing to do with the actual bill itself. I want to note the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands's keen eye to the title of the bill.

I have trouble with the bill. I will share a story about my children. I have a seven-year-old son and an eighteen-year-old daughter. My son makes a huge mess in the living room, but he wants his sister to clean it up. His sister tells their mom that she is not cleaning it up: it is his mess and he should clean it up. After some discussion, seven-year-old Jaron agrees to clean up the mess.

The problem with the bill is that the Conservatives believe that if there is an oil spill or a hazardous material spill, there is not enough liability attached to it. They believe that taxpayers should be cleaning it up. It should be the people who make the spill who clean it up. A seven-year-old understands that. Conservatives do not understand that. They have gutted the environmental regulations. Obviously they want us to clean that up. I can assure members that we will do that in 2015.

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan (Scarborough—Rouge River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is great to speak to Bill C-3 today. I will be sharing my time this morning with the fabulous member of Parliament for Parkdale—High Park. She deserves a round of applause.

This legislation seeks to enact the Aviation Industry Indemnity Act and make changes to many different pieces of existing legislation, such as the Aeronautics Act, the Canada Marine Act, the Marine Liability Act, and the Canada Shipping Act, 2001.

Right now we are debating Bill C-3 at third reading. I want to mention at the outset that the NDP will be supporting the bill at third reading because, as my hon. colleague before me mentioned briefly in his response to questions, it would make marginal improvements to the situation we have at hand.

However, I must also note that during the committee study of the bill, amendments were proposed that came from suggestions from witness testimony at committee. The NDP moved seven amendments and the Green Party moved three. All 10 of the amendments that were put forward, based on expert testimony, were refused by the Conservative majority on the committee. Even though Bill C-3 would make modest improvements, even better improvements could have been made, and were put forward, but Conservatives on the committee made sure they did not pass.

Just briefly, I want to mention a couple of the general themes of the amendments we proposed.

One of the amendments required the Minister of National Defence to publish all reports from the studies of the disasters that happened, rather than keeping them as internal documents.

Another amendment was with regard to extending the ship-source oil pollution fund, the SOPF, to non-oil spills that could pollute our waters. Conservative members chose not to support that.

Bill C-3 was formerly Bill C-57, which was tabled in March 2013. That legislation died on the order paper when that session of Parliament was prorogued.

Bill C-3 appears to be part of a concerted effort by the Conservatives to correct their lack of credibility in areas of transport safety, particularly oil tanker traffic on the west coast, in face of the mounting opposition we are seeing across the country to the Northern Gateway pipeline, which was originally proposed in 2006.

I think the real reason why the government is finally pushing on this issue is that the bill would implement the International Convention on Liability and Compensation for Damage in Connection with the Carriage of Hazardous and Noxious Substances by Sea, 2010, to which Canada is a signatory. The convention has not been implemented yet, so this legislation would allow for its implementation.

New Democrats believe that Canadian taxpayers should not be on the hook for the cleanup costs and damage that follow a spill of hazardous and noxious substances. In consequence, we have proposed that damages from a hazardous and noxious substance spill exceeding \$500 million liability should not be paid by taxpayers. They should be covered by the SOPF, the ship-source oil pollution fund. Polluters should be responsible for the cleanup of oil spills, rather than taxpayers across the country.

Government Orders

Part 2 of the bill would give the military the AIA, which is the airworthiness investigative authority, the traditional Transportation Safety Board investigatory powers in the event of an aviation accident involving the military.

● (1125)

For example, if the military exclusively investigates a defined military-civilian accident, the Transportation Safety Board is no longer involved. The military investigator only reports the results of that investigation to the Minister of National Defence. Canadians do not know what is in the report, in the investigation or the outcome of that report. The New Democrats feel that our operations need to be far more transparent. One of the amendments we had put forward was to make these reports public, rather than them only being given to the Minister of National Defence. Canadians should know what is in those reports.

Other measures that the New Democrats wanted to see in a bill to safeguard Canada's seas included: reversing the Coast Guard closures and the scaling back of the services included in the closure of the Kitsilano Coast Guard station; cancelling the closure of B.C.'s regional office for emergency oil spill responders; cancelling the cuts to Canada's Centre for Offshore Oil, Gas and Energy Research; and reversing the cuts to key environmental emergency programs, including oil spill response for Newfoundland and Labrador and British Columbia. We put forward many other suggestions to reverse many of the cuts put forward by the Conservative government that decreased safety on our coastlines and in Canadian waters. Many of these amendments were not accepted by the Conservatives on the transportation, infrastructure and communities committee.

We are now left with Bill C-3, which is, as I said at the outset, a marginal improvement, but not the best it could be. However, we do support the bill at third reading.

The two pieces that we really pushed for in committee were to not have Canadian taxpayers on the hook for large-scale hazardous and noxious substance spills. It should have been the polluters. The second piece was that there needed to be increased transparency regarding investigations and the reports that would come out of those investigations. We know how the Conservatives are with respect to transparency and accountability, so I will not go too much into repeating the fact that the government likes to keep things secretive and does not like telling Canadians what it is going on.

The context of Bill C-3 focuses on administrative organization, but lacks in actual environmental improvements. Ben West from ForestEthics Advocacy said of continuing on this path of safety cuts and emergency response closures, "...we have actually been aggressively moving in the wrong direction on this file." I am concerned because this may have been on the topic of forest or coastline safety in British Columbia, which has a high level of tanker traffic.

My constituency of Scarborough—Rouge River is home to the Rouge Park. The government just introduced legislation in the House to create it as Canada's first urban national park. We are consistently seeing actions by the government that are moving away from forest safety and not ensuring the viability and long-term sustainability of our forests. Rouge Park is a grand forest that was created by community activists, including me. In the spring we go

out and plant trees and bushes and in the fall we remove invasive species to ensure that our park, the people's park, will thrive and be a large, successful park.

It is great that the Conservatives have finally come on board, 35 years after the community and local activists started to work on this park, to make it a national park. However, we need to ensure that it is done in a sustainable way where we protect and respect the existing legislation and greenbelt protection measures. We also need to talk to the local first nations communities that have sacred burial grounds and a village there. We also need to talk to the local community activists who work on the ground in the community.

● (1130)

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I greatly appreciate my colleague's speech on this very important issue. Again, the bill would change five different acts. Would my colleague like to comment on what happens when we have omnibus bills such as this one?

The other thing I would like her to comment on is with respect to the environmental movements, such as the first nations that have been voicing their concerns on this. We have seen fisheries organizations, community organizations, even the tourism industry voice their opinions on this. A lot of them have a lot of knowledge and have done a lot of research on this.

We often hear the government say that it is willing to work with willing partners. Well, these are willing partners, albeit they have a different opinion than the government at times. However, everyone at the same time wants to see a sound bill and one that would benefit not just the industry but the safety of Canadians as a whole.

The member mentioned who would be on the hook in certain areas. Does she think that Bill C-3 addresses the needs and concerns of the communities I mentioned, especially when we look at first nations, the fishing industry and the tourism industry?

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan: Mr. Speaker, one of the member's question was about the government's continuous use of omnibus bills. As she mentioned, Bill C-3 proposes changes to many different acts. This is a constant behaviour we see with the government. It likes to jam many changes, some that may not even be related, into one bill. People do not necessarily see all those changes because there are far too many.

I only had 10 minutes to speak about these things. If I wanted to speak about all the changes that would happen, I would probably need three hours at least. We know very well, I do not have that time. What happens is important issues get overlooked because we have to prioritize and speak to what we can.

Government Orders

With respect to her second question, especially about first nations and fishing communities, I talked about the importance of preserving a way of life and the forests. I have a sacred burial ground of the Mississauga Huron-Wendat First Nation in my constituency of Scarborough—Rouge River. I want to ensure that it and the people's ways of life are protected, whether it is fishing, hunting, or whatever it may be.

● (1135)

Mr. John Carmichael (Don Valley West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting when the NDP members talk about omnibus bills. They love to chat about that in the opposition. The reality is that the bills they are referring to were first enacted in 2001. When a new bill like this is brought forward, it is only responsible and good government that would draw those other bills into play to ensure everything is brought current.

Could my hon. colleague address some of the issues that came forward in the new bill and specifically talk to a number of things such as: increased tanker inspections, which have been updated; expanded aerial patrols off our coasts; increased satellite protection; support of the Canadian Coast Guard to adopt an internationally recognized incident command system; and conducting groundbreaking research? Could she comment on some of the things that make the bill a really strong initiative put forward by the government?

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan: Mr. Speaker, yes, there are some things in the bill that are positive. That is why we will support the bill at third reading. It does make marginal improvements. However, we need to reverse the cuts to the Coast Guard at the Kitsilano Coast Guard station. We need to cancel the closure of the B.C. regional office for emergency oil-spills responders. We need to cancel the cuts to Canada's offshore oil and gas research centre. We need to reverse the cuts to the environmental emergency program. We need to reverse—

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Resuming debate, the hon. member for Parkdale—High Park.

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in starting my remarks, I would definitely like to thank my fabulous colleague from Scarborough—Rouge River for her remarks and for the great representation she provides for the constituents of Scarborough—Rouge River.

I am happy to participate in the debate on Bill C-3, An Act to enact the Aviation Industry Indemnity Act, to amend the Aeronautics Act, the Canada Marine Act, the Marine Liability Act and the Canada Shipping Act, 2001 and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

As folks can well imagine, it does make a number of changes to a number of pieces of legislation. As my colleague has said, the NDP will be supporting this bill at third reading because it does make modest improvements to the existing legislation, although we did make some proposed amendments to the bill, which we thought would strengthen it significantly. Unfortunately, the government was not open to those amendments.

Let me just briefly describe what the bill proposes to do.

Part 1 would enact the Aviation Industry Indemnity Act to indemnify the aviation industry for the cost of damages in the event

of what they call “interferences” for things like armed conflict or an attack, things that normally would be outside the normal operation of the aviation industry, a crisis of some kind.

Part 2 would amend the Aeronautics Act to provide the Airworthiness Investigative Authority with the powers to investigate aviation accidents or incidents involving civilians and aircraft or aeronautical installations operated by or on behalf of the Department of National Defence, the Canadian Forces or a visiting force.

Part 3 would amend the Canada Marine Act in relation to the effective day of the appointment of a director of the Port Authority.

Part 4 would amend the Marine Liability Act to implement, in Canada, the International Convention on Liability and Compensation for Damage in Connection with the Carriage of Hazardous and Noxious Substances by Sea. That is a 2010 convention which basically establishes a liability scheme to compensate victims in the event of a spill of hazardous or noxious substances. It puts a limit to that liability, which the act details.

Part 5 would introduce requirements for operators of oil handling facilities, including the requirement to notify the minister of their operations and to submit plans to the minister.

The NDP supports this bill, but we believe there should not be a limit to the liability. We do not believe Canadians should be on the hook for clean-up costs and damages following a spill of hazardous or noxious substances.

The Conservatives have even refused reasonable amendments that would increase the liability. Canadians would ultimately be on the hook if the damages exceeded that liability.

Basically, the New Democrats are committed to preventing any spills on our coasts whatsoever. We want to ensure that we have an effective Coast Guard and that we have effective environmental precautions so our coasts are protected. We do question the government when it takes actions like closing down B.C.'s oil spill response centre. If we want to make the coasts safer, why would we close down the oil spill response centre? Shutting down the Kitsilano Coast Guard station and gutting environmental emergency response programs, these do not sound like the actions of a government that has the interests of the safety of Canadians as its priority.

● (1140)

However, as I said, there are some positive parts of this bill. The required pilotage and increased surveillance is a small step in the right direction, but the bill is very limited in its scope. New Democrats believe that the government needs to reverse the effects of the drastic cuts of last year's budget on tanker safety to really be effective.

If we are talking about tanker safety, let us take a look at some of the more recent statistics. Tanker traffic has increased dramatically and, therefore, has created an increased risk of an oil spill in Canadian waters. The federal government decreases marine communication traffic centres and environmental emergency programs even though estimates state that oil tanker traffic has already tripled between 2005 and 2010 and that oil tanker traffic is planned to triple again by 2016. Therefore, we are seeing dramatically increased oil tanker traffic, which would require stronger measures by the government.

Proposed pipeline expansion projects would increase crude deliveries from 300,000 to 700,000 barrels per day. We are seeing a tremendous increase in traffic and we should have the strongest precautionary measures possible. One of the precautionary measures is to ensure that the polluter pays, so that if there is a spill or a problem, which hopefully there is not and something we can prevent, the polluter pays for the damage caused.

We know what the government's record is when it comes to environmental protection. We have seen in omnibus budget bill after omnibus budget bill the extent of the cuts, such as the gutting of environmental protections and the changes to the Navigable Waters Protection Act. A major urban heritage river, the Humber River, runs through my riding of Parkdale—High Park. It is truly a national treasure, which is why it was deemed to be a heritage river. It has been delisted from the Navigable Waters Protection Act, all except the very mouth of the river. That is of great concern to conservationists, biologists, and the community at large. New Democrats are trying to get that river and many other rivers put back under the protection of the Navigable Waters Protection Act.

The government is also making changes in aviation safety, which is one of the issues addressed in this bill. In my riding of Parkdale—High Park it is home to many flight attendants and pilots, people who work in the aviation industry. One of the issues that is of great concern to them is the number of flight attendants on aircraft. We all remember, at least in Toronto we all remember, back in 2005 when Air France flight 358 crashed at Toronto Pearson International Airport. It was a horrific crash. When people first saw the smoke and fire, they wondered whether anyone would survive, but the full complement of cabin crew managed to evacuate all the passengers from that burning aircraft in less than 90 seconds. Talk about professionalism and dedication. They were exemplary.

We know from the history of aviation accidents that having more flight attendants positioned at emergency exits improves every passenger's chance of escaping and surviving in the event of an aircraft accident. We have seen the government previously attempt to reduce the number of flight attendants on aircraft. Right now, the ratio is 1:40. It is trying to reduce that by 25% and increase it to 1:50. I believe that is fundamentally wrong and it could be very dangerous for the travelling public.

While New Democrats support this bill, we have many other concerns about public safety and environmental protection. Frankly, the scope of the changes in this bill are very limited.

• (1145)

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I spoke to this bill at an earlier stage. It is clear that, in many respects,

Government Orders

this bill has a piecemeal or what we might even describe as an incoherent approach to transportation safety policy in Canada.

At the transportation committee, of which I am vice-chair, we are seized right now, for example, with the whole question of safety management systems, rail safety, and other important foundational issues. We could describe this bill as a technical amendment bill, as it would amend so many statutes.

Underlying all of these, if we look at the public accounts, the important thing for Canadians to remember is the money, because they are wise and they know that they should follow the money. When we look at the money, which underpins transportation safety in Canada, the last set of public accounts that were rendered public are conclusive in that they are all being cut. The only area that is not being cut, with a marginal increase, is rail safety. However, road safety is being cut, marine safety is being cut, and air safety is being cut.

Could the member help us understand how the government can, frankly, have the audacity to describe this as the safeguarding Canada's seas and skies act when, if we look at the money that underpins the audits, the inspection, the enforcement, and the follow-up, everything but rail safety is actually being cut?

Ms. Peggy Nash: Mr. Speaker, I do agree that we need to follow the money.

It is evident to those of us on this side of the House that the government's number one job seems to be to reduce the size of government. When it comes to public safety, that is not a good thing. Surely, a basic responsibility of government is to protect public safety. Whether it is our roads, our skies, our seas, or our rail, that is a fundamental responsibility of government.

My colleague referred to safety management systems. That jargon hides the fact that what they basically do is cut back on government inspectors, the people who go in and visit workplaces, and check up on the trucks on our roads and the trains on our rails. It turns much of the safety responsibility over to the employer. It is a competitive economy and people in business obviously want to make money and get business. They try to cut costs. Making businesses responsible for safety is a contradiction. We need independent government inspections.

Government Orders

I will just say one last thing. In my community of Parkdale—High Park, we are surrounded by railway lines, and we see hundreds of DOT-111 tank cars rolling through our community. People do not know what is in those cars. They do not know what precautions are in place. They do not know that safety inspections have taken place. They are kept in the dark. It is about time that we let some light in and increase public safety by letting Canadians know what is in these tank cars, and reassuring them that we have inspectors from the government who are going in and conducting the inspections to make sure that public safety is the number one priority.

● (1150)

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is with some pleasure that I rise to debate Bill C-3 today. I want to underline the fact that it is today because as many Canadians would know, it is also today that the federal government will make its long awaited announcement on the Enbridge northern gateway project at some point this afternoon.

This was a decision and a burden that the Conservative government and the Prime Minister gave to themselves. Previously in Canadian law, any such decisions of this scope and magnitude were handled entirely by the National Energy Board, an organization that was meant to be arm's-length from government and was tasked with promoting energy exports. Some would offer that it might be a challenge or a conflict of interest at times because it is a panel that is tasked with promoting exports and encouraging that to happen, but is also playing the role of watchdog and protecting the public's interests. Sometimes, such as in this case, that has been challenging.

Today by midnight tonight is when the government has to make the decision on Enbridge northern gateway. The government has lost so much faith with the public when it comes to oil spills and the maintenance of the oil industry. My Conservative colleagues can chuckle, but the unfortunate thing is they are entitled to those opinions and not their own facts. The facts state that Canadian public support for transit of oil through pipeline and rail has dropped dramatically since the government took office.

One might ask why that is. I suppose Conservatives, from a particularly cynical line of political thought, thought that they could sort of pull one over on the public, that the public would not notice if the Conservatives since taking office have systematically undermined and downgraded environmental protection laws in Canada, have systematically taken out the major pieces of protection that Canadians have enjoyed for many years rather than enhance them.

Over the last number of weeks we have seen the Conservatives on a pipeline and supertanker charm offensive on both coasts, but particularly on the west coast, where Conservative minister after minister is swooping in to show the public that suddenly they are very concerned with oil spills and with protecting the public. I would argue that it is important to know the government by its actions, not by its words. If we judged the Conservatives by their actions, we would come to a very clear and concise opinion about who they think is really important.

I can say that the oil lobby is particularly thrilled, but Canadians, particularly those living on a pipeline route or under the threat of new or increased supertanker traffic, know the Conservatives are not on their side. This is the government that closed down Coast Guard

bases, bases like Kitsilano that is one of the busiest Coast Guard bases in the entire country, handling an enormous amount of traffic.

This is the government that scrapped the Navigable Waters Protection Act, an act that had existed for almost a century in Canada. Excuse me, I misspoke, Conservatives did keep some rivers and lakes protected by the Navigable Waters Protection Act, but those are the lakes that exist in cottage country north of Ontario. Those are the lakes and rivers the Conservatives deemed to be important to protect. All of the rest were deemed not so important.

New Democrats have been standing in the House day after day, attempting to reintroduce those lakes into protection, reintroduce those rivers into some form of protection. That is what Canadians want because we are attached to our rivers and lakes. We are a nation of great expanse and imagination. We believe in the idea that Canada as a settled but wild place, a place where people can experience a country that is truly vast and magnificent, also has with it some responsibility to protect those spaces.

The government gutted the Environmental Assessment Act. According to the Auditor General of Canada, assessments in Canada ranged between 3,000 and 5,000 a year. That is 3,000 and 5,000 different projects a year, mines, pipelines, and whatnot, that went through some sort of environmental review. For those who have ever been involved, this is a public hearing where a proponent has to bring evidence and show in testimony and the public gets to ask questions.

The Conservatives have taken those 3,000 to 5,000 assessments a year and reduced them down from what the Auditor General estimates to between 12 and 15 assessments a year. All those other projects, hundreds and thousands of projects, thousands of mines and pipelines will simply not get an environmental review.

● (1155)

The few that do get a review, as we have now seen through new legislation and regulations the Conservatives have introduced, limit the public's ability to go to the hearings and cross-examine the proponents, the oil companies and the mining companies.

The Conservatives have so narrowly defined who matters, it is now being brought up in court, as is so often the case with Conservative legislation and laws. They make them so badly, and so often make them against the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, that Canadians are forced to go to court to protect that charter. The Conservatives spend millions of taxpayers' dollars trying to undermine the charter with these draconian pieces of legislation that take away values and the rights of Canadians, and they lose, time and time again.

Government Orders

It is at the point where the Conservatives cannot even get a judge nominated to the Supreme Court without violating some fundamental piece of our Constitution. It is incredible, the hubris, yet we can understand it with a government that has been too long in power. It grows in arrogance. It grows in the sense of entitlement. We have seen this movie before in Canada. It is lamentable, because the Conservatives came in riding the white knight of accountability, riding the cause and the celebrated idea of having a more open and transparent government. However, according to the ethics commissioner, the Privacy Commissioner, and the Parliamentary Budget Officer, all of the watchdogs of Parliament, the government has become, and is, the most secretive in Canadian history. It denies Canadians the basic right to information they have constitutionally protected. This is what the Conservatives have become.

It was also the Conservatives who gutted the Fisheries Act, one of the most fundamental pieces of protection of the fisheries in Canada, which has been an historical and important part of our industry and society. It said that companies can now go in and destroy fish habitat, where fish spawn, with no consequence whatsoever, without triggering any kind of assessment or any kind of public hearing.

That is okay under the Conservatives' world view. The private sector dominates all. They have limited liability across a whole series of sectors. What is limited liability? That is when the government comes in with a rule to subsidize and support certain industries. It picks winners and losers. There are certain industries that do not enjoy this favouritism from the government, but the oil industry is one that absolutely does. The Conservatives insert a liability cap on damages in the event of any major accident in which there are significant and serious costs, both for cleanup and to pay damages to those who have lost businesses or their homes. Heaven forbid, under the Conservatives' world view, that the company that causes the pollution, that causes the spill from a pipeline or a tanker, should pay for the cost of damages. The Conservatives use terms like the "polluter pay principle", but only sometimes and only to a certain amount. That is the Conservatives' view of the world.

Limited liability, this reducing the risk for certain industrial players, causes all sorts of consequences. It is not just the idea that the public has to pay any expenses above. An example is that under certain of these acts, there is a \$500-million cap for oil spills. People might say that \$500 million is a lot of money, and maybe that is enough. However, the spill from the *Exxon Valdez*, which happened just north of my riding in northwestern B.C., hit \$3.5 billion. Under the Conservative law, who would pay the remainder, the \$3 billion or more? That would be the Canadian public.

For the Kalamazoo spill in Michigan, by Enbridge, that happened just a couple of years ago, it is \$1.1 billion and counting. They have been at it for three years. They have dredged up the whole bottom of the river, and they are still paying. Under the Conservatives' world view, it would be the public paying for that incompetence by an oil company.

This is not to suggest that these oil companies do not have the resources to pay for this. I did not look at oil prices today, but it is somewhere north of \$100, certainly. They are clearing massive profits, historically high profits. These folks can afford to pay for the operations they perform.

The second consequence, aside from the public paying, is that if an industry knows, as the investment industry knew in the United States that there was a certain liability protection they had and that certain banks were "too big to fail", over time it encourages very bad, risky behaviour. Fundamentally, all of those investors knew that even if this thing went totally wrong, they would not be on the hook.

Imagine going to a casino or the racetrack and the government saying, "No matter what, you cannot lose money today. We will cap it at \$50." Most Canadians would pick a horse that is 100 to one. Why not? They would put \$100 on it and put more on the next one, because there would be no way to lose. The only upside would be that we would get to pick long shots, which would encourage risky behaviour.

● (1200)

The companies will not admit to this, but that is human behaviour. Unless they have somehow changed the genetic code in oil companies to make humans into something we are not, if they encourage risky behaviour, over time humans will take those risks. At the end, we will wake up one morning and turn on the CBC news and hear that there was a tragic accident last night and there is oil spilling, as it does; in Enbridge's case, it has been 900 times just in the last decade. It is lamentable, and the homeowners are upset, and ranchers are worried, and fishermen are losing their business. When they do the investigation, it will turn out to be from human error, again. Who will pick up the tab? The companies will, up to a little bit. Everything beyond that will come to the taxpayers of Canada.

If we think of all of the industries in the world we would want to subsidize, the oil industry would not be on the top of the list. It makes an inordinate amount of profit. Gas prices in Canada today are \$1.30 to \$1.40 a litre. Some say it is doing too fine. It is certainly doing fine enough.

This is the Conservative government that shut down B.C.'s regulatory oil spill response team. The Conservatives cancelled that and fired everyone in charge of oil spill response on the west coast. They wonder why the public raises suspicions. This is a government that has a fund, as Liberal governments had previously, that shippers at one point had to contribute to. That fund has gone up to \$400 million, having contributed to it since 1976, and the government is fine with that and believes it is enough money to handle all incidents of all the oil spills in the country, not just one. As I have described, some of these oil spills can be incredibly expensive.

In Bill C-3, the government made some small moves to improve a disastrous situation and make it less disastrous.

Government Orders

When people are in the process of potential rehabilitation for their actions, we want to encourage any small steps they make. Therefore, the NDP at committee encouraged the baby steps being made by the government and made amendments based on the testimony of the witnesses we heard. I know that is radical and may be contrary to the world view of the Conservatives, but we listen to witnesses who come to committee that know more about an issue than MPs do. We take their advice and write it up into nicely worded amendments as changes to a bill, but consistently, time and time again, the Conservatives reject them. One would think that at committee they would offer some alternative or say why they are rejecting them and that they have counter evidence that is better or more informed, but they do not.

All opposition MPs have witnessed it. We have all been there when we have put forward a motion and we stare at five blank Conservative faces across the way. When it is time for the vote, we make our case and say, "This is based on witness so-and-so. This is how it will help this bill and how it will help the Canadian public and protect the public." The Conservatives just stare at us with nothing going on and vote against it. It happens over and over again.

If this is just a political exercise, so be it. People can choose to make themselves look ignorant. That is a choice others make. The fact is, this impacts Canadian lives and Canadian industry and uncertainty. I have argued for quite a while, although it may be a slightly counterintuitive position, that for reasons of social licence and the idea of winning over the public, the Conservatives have been no friend of the oil industry. We have seen this just recently.

The Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, the main lobby group in Canada for the oil industry, distanced itself from the Conservative position on a whole variety of things, particularly the ads they had been running. When the oil lobby abandons the government and says it would like to not be associated with it, we know that the government has a problem.

The Conservatives like to talk about radicals. That is what radicals look like in action. They so denigrated the faith of the public in government to protect our general and collective interests that the public has said that it no longer grants the government a social licence to operate.

When the Conservatives come out with their announcement this afternoon and give the green light and thumbs up to Enbridge northern gateway, we do not believe that the public will be swayed one bit, because the Conservatives have completely lost their faith. They have forgotten one very fundamental principle in this place, which is that governments can grant permits, but only people can grant permission. The government has forgotten that, and in forgetting that, we see the arrogance and bullying we have seen time and again.

People have raised concerns about the northern gateway pipeline going through northern B.C. It goes right through my home and the homes of the people I represent. The government has suggested that in raising those concerns, those people must be foreign-funded radicals. That is what the minister called them in a letter issued out of the Prime Minister's Office. He said that they must be enemies of the state. That is what they called me, my friends, and my community

members for having raised questions about a pipeline that threatens our very way of life.

• (1205)

I do not think that is anti-Canadian. I think it is very Canadian to raise questions, to raise our voices, to stand shoulder to shoulder, first nation with non-first nation, community to community, to say that our voices count in the conversation of Canada, that we will not be marginalized, and that we will not be bullied by a government, any government, of any political stripe.

Conservatives should know this. The Conservatives used to decry the heavy-handed tactics of Ottawa when it comes to energy policy. Some will remember this. How does Ottawa know best for the west? I remember this. Arrogant Liberal governments came in and imposed plans that western Canada did not want, and western Canadians reacted.

Now we see it in the reverse: a pipeline that Canadians on the west coast of British Columbia do not want, at a level of 66% or more. We have 130-plus first nations that have told the government, "Do not do this thing." The Union of B.C. Municipalities and the B.C. government have all told the government, "No" and "What part of 'no' do you not understand?"

The government, in a few short hours, is poised to ignore all of that and say that those people must be radicals. They must be enemies of Canada. All those people, two-thirds of the province of British Columbia, the Government of British Columbia, 130 first nations and more, the Union of B.C. Municipalities, and the mayors and councillors of British Columbia must be enemies of Canada. That is the Conservatives' world view, because they have so attached themselves to one bad pipeline. The arrogance has grown so much with the current Prime Minister that he cannot imagine stepping back. He cannot imagine taking a breath and realizing that there may be other things that are more important.

Here is a secondary concern, as if all that were not bad enough. As I was talking to first nation leaders in B.C. over the weekend and again last night, they said that if the Conservatives force this project down the throats of British Columbians against the rights and titles of first nations in B.C., not only will this pipeline never get built, but it will so poison the relationship that is already in a terrible state between first nations and the Government of Canada that other projects, other industries, will also be threatened. The ability to get agreements and deals done in B.C. between industrial players and the first nations of B.C. will be jeopardized.

Government Orders

All that is at stake—the relationship between the crown and an important place like British Columbia, the ability to get other industrial development done, such as liquefied natural gas, mining, and other industrial projects—the government is willing to threaten for the sake of one bad pipeline. That is the equation the Prime Minister is going to make this afternoon. That is the test he is facing as a leader in this country this afternoon.

I lament that he will fail that test. I am saddened by the fact that he will fail this test of leadership because he is unable to see the forest for the trees. He is unable to see past his own belligerence and his own determination to have it his way or the highway. He is going to ram through all of those objections. He somehow thinks that we are going to back down; that the first nations, which have constitutionally protected rights and title in this country, are suddenly going to forgo those rights; that the people in B.C. who voted against this thing two-thirds to one-third are not going to show up at the ballot box in 2015 and kick Conservative MPs out who stand on the wrong side of this issue; and that the Union of B.C. Municipalities and the Government of B.C. are suddenly just going to walk away from their opposition to this pipeline that threatens who we are.

It is a most Canadian response. When threatened at a core level, at a values level, at the ability to raise our kids in a healthy environment and hope for their better future, it is a most Canadian reaction to stand up and resist. It is a most Canadian reaction to say to a government that has grown so arrogant and so content with its privilege and its power, whose members have become so accustomed to those limos that they cannot find a way—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Nathan Cullen: They can heckle, Mr. Speaker. They yell out to try to shut down the voices of real British Columbians who understand how to stand up for their constituents, rather than selling out to the oil companies, as they have so happily done. British Columbia MPs in this place know right from wrong. They know what this afternoon means. It is a decision point. It is a fork in the road. It is a place where Canada stands and says this is the future we want.

New Democrats will stand on the right side of that future and say that we want a prosperous, clean environment and jobs that will sustain us through the future, not a government so drunk on power that it has lost its way and has lost its ability to see anything at all other than the almighty buck from the oil companies.

• (1210)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I think that my colleague's passionate speech irritated some of the Conservative government members. They will either have to make a decision or accept the decision that is going to be made because it will have a major impact on the future of this country, and the west coast in particular.

I would like to ask a question. It is not about transporting oil specifically, but it is about the Conservative government's previous decisions to eliminate or cut resources at the Coast Guard, search and rescue centres and oil spill monitoring centres.

All of those cuts will have a major impact on future decisions, including the decision that will be made later today regarding the northern gateway pipeline, and on the future of marine transportation of oil.

I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on the impact not only of these decisions, which he already addressed, but also of the cuts that have been made to organizations that monitor marine disasters and protect our coastlines and the people who live there.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Mr. Speaker, it is incredible. As I already said, it is more important to pay attention to this government's actions than its words. The cuts it made to the Coast Guard prove that this government is not concerned about oil companies. As my colleague said, between 2005 and 2010, the amount of oil shipped via tankers tripled, and it will triple again in the next five years.

Although faced with that reality, the government cut the resources required to clean up bitumen, which is practically an impossible task. That is what the Conservatives want.

I notice that there are many Conservatives here, but they are not asking any questions. I find it intriguing that they are so quiet even though they have the opportunity to discuss the future of oil and the west coast. That is the choice they are making.

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Strahl (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the speech by the hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley. I just wanted to get his comments.

In British Columbia, former NDP premier, Mike Harcourt, has torn up his NDP membership card because he knows that the NDP has strayed from its working-class roots, has become a party of downtown elites, and does not represent working people anymore. These are the words of Mike Harcourt. He said that they no longer appreciate where our resources come from and what they fund.

A former interim NDP premier, Dan Miller, wrote an article in which he questions where the New Democrats think that the resources come from that fund our schools, fund our hospitals, fund our infrastructure. He says that the resources do not come out of the air, but that they come from the interior of British Columbia, from LNG, and from everything the NDP opposes.

We saw Adrian Dix with a 20-point lead in the provincial election that he blew because he was too radical in opposing every natural resource development. The member can laugh as he does, but he knows that the NDP is out of touch with British Columbians. That is why the New Democrats continue to lose election after election in the province. Why does the member not stand up for the working-class people, the tradespeople who want to see these projects proceed in a responsible and safe manner?

Government Orders

•(1215)

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Mr. Speaker, I am impressed that my friend has become such a fond friend of Christy Clark. I did not notice such support from my Conservative colleagues during the actual campaign in B.C. I remember them distinctly staying away from that election and showing no support for Christy Clark, who, by the way, does not support northern gateway.

If the Conservatives are so supportive of the B.C. government, one would think that support would be broadly felt. The B.C. government told the federal government of its five conditions, which have not been met, as the premier said two days ago. I would suspect that the Conservatives from B.C. would recognize that their premier has said there are problems. Even from the right wing, as my friend says, what about the other side of this thing?

We are neighbours. We come from northern B.C., and it is a resource-based part of the world. I had two resource companies in my office yesterday showing strong public support for their operations, mining operations, which we have helped navigate through the process.

It is interesting that what has changed in the 10 years that I have been here and represented northwestern B.C. is that companies get it. They understand we need first nations support. Creating local jobs is important, as opposed to the temporary foreign workers that Conservatives allowed in at HD Mining. My friend must have had an opinion on that. There were 200 Chinese workers allowed to come in and take Canadian jobs through a loophole the Conservative government created.

So much for standing up for B.C. So much for standing up for the resource sector and all the jobs. The Conservatives were only too happy to give those away, and 350,000 temporary foreign workers are working today, many of them in the resource sector, as Canadians in northeastern and northwestern B.C. are still looking for jobs.

If the government is actually interested in a resource debate, how about this: raw bitumen exports, which the Conservative government promotes, across the world. The Conservatives ask the United States to support the Keystone pipeline because it would create 40,000 jobs in the U.S. Well, if they can do that there, why can we not do it here? What happened to the courage, vision, and the idea that Canadian jobs could come from Canadian resources? What happened to those Conservative values?

Mr. Glenn Thibeault (Sudbury, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for his very passionate and important speech.

Many things are in the bill, but today, on the eve of the decision that the Conservative government is making with northern gateway, it is paramount for us to have this discussion. We really cannot trust the government to allow us to have this discussion anywhere else. I think about the amendments we wanted to bring forward in committee, which the Conservatives shut down, as usual.

I had the blessing of living in British Columbia for seven years. I think many people in my great riding of Sudbury would also say that it is one of the most beautiful places in the world, and we need to do everything we can to protect it. Unfortunately, we do not see anything in the bill to address oil spills.

One of the important things my colleague spoke to, which really resonated, is that the government is allowed to give permits, but it is the people who give permission. What we have in British Columbia is that none of the people, the first nations, or the communities in the riding the member comes from, are giving permission.

I would like the member to elaborate a little more on his statement because it resonates from coast to coast with the importance of understanding what the social licence is as we move forward with this.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Mr. Speaker, I have done a couple of tours around B.C. in the last couple of months, through Vancouver Island, Sunshine Coast, and the interior up to Prince George, because it felt important. The leadership in my communities has asked me to engage British Columbians on a question that implicates all of us, not just those who live in the northwest at ground zero where the pipeline is meant to go and 11,000 supertankers are meant to sail through some pretty treacherous waters. If people had any semblance of understanding of B.C.'s north coast they would know that this area is fraught with peril. Enbridge itself has admitted that there is at least a 10% to 14% chance of a major oil spill.

What was remarkable was the size of the crowd in places like Kamloops, Penticton, Prince George, and Powell River. A lot of these places are currently represented by Conservatives. Even more intriguing were the people who came out. There were members of the chamber of commerce and members of the local downtown business association.

One of the first questions that we often posed at events in Nanaimo, Vancouver Island, and Victoria to counter this idea that this is a city versus rural debate was, "Why do you live here?" This is absolutely not a city versus rural debate. When people are asked that question in places like Courtenay, Comox, Campbell River, and Powell River, they say it is because of "the place". These are some of the most remarkable places on earth, certainly within Canada. They are incredibly beautiful. B.C. attempts to marry the use of resources to benefit our communities and to put food on the table, with that natural and stunning beauty. That is the balance that the Conservatives' have completely left behind.

The hunting and fishing communities are coming forward. Wildlife groups are coming forward. It is the people who Conservatives have maybe traditionally relied upon and perhaps taken for granted who are joining arm in arm with first nations, with people who are concerned with the environment. This suggests that the Conservatives have lost their way and the balance has gone completely.

The way to tell whether we have a debate or something to say in the House is whether a member gets up and makes a speech about something or whether a member sits and heckles from the backbenches.

Government Orders

New Democrats know that we have the right side on this. We will take this question to British Columbians and we will see what they think about this.

• (1220)

Mr. Glenn Thibeault (Sudbury, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques.

It is very important for me to be able to rise today and speak to Bill C-3. I will pull back a little bit and talk about some of the specifics related to this bill.

When looking at Bill C-3, we see it is something we will support at third reading because of the modest improvements in marine security that we have seen in this bill. However, it is important to recognize that, as usual, we try to bring forward some amendments at committee, really to make the bills better. That is what we are supposed to be doing. We are supposed to be strengthening the bills and laws of this country to make them better for Canadians. However, as usual and once again, the Conservatives completely voted against all of our amendments. It is unfortunate. These amendments did not just come from the NDP; they came from witnesses and stakeholders.

We really need to ensure that the government starts to listen. What we heard from my colleague just a few minutes ago is that it is not listening to first nations in British Columbia. It is not listening to the Government of British Columbia, which said no when it comes to northern gateway. It is also not listening to, I believe, 67% of the population, which is against northern gateway.

We needed to ensure that Bill C-3 had a broader scope. It is something we asked for. We asked that this bill be allowed to go to committee before second reading to ensure we were looking at ways of enhancing this bill and making it better, making sure we can protect our pristine coastline on the B.C. coast. Unfortunately though, that never happened.

Let me give members some key facts and figures before I continue. What we have heard about tanker traffic is that it is increasing the chances of an oil spill in Canadian waters, yet the government has decreased the marine communications and traffic centres and environmental emergency programs. It has done this even though the estimates state that oil tanker traffic tripled between 2005 and 2010, that tanker traffic is expected to triple again by 2016, and that the proposed pipeline expansion projects would increase crude oil deliveries from 300,000 to 700,000 barrels per day.

We need to ensure that we are protecting our coast, but again, this bill would not address it.

Let me talk a little bit about those amendments. We wanted to ensure that Canadian taxpayers are not on the hook for cleanup costs and damages following the spill of hazardous and noxious substances. We wanted to ensure transparency regarding investigation reports of aviation accidents or incidents involving civilians and the military. Those proposed reasonable amendments never made it past the committee.

Prior to debating Bill C-3, which I believe was the former Bill C-57 at second reading before prorogation, we requested that the

scope of this bill be broadened by sending it to committee before second reading for a study that would aim to include a more comprehensive measure to safeguard Canada's coast. It would also, in part, reverse many of the cuts that we have seen from the Conservative government and the closures specific to marine and environmental safety. I believe that we sent a letter to the Minister of Transport back in April, 2013, to outline this request.

Bill C-3 would make amendments to five acts. I will touch on those briefly. The first part would enact the aviation industry indemnity act, which would authorize the Minister of Transport to undertake to indemnify certain aviation industry participants for loss, damage, or liability caused by "war risks".

The second part would amend the Aeronautics Act to provide the airworthiness investigation with the powers to investigate aviation accidents or incidents involving civilians and aircraft or aeronautical installations operated by or on behalf of the DND, Canadian Forces, or a visiting force.

• (1225)

Part 3 would amend the Canada Marine Act in relation to the effective day of the appointment of a director of a port authority, in that the municipality or the port authority notifies the port ASAP.

Part 4 would amend the Marine Liability Act to implement the International Convention on Liability and Compensation for Damage in Connection with the Carriage of Hazardous and Noxious Substances by Sea, 2010, or as it is known, the HNS convention.

The liability scheme that was created for this talked about shipowners' liability limited to \$230 million. Damages in excess of shipowners' liability were to be paid by an international fund, which is that HNS fund, up to a maximum of \$500 million.

In part 4, the availability of the ship-source oil pollution fund to oil spills would exclude HNS spills. We wanted to ensure, at committee level, that this is broader.

Part 5 really looks at the Canada Shipping Act, 2001. It was introducing new requirements for operators of oil handling facilities, including the requirement to notify the minister of their operations and to submit plans to the minister. There are some other segments to that as well.

I think it is important for us to then say that we believe, as I talked about in the last amendment, that Canadian taxpayers really should not have to pay the cleanup costs and damages following a spill of hazardous or noxious substances.

However, we have seen the government refuse reasonable amendments that may have prevented Canadian taxpayers from being responsible for damages exceeding \$500 million.

It is also important for us to say that the NDP is committed to ensuring that oil spills never happen on our coasts. We have seen the Conservative record in the past. There was the closing of British Columbia's oil spill response centre, the shutting down of Kitsilano Coast Guard station, and the gutting of environmental response programs. This is making it increasingly difficult for us, and even for Canadians, to trust that their concerns are really being taken seriously.

Government Orders

Some of the things that we really wanted to see in this bill to safeguard Canada's seas include reversing those cuts to the Coast Guard and reversing the scaling back of the services; the cancelling of closure of the marine communication traffic service centres, including the marine traffic control communications terminals in Vancouver and of course in St. John's, Newfoundland, as well; the cancelling of the closure of B.C.'s regional office for emergency oil spill responders; and the cancelling of the cuts to Canada's Centre for Offshore Oil, Gas and Energy Research.

Those are just a few of the things we really would have liked to have seen in this bill. Unfortunately, they are not there.

When it comes on the eve of the announcement on northern gateway, what we are really seeing now are the concerns and the worries of Canadians being ignored by the government. As I heard earlier, 67% of people in British Columbia are opposed to northern gateway. We have the government saying no. We have first nations saying that they do not want this, and that they need to have some type of discussion. I wish the government would listen to first nations and have that communication with them. Unfortunately we are seeing that this is not happening.

To put it into perspective, we are going to see about 1,100 kilometres of pipeline pumping raw bitumen through the pristine forest and rivers in northern British Columbia. That is about 525,000 barrels of raw bitumen per day. What is really scary is Enbridge's record on pipeline safety. We have seen over 800 spills between 1999 and 2010, resulting in over 16,000 barrels of oil going into the environment.

We can all agree that no one wants to see that in northern British Columbia. We need to do everything we can to protect northern British Columbia.

● (1230)

Mr. Mark Strahl (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to hear that the hon. member spent seven years of his life in British Columbia. They were, no doubt, the best seven years of his life.

He spoke briefly in his last intervention about social licence, which is a concept that is certainly gathering steam. It is tough to define how one actually gathers it. He comes from Sudbury, which was obviously built on the mining sector. It is not as big as it used to be, I understand, but that is what built the riding he represents, as did the transcontinental railway that went through there.

If we were applying today's social licence theories or practices, would any of the mines in his riding have been built; would there be the prosperity that currently exists in Sudbury; and would the transcontinental railway have been put through? Should we not be talking about the safest way to transport petrochemicals, not saying we should shut down large sectors of the economy, which is what I tend to hear from the NDP?

Mr. Glenn Thibeault: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for the question and, of course, the acknowledgement that I lived in North Vancouver for seven years. Yes, it is one of the most beautiful places. Sometimes in the middle of winter when it is -40° and I am having to shovel snow in Sudbury, I wonder why I came

back home. However, it is great to be back home and to be the representative for Sudbury.

In relation to the question he asked about mining, he is going back 100 years, but let us talk about the re-greening of Sudbury through the mining companies and what they have done. They have won awards from the United Nations on the re-greening, making sure that the environment is being protected. The people of Sudbury want to ensure that they have clean air to breathe, water to swim in, and that they can actually go fishing in downtown Sudbury. However, what we do not have, as he talked about, is the social licence to put through pipelines when people are choosing, voting, and standing up and saying no.

That is what is happening in northern British Columbia and throughout British Columbia. People are standing up and saying no. In Sudbury, we actually have the conversation, and the mining companies talk to and work with first nations. The current government is choosing not to do that.

● (1235)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when I think of the northern gateway project, one thing that comes to my mind is risk. This is something we need to recognize: the risk to our environment and our economy. When we look at this particular project, we see that it is, arguably, an unacceptable level of risk in that region, and the resultant impact to the economy and the environment speaks volumes.

I am wondering if the member would like to comment just on the idea of risk and how this is an unacceptable level of risk that we are putting, at potential cost, by going forward with the northern gateway project.

Mr. Glenn Thibeault: Mr. Speaker, risk is paramount to this discussion, to this debate, and to the pipeline. We know Enbridge's record. There were 800 spills between 1999 and 2010, resulting in over 16,000 barrels of oil going into the environment. There would be 525,000 barrels of raw bitumen per day being shipped by massive supertankers along British Columbia's coast. The risk of one incident and the effects it would have on the environment are catastrophic.

Let us not forget about the risks that are related to the economy as well. There would or could be 45,000 potential jobs, according to statistics, impacted by a spill, from tourism jobs to forestry jobs. This is a huge risk, and with 1,100 kilometres of pipeline going through northern Alberta and British Columbia, I do not think the risks outweigh the merits right now.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Sudbury for giving me a few minutes to talk about Bill C-3, which is about an issue that really matters to me. It is about safety and amendments to the Canada Marine Act, the Marine Liability Act and the Canada Shipping Act, 2001.

Government Orders

I am concerned about this issue and it is a personal one for me because there is a big debate about it right now. Our colleague from Skeena—Bulkley Valley and several others have talked about a number of things, including the northern gateway pipeline. However, TransCanada has a project called energy east. They want to build a pipeline from the Alberta oil sands to Saint John, New Brunswick. The pipeline would go through my riding, Témiscouata, and through the lower St. Lawrence. They would build an oil port in Cacouna, which is not in my riding, but which is nearby. Cacouna is about a 45-minute drive from Rimouski.

This is important because some parts of this bill, if it is passed, would result in the construction of an oil port where there is currently a commercial port.

In addition, Part 5 of this bill amends the Canada Shipping Act, 2001. It introduces new requirements for operators of oil handling facilities, which is what an oil port is, including the requirement to notify the minister of their operations and to submit plans to the minister.

I will not go into detail about this because I do not have much time, but I wonder why this has not always been the case. This bill seems to be a hasty response on the part of the Conservative government to implement measures that will reassure the public, particularly with respect to the northern gateway project, which has been on the agenda for a very long time.

Before the election, I worked briefly on the pipeline and oil transportation file in British Columbia. I picked up on people's concerns about security measures and navigation problems and risks along the British Columbia coast. This bill sets out to reassure people, but does not completely succeed.

We will vote in favour of this bill because it is an improvement over the status quo. However, I highly doubt that the bill has addressed everyone's concerns.

The reason is that the government's actions in the past—and I am not just talking about this bill, but also its decisions, particularly since 2011—have not really responded to the need for additional protection. Environmentally, these actions have not ensured that the work was done to protect Canadians and their livelihoods.

The people on British Columbia's coast still remember an incident that happened 40 years ago, the wreck of the *Exxon Valdez*. They were affected, and they now want to ensure that the coast is well protected, specifically the coast of the islands off British Columbia.

What have the Conservatives done since 2011, before we started discussing the bill? They have reduced Coast Guard service, including closing the Coast Guard station in Kitsilano.

They have made cuts to the marine communications and traffic services centres, including the centres in Vancouver and St. John's, Newfoundland. They have closed the British Columbia regional office for oil spill emergencies. Why? Why are the Conservatives not cancelling these closures?

There have been cuts to the Centre for Offshore Oil, Gas and Energy Research, as well as to the main environmental emergency programs, including in the event of oil spills in Newfoundland and Labrador and British Columbia.

All the decisions made in this matter, before the bill was discussed, fly in the face of the need for additional protection under this bill. No one really knows where the Conservative government is going.

As an economist, I am very sensitive to externality issues and issues related to the principle we support, the polluter pays principle. This bill contains elements that are not in line with that concept.

Let us take a look at part 4, which has to do with liability in the event of a spill involving noxious and hazardous substances or oil.

● (1240)

In committee, specifically at second reading where I had the opportunity to speak, we proposed that public funds not be used in cases where a disaster is caused by a private company. The bill caps that compensation at \$500 million. Beyond \$500 million, taxpayers could end up being forced, through the government, to pay the cost of the cleanup and compensation for the people who lose their livelihood or source of economic activity. This makes no sense.

It is the company that should take responsibility for this. When it comes to externalities, if the company had to take more responsibility or even full responsibility for the cost of an oil spill or a spill of hazardous and noxious substances, then it would take measures to ensure its own survival.

Currently, oil companies have a profit margin of tens of millions of dollars for every shipment of oil. If they have limited responsibility for a spill, then they have no incentive to take the protective measures they need to take. Their main incentive is their reputation, and their ability to maintain good public relations to minimize the hits to their reputation.

That is not enough incentive. A greater share of the responsibility for compensation should be taken by the private corporations that ship oil and hazardous and noxious substances.

This bill does not go far enough. We announced amendments at second reading and we proposed them at report stage. Many witnesses supported the opposition on this. In fact, that is what the Conservatives are grappling with on this day when the decision on the northern gateway pipeline will be announced.

Government Orders

Many people from British Columbia, and not just citizens and first nations, are talking to the Conservatives. We know that the Conservatives are not used to negotiating with the first nations or acknowledging their concerns on these issues. Even witnesses who work at port authorities and others who work in the field told the Conservatives exactly what needed to be done. In fact, their comments were often consistent with those made by the official opposition. However, these demands have been ignored. No amendment was accepted. The current bill is the same as it was when it was introduced at second reading.

A responsible government that wants to be known for good governance would realize that it does not have all the answers and that the bill has weaknesses that must be corrected so that it can be true to its objective. Instead, the government is turning a deaf ear. It is refusing to listen and to accept very pertinent comments that address the concerns raised about the environment and liability when it comes to the transportation of noxious or hazardous substances that could be detrimental to the economic activity of much of the community affected.

We find it difficult to understand why the government is remaining silent and intransigent. I do believe that we were all elected by our constituents, in my case the people of the lovely riding of Rimouski—Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques. We have the duty to debate and improve bills.

The government members are remaining silent about this bill. No one is rising to debate it and to justify the proposed measures. We have pointed out this bill's weaknesses, and we will continue to do so.

• (1245)

As I mentioned, this will not prevent us from voting in favour of the bill at third reading because it is still better than what is currently in place. However, I mentioned that I do not understand why the measures proposed in part 5 have not been implemented already. They seem to be very reasonable.

In short, we will be supporting the bill. However, we are very disappointed with the Conservative government's silence and refusal to listen at every stage, including study in committee.

If the Conservatives were to ask me a question about this bill, I would be very pleased to answer.

[*English*]

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is one of the members across the way that I have learned to respect over the last three years. He is very polite, very cordial. I respect that of the member, and also that he is an economist.

We have heard a lot of comments today about raw resource development and developing our resources in Canada, especially British Columbia. However, we always hear from the NDP members what they would not do. I asked the hon. Leader of the Opposition, a couple of years ago now, what New Democrats would do, short of developing our resources. Would they refine it in B.C.? What else would they do?

The question I have for the pragmatic member across the way is, short of having pipelines and developing our resources to ship across the world where our resources are needed, what else would they do?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Caron: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his comments.

I also respect him. I have had the pleasure of working and talking with him on a regular basis, and I am pleased to be able to return the compliment to him.

Indeed, on this side of the House and as far as our leader, the leader of the official opposition, is concerned, we clearly do not want oil sands or their development to be eliminated, despite what people often say. We are looking for something geared toward development that is sustainable in the true sense of the word. People often gloss over the meaning of the words “sustainable development”, but we want to see development that is truly sustainable, both economically and environmentally.

All too often we see that the environmental aspect is swept under the rug. One of the things some people forget is the polluter pays principle. This has to do with external factors, the costs that all of Alberta or even all of Canada might have to bear. TransCanada's Energy East pipeline project, with the pipeline that would go through my riding, is a telling example.

The oil port project is well received by a segment of the population because people see the potential economic spinoffs. However, this still jeopardizes the tourism industry, and many opponents and people questioning the project say so. Beluga whale watching brings significant tourism and economic spinoffs. Some people say the benefits are even more significant, in absolute terms, than the potential benefits of the oil port.

This is therefore a very complex issue, and the costs and benefits of every project must always be assessed. This is the type of development we want, development that is responsible when it comes to the oil sands.

• (1250)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it bears stating that the final decision on the northern gateway project actually rests with the Prime Minister's Office. We need to emphasize the fact that the Prime Minister has an opportunity to do what is right on this issue. We need to factor in the risk and look at the potential negative impact on our economy and our environment, taking into consideration our first nations, people of aboriginal heritage, and the many different communities on which this pipeline is going to have an impact. They have raised their concerns and objections.

I wonder if the member might want to comment on how important it is that the Prime Minister of Canada listen to what the people of British Columbia have to say on it, because obviously, the members of Parliament in the Conservative Party who represent British Columbia are not expressing the concerns that many of their constituents are no doubt advocating for them to do.

Government Orders

[Translation]

Mr. Guy Caron: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his question, which gives me an opportunity to touch on an aspect of the bill that I did not address in my speech.

This is a matter of externalities, the polluter pays principle and the responsible development of our natural resources. We also need to talk about social acceptability. The government needs to ensure that it has the support of the residents and the first nations of any community where a pipeline will be passing through and jeopardizing the economic activity in the community that is not necessarily related to the pipeline or to the general transportation of hazardous materials or petroleum products.

When we hear that 67% of the population of British Columbia and basically every first nation in the province oppose the project, it is clear that the government did not do the work required to achieve that social acceptability. This is a reflex that all good governments should have but that the Conservative government seems to be lacking, the reflex of consulting with people and responding to their concerns. Given the current lack of support for this project, we can see that this work was not done.

[English]

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill C-3, which is yet another omnibus bill that only affects five bills this time. We should be lucky. In finance we dealt with a budget implementation act that would amend some 60 bills, so having only having only 5 bills is a bit of a luxury.

It is not so much the process I want to talk about today, but the substance. We can do much better than this legislation, which we will be supporting at this stage.

I wish to advise you, Mr. Speaker, that I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Churchill.

It is interesting and somewhat ironic that we are here today on the eve of what we understand to be the government's decision day on the Enbridge northern gateway pipeline. I had the good fortune of running in a by-election in my community of Victoria and Oak Bay coastal communities in British Columbia in November 2012. As we would expect, and as I am sure all members on all sides of the House will have done, I knocked on a lot of doors and met a lot of people from various walks of life, young and old. I did not meet a single person who supported the Enbridge northern gateway proposal, not one.

I have a duty and an honour to represent my coastal community, and I will do so to the best of my ability. However, I believe that if this bill is a bit of window dressing, greasing the wheels for this project, the Conservatives ought to know that it has met utter opposition in British Columbia. Perhaps the most poignant aspect of the opposition I encountered and observed was that it united British Columbians in a way that I had never experienced in my life. I have never seen aboriginal people leading protests of the kind and in the numbers. I have never seen retired teachers and bus drivers, people who are very young and people who are at the end of their careers and indeed at the end of their lives, all united in opposition to what the government intends to do, although I pray I am wrong.

I know the polls say that two-thirds of the population are opposed. However, if we scratch a little deeper, we will not find many people who think it makes sense to ship, in tankers the size of the Eiffel Tower along some of the most dangerous waters on the planet into Hecate Strait, diluted bitumen, a product of which we really have little understanding. We did not even know at the joint review panel whether it would sink or rise to the surface. That is the level of misunderstanding.

I taught environmental law for over a dozen years. People who appeared before that committee, fellow lawyers who cross-examined, said that they had never seen such dissonance between what a panel heard in testimony and what it concluded in its recommendations. It was two different realities. As well, the cost-benefit analysis that would say it is fine to potentially extirpate a herd of caribou, an endangered species, because it is in the national interest, with no evidence for that, is really quite shocking to British Columbians. It is also shocking that we would play Russian roulette with rivers full of endangered species, including certain salmon stocks that would never come back if there were a spill.

It is a product that is not heavy oil, but is diluted bitumen and it ought not to be confused with what happened with *Exxon Valdez*, which was bad enough as I will explain. That this could possibly be approved by the Government of Canada in the face of ferocious opposition by young and old, aboriginal and non-aboriginal, coastal and non-coastal communities, is frankly shocking to me. I just wish to reiterate that I will do, on behalf of the people of my community, whatever I can to ensure that this wrong-headed decision is never fully implemented in my province and in our country.

This bill deals with a number of matters that are somewhat germane to what I have been saying. Entirely, the Canada Marine Act, the Marine Liability Act and the Canada Shipping Act are three of the statutes that would be amended. Some of the regulatory changes are to be commended, and for that reason the bill will have our full support.

● (1255)

What the government has done in northern gateway is handed the industry a poisoned chalice. As one industry leader said very eloquently, we will get the permission perhaps from the government, but we will not get the permission from the people.

The phrase "social licence" has been used throughout this debate and I know exactly what that industry leader said. Even if government gives us the piece of paper, it will not have given us the legitimacy to proceed, because people know in their guts that this process is flawed. They knew that it was unfair and that a decision built on such a flawed process should not see the light of day.

Government Orders

It really is a poisoned chalice, and it is interesting that I see environmental organizations, first nations and industry holding hands around that phenomenon, recognizing that indeed industry will have been handed a poisoned chalice if the government were to proceed in the face of the ferocious opposition that is out there today.

At the second reading debate, the hon. Minister of Transport said a number of things about the bill, in respect of the proposed amendments to the Canada Shipping Act. She talked about the amendments that would increase marine environmental protection by strengthening provisions pertaining to pollution prevention and response. She said that the amendments would aim to strengthen requirements for spill prevention and preparedness at oil handling facilities by requiring certain facilities to submit both prevention and emergency plans to the Minister of Transport, to which I say “Bravo.”

However, when we do not have officials who are there to enforce those laws, who do not have the budget to insist on compliance, with the greatest of respect, it is irrelevant what the legislation says. We have seen the government consistently cut programs, cut offices that would deal with these very issues. It means nothing that legislation like this would contain pretty words, full of sound and fury and signifying nothing, as Shakespeare would say.

This legislation, like so many Conservative initiatives, might look good on the surface, but if there is no personnel because it has all been cut, if there are no scientists because they have all been fired, if there is no office anymore, as in the case of the Kitsilano Coast Guard office, or spill prevention offices, who cares?

People are not being fooled. They know that what we do in passing pretty laws with no people behind them to enforce them and no political will, moreover, to enforce them, it really does not matter very much, and that is what is so frustrating. The Conservatives are full of sound and fury and really signify nothing in this kind of legislation.

On the amendment, if people do not, for example, submit those plans, what happens then? The minister tells us that the government has administered a penalty. There are \$250 and sometimes even a range of \$25,000 for a monetary penalty for some matter that may not have been complied with: a) we have to actually do it, we have to bring a proceeding; and b) we have to collect it.

Having worked on behalf of compliance with Canadian Environmental Protection Act, when I had the good fortune of advising the chief review officer under CEPA 99, these monetary penalties and these administrative regimes are excellent, but with no will to enforce them, who cares what they say, and who even cares what the amount is? The penalty amounts may sound impressive when they are increased but again, no will, no fines, no action, nothing. It is sound and fury, signifying nothing.

I am not making it up when I say that the government has done so little by, in effect, closing the Kitsilano Coast Guard Station, by closing British Columbia's oil spill response centre and gutting the environmental emergency response program. Do British Columbians, do Canadians trust the government to look after their precious environment with these cosmetic changes? I think not, and I think we will find the members opposite, 21 of them, will face the wrath of

British Columbians when they see if indeed, and I pray I am wrong, the government were to ever allow the monstrosity of the Enbridge northern gateway project to see the light of day.

• (1300)

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the point of view of my colleague. Not only is he from B.C., but he understands the issue. I think all of us have more concerns based on what happened in Lac-Mégantic not too long ago.

The fact is that we have a government that chooses to turn a blind eye when it comes to enforcement. The government can put in all the laws and change all the legislation it wants to say that it is protecting people, but at the end of the day, if it does not enforce them, then there is no security for Canadians. The communities and taxpayers are having to pay for the brunt of the cost for cleanup and reconstruction.

Not too long ago, just on this particular piece, the Minister of Natural Resources stated, “to protect the environment...tankers will have to be double-hulled”. Well, all tankers are required to be double-hulled by an international agreement made in 1993.

The member talked about fooling the public. Could he talk a little more about that “fool me once” anecdote? This is a government that seems to want to pull the wool over the eyes of Canadians, but Canadians will not be fooled.

Mr. Murray Rankin: Mr. Speaker, polluter pays should be the backbone of the legislation, yet we still seem to have the Canadian people being asked to be on the hook after a certain amount of money for an oil spill cleanup. How much is a cleanup? It sounds like a lot of money. As my colleague for Skeena—Bulkley Valley pointed out, it could be hundreds of millions of dollars.

Professor Rashid Sumaila at the University of British Columbia's Fisheries Economics Research Unit asked the question about who paid. We have a mechanism to cover \$1.35 billion, but look at the example of the *Exxon Valdez*, at \$6.5 billion to cleanup. The Gulf of Mexico was much larger. For northern gateway, the cost of cleanup and losses could be up to \$9.6 billion.

If there is no political will to enforce and if the government is not serious about polluter pay, it will be the rest of us Canadians who will foot the bill, and that is wrong.

Government Orders

●(1305)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his eloquent speech. He spoke a lot about accountability, which I think is important. He indicated, in a very articulate manner, that the bill serves as little more than window dressing designed to instil confidence in people, that it does not have enough teeth and that the government does not have enough political will to enforce it. That does not just apply to this case but also to a wide range of government activities related to oversight.

I would like to ask my colleague a question about the parallel that can be drawn with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, which has standards to enforce. If there is not enough staff to enforce the rules or employees are not given the power to enforce them, then there are going to be more problems like the ones we have already experienced. I would like my colleague to compare what is happening with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency with the changes to the regulations set out in this bill.

[*English*]

Mr. Murray Rankin: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's question, which raises the notion of monitoring activities and the failure perhaps to have the people there to do the monitoring. His example of what happened with the listeriosis outbreak and CFIA being essentially understaffed to do the job is an excellent illustration and exactly parallel.

This is another regulatory statute. There is no difference in principle among environmental regulation, health and safety, occupational safety, food inspection, railway safety, as my other colleague mentioned. These are all examples of when we put a regime in place, we expect people will be there to enforce those rules. If those rules are broken, we expect there will be some political will to go after the people who break those rules.

We do not have two of those three things. We have less and less people doing the job and we have virtually no political will to enforce our regulatory standards.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise in the House and speak to Bill C-3, an act to enact the aviation industry indemnity act, to amend the Aeronautics Act, the Canada Marine Act, the Marine Liability Act and the Canada Shipping Act, 2001 and to make consequential amendments to other acts.

I stand here with my colleagues, many of whom have spoken before me, who have made clear our position as New Democrats on this bill. It is a position where we recognize the modest improvements that have been made in terms of marine security, but we have also expressed concern about the amendments we proposed that have not been passed by the government.

We have been very clear in our concern that despite these acts, Canadians know that the current situation is one in which regulations, of the few that do exist on paper, are not able to be enforced the way they ought to because of the cuts that we are seeing in terms of scientists, the Coast Guard and inspectors that need to be

in place to make sure that legislation and regulations are being followed.

When I was first asked to speak to the bill, I understood the connections with respect to the proposed Enbridge pipeline and the immense opposition that so many people in B.C. and across the country have to the pipeline, in part because they know the great risk to the environment, the environmental damage it poses. The fact is the government and provincial governments can do nothing to deal with potential oil spills to make them go away. I share that concern.

Obviously I am proud to be part of a party that is opposed to the Enbridge pipeline, that stands with Canadians and British Columbia and the rest of the country in opposition to this plan. I also want to share the voices of my own constituents who stand to lose as a result of the government's approach on the failure to enforce regulation and legislation when it comes to keeping our waterways and our rail lines safe.

I speak particularly about the proposal to ship oil through Churchill. For those who have not been to Churchill, it is well known as a real gem not just for my province of Manitoba, but also for our country. It is a small community on the coast of Hudson Bay about 1,200 kilometres north of Winnipeg. It is known around the world as the easiest place in the world for humans to be able to see polar bears. It includes a nesting ground for polar bears which is part of Wapusk National Park. It is a real treasure for Canadians.

We know that the community of Churchill in northern Manitoba benefits from the tourism industry, as people come to our region because of the polar bears. We also know that Churchill's economy depends on environmental research that takes place in the Churchill Northern Studies Centre, where researchers and scientists from around the world come to engage in climate change research and the impacts of climate change on wildlife, such as polar bears. We also know that Churchill depends on rail traffic and trade of which a good chunk is international trade.

Churchill has been going through a difficult time and will continue to go through a difficult time, because of the fact that the government got rid of its number one best customer, the Canadian Wheat Board. In getting rid of the Canadian Wheat Board, Churchill lost an important trade partner that had an ongoing and very positive relationship with Churchill.

●(1310)

The government then decided, because it wiped out an organization that was run by farmers and managed in the best interests of farmers, and despite its rhetoric that somehow the market was going to correct everything, to offer a major taxpayer-funded subsidy to some of the biggest grain companies around the world to do one thing that had already happened under the Canadian Wheat Board, which was to ship grain through Churchill. Sadly, this has not resulted in the figures that used to be under the Canadian Wheat Board. The people of Churchill and northern Manitoba are concerned about the future of the port, the future of trade through the port, and what it means in terms of bringing in revenue and investment into the port and the rail line that exists.

Government Orders

In the midst of a difficult and stressful situation, the company that owns the rail line and the port expressed interest out of the blue just under a year ago to ship crude oil from the Bakken oil fields, through the Bay line, up to Churchill and onto ships in the Arctic Ocean.

I do not think it comes as any surprise to anyone that people were taken aback by this proposal. The number one concern that was raised was safety. This occurred mere weeks after the tragedy that happened in Lac-Mégantic. We know that very similar crude oil was being transported in the railcars that blew up and killed so many people in that community.

People saw those images and what it could mean to our region. In recognizing that concern, people looked around to see whom they could work with to make sure they are protected. Sadly, when they looked at the federal government, what they saw is a government that has targeted regulation, particularly environmental regulation, that has cut back inspections in a whole host of areas, and has removed itself from taking leadership when it comes to safety.

In terms of rail safety, I want to recognize that in recent months, some measures have been brought in that are important to Canadians, particularly my constituents. However, we are particularly concerned about the potential of an oil spill if this shipment possibly went through into Hudson Bay and the Arctic Ocean. That would be a devastating prospect.

We do not have the technology or the know-how to deal with oil spills in the Arctic. This has been raised in the context of drilling in the Arctic, but we do not even have to go that far. Simply transporting crude oil in the Arctic at the kind of volumes we are hearing about from this company is not something we know how to deal with.

In terms of the terrain, we know that if there were to be an oil spill into Hudson Bay, with it being a bay, it would remain there for a considerable amount of time. It would pollute the tributary rivers that come from Hudson Bay. It would actually move counterclockwise, the direction in which the water moves, into James Bay, and would pollute James Bay. It would then move straight up into the Arctic Ocean and pollute the various coastlines of Nunavut. It would have a devastating impact on the wildlife, including beluga whales. The beluga whale population of Hudson Bay is unique in that it has managed to withstand a fair bit of adversity and has shown signs of resilience that we do not see in other beluga whale populations. This is all to say that the reality of an oil spill is something which we cannot comprehend.

As the member of Parliament for Churchill and someone who is proud to come from the north, and proud of the way that first nations people, Métis people and northern people have been stewards of the environment, certainly where I come from, it troubles me that the federal government is not a partner at the table the way it ought to be when it comes to protecting our waterways, protecting our oceans, and protecting Canadians.

● (1315)

I am proud to stand here to raise our real concerns about this bill and to continue the fight for greater protection and fundamental leadership from the federal government, because Canadians deserve better.

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, like a lot of Canadians, I did not know there was an ocean in Manitoba. I met with the Canadian Consortium of Ocean Research Universities and a very impressive professor from the University of Manitoba was there. I asked him why he was at the meeting, pointing out that oceans are on the coast. He pointed out, as my colleague from Churchill did so eloquently, that Hudson Bay feeds into the Arctic Ocean.

My colleague talked about the future of the port of Churchill and the concerns that the community has about oil spills and safety. Could she talk about the nature of the concerns that people have in the port of Churchill, whether they are economic or environmental, and to what extent, if at all, this bill would rectify those concerns?

Ms. Niki Ashton: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's sharing his incredulity that in fact we are so diverse. I extend a personal invitation to him to come and see our ocean first-hand.

I appreciate the member pointing out the cutting-edge research that is taking place in my province when it comes to its bodies of water.

There are concerns, both economic and environmental, and they are very much connected. Environmental pollution affects everything. It affects our economy, our tourism industry, hunting and trapping, small-scale agriculture. Whatever it may be in a region like ours, if the environment is polluted, it affects everything. It affects our livelihoods.

It is incredible that the federal government has turned a blind eye to its responsibility to provide leadership when it comes to environmental protection. Canada has gone from being obstinate in taking action on climate change to being obstructionist. The federal government seems to be encouraging others not to take action nor to play a leadership role on this front, and it maligns those who do.

This brings little comfort to people in my neck of the woods who are proud of their natural environment. They know their livelihood depends on a sustainable approach to our environment. They see that the federal government is nowhere to be found when it comes to environmental protection.

● (1320)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I did not want to pass on referencing Churchill and its impact on Manitoba's economy. It is fairly significant. I think of the golden boy who sits on top of the Manitoba legislature. He points north, to represent the province's future prosperity.

When many Manitobans think about Churchill, they think of the beluga whale, polar bears and all sorts of wonderful natural life. Its ecosystem needs to be protected.

Government Orders

When we hear about the possibility of oil being shipped and so forth, we have to ensure that we do something which the federal government has not done in regard to the proposed northern gateway pipeline project, and that is to work with our communities and listen to what they say, work with the different stakeholders, including the province of Manitoba and different municipalities, especially the Churchill municipality. In order to make good decisions, we have to work with people. For Churchill's prosperity, it is important for the government of the day to do just that.

Ms. Niki Ashton: Mr. Speaker, what I would say to that is it is absolutely key for communities to be heard. At the beginning of the stages, communities directing the kinds of economic development they want to see is critical.

It is not enough to hear from the federal government that legislation and the emphasis on polluter pays needs to be there. That is a given. What we need is a federal government that partners with communities and with our provincial government to be able to make the best decisions. I want to say that on this front, I am very proud of the position that our provincial government is taking to oppose the proposal to ship crude oil through Churchill. I will also note that, sadly, we also have a legacy, left over from the previous Liberal government, that privatized the railway that we are now, with such great interest, trying to protect and support.

The conclusion here is that federal governments have an incredible role to play in every part of this country. They must do that role in conjunction with communities on the ground with Canadians directing the future of their region.

Mr. Malcolm Allen (Welland, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join the debate with my colleagues on Bill C-3.

When we look at what it is trying to accomplish, it is, in a sense, part of a reporting mechanism, but it is also part of a risk-mitigating exercise as well. I think all of us would accept the fact that, inherently, in life there is risk. Getting out of bed in the morning is a risk. People are then exposed to the vagaries of life. They can step on the road and get run over by a bus. I hope that does not happen, but people learn certain things and mitigate the risks in life. They could also stay in bed, never get up, and die of starvation and lack of water. That would be a risk people would take if they decided to stay there. Clearly, we learn lessons over our lifetimes. We look back to those life lessons and ask how we can mitigate the risks that may be in front of us, so we can manage all of those things.

Business owners and many of my friends in the Conservative Party and other parties who have businesses mitigate risk. They figure out how to manage the risk. They find ways to ensure that whatever the risks are, if they cannot manage them, they limit the ability of risks to affect their businesses. When we talk about handling noxious and hazardous substances, there is a risk. The risk can be great because the eventuality of an incident has great repercussions to populations, environments, perhaps marine aquacultures, animals. It is an abundance of risk. The issue is what to do in mitigating it.

One thing the government has outlined before is that ships have to be double-hulled. No one can suggest that is brand new, because it is not. Ships have been double-hulled for a long time. It is a recommendation that was made many years ago. In fact, it was

thought of decades ago, but double-hulled ships were not built because it was an expensive proposition.

My family grew up in the shipbuilding business. That is what my father, his grandfather, and his grandfather before him did. They all built ships, and at those times they were considered great big ships. They do not look like great big ships any more. Those ships literally look like tugs compared to the ships that are built today, but at that time they were seen as giants of the marine industry. They were built to withstand certain things. One of the things I learned from my father in all the years that he built them is that ships are at the mercy of the sea and the mercy of the captain. When they are at the mercy of the sea, it is guaranteed there will be an incident, because the sea is unrelenting. The sea shows no mercy. Therefore, when an incident occurs, it is a matter of how to avoid risk and mitigate it when it actually happens.

In the case of the captain, there are times when captains make decisions that are ill-founded and ships run aground, they capsize, or they run into other ships. We have seen over time that captains have been charged with crimes on the sea because of their inability to be the masters of their vessels in an appropriate and manageable way.

This bill, unfortunately, says it may potentially happen, so a few things should be done here and there and it should be tweaked a bit here or there. We are no longer talking about vessels that my father built in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, when, if there was a spill, it was manageable. They knew what the substance was, the hazardous and noxious substances were smaller cargoes in those days around the world than they are today and, ultimately, it was a small incident that had to be dealt with.

Now the scope and size of incidents are huge. Today's ships are now simply called very large ships because they do not have another name for them. They are football fields in length. They are phenomenally huge. When they carry bulk cargo, it can be noxious substances or oil. Most of them are oil carriers. If there is a major incident due to a rupture, there may be a leak. I am not talking 1,000 litres or 10,000 litres, but millions. That is the scope of the issue that we now have to deal with.

● (1325)

Unfortunately, the measures in Bill C-3, as much as they step toward the right direction, do not take into consideration the scope and magnitude of the spills before us today because they are of such huge proportions. If we have a catastrophic spill like we saw in the gulf, which came out of a well that lost its backflow preventer, the effects are equally transparent. Essentially, the top of the well head blew off allowing it to spew oil for weeks. Although the magnitude of that was seen across thousands of miles, the damage that was done to the ocean floor and elsewhere in the ecosystem is unknown because it has not yet been mapped out. We looked at the shoreline in Louisiana and up the gulf coast into Florida, down into Mexico, and a number of other different places, but we need to determine what the damage was to the marine aquaculture. It could take decades to make that determination.

Government Orders

We have one of the largest coastlines, if not the largest coastline, of any nation in the world: British Columbia. It is fair to talk about that since the northern gateway is on everyone's mind today, including the government's. The government should help out by sharing that with us now. It would unburden its mind of that decision and make it feel better. Like the saying in the evangelical movement "repent and thou shalt see the way and the light and the truth", it should simply tell us what that is now.

My friend from Churchill talked about the fact that we have this huge internal waterway called Hudson's Bay. A lot of folks forget about this huge piece that goes right into the Arctic Ocean. Although we see it on a map, quite often we lose sight of that. I want to thank my friend from Churchill for giving us the opportunity to remember that. Oddly enough, many if not all of us live on or near a coast. For those of us who live in central Canada, it is strange to think about that. I live on the coast but I have two coasts to go to, the coasts of Lake Erie and Lake Ontario. The folks from Toronto and my good friend from Parkdale—High Park have the north shore of Lake Ontario. She lives on a coast. Many of us across this country live very close to bodies of water, as do our good friends in the Conservative Party. A body of water is often one or two blocks away from their home.

The impact of any of these kinds of catastrophic spills is not just substances that come up the St. Lawrence River and head into places like Lake Erie, Lake Ontario, and Lake Superior because we heard our member from Churchill talk about how that would get out through Hudson's Bay. We have bodies of water throughout this entire country in front of us that have that potential.

It is interesting to look at the two furthest coasts. I will leave out the north for now, but if we look at the east and west coasts and we talk to sailors about traversing the north Atlantic and heading into Newfoundland, depending on the time of year it can be one of the most dangerous waters one could ever enter into. I have been on our far east coast as well as the west coast and have not had the opportunity to go to the Arctic yet. When we look at the north Atlantic we see the types of dangers that are inherent in it. Seafarers know all too well the inherent dangers of going to sea.

As a kid, I grew up on an island and it was natural for us to be at the sea. When one grows up in Scotland, which is an island, the coast is everywhere. There is no other land, just coast, and nearly all of us at some point in time take to the sea somehow. Whether we fish or are involved in other industries, we always seem to be at sea. In their hearts seafarers know the dangers of going to sea. It is one of the most dangerous occupations in the world.

● (1330)

I raise that because they know the inherent danger. They know that the likelihood of an incident just simply gets greater the longer they are at sea. Very few seafarers, very few sailors, ever run out an entire career not having an incident while on ship. It is just an inherent danger of actually being on a ship. Regardless how good the master is or how well the ship is built, it just happens. Some of it happens through negligence, sometimes, of the master of the ship and sometimes it is just simply the weather. We have heard of ships that just simply sunk, and people will ask how they could possibly have sunk because it would have been impossible for them to sink.

When they get out in a gale or on the wrong sea, they can sink. Regardless how new these vessels are, how large they are, how sophisticated they are, with radar, sonar, and all kinds of navigational tools, when the sea is angry, the sea will conquer. The problem for us is that we face the consequences of what is left of that catastrophic mess.

Now, of course, with this, we are talking about who pays for that because, ultimately, this comes back to the risk. If people want to be in the business of moving noxious substances and oil and hazardous materials, they know the risk when they decide to go into that business.

How is it that these operators, the movers of this type of material, have figured out a way to download the risk to us? That is what they have done. Now they have decided to move them in huge bulk cargo carriers that are literally beyond most of our imaginations, unless one has actually been at port and seen one. How big are these things? They are gigantic. If they have a spill, it will more than likely be beyond the capability of the amount of these funds that they have to put up as a liability, and these companies that are moving this material have figured that out. They have now figured out how to download the risk to the Canadian public.

Other businesses do not get to do that. They do not get to download their risk to the general public and say that maybe it will cost \$1 billion or \$4 billion and they will pay the first couple hundred million dollars, maybe up to \$500 million. Then other folks can carry the rest.

It is patently wrong. Never mind it being unfair; it is just patently wrong. No other business gets to do that. No other business gets to simply say to the Canadian taxpayer, "You carry the risk while I carry on making money."

These businesses are why we say they should actually be held accountable for the costs. Yes, some will say we will put them out of business. That is the risk they took when they understood that this was a business where they could make lots of money. However, the risk is that, if they have a potential catastrophic spill and they have to pay for the cleanup, it might wipe them out. That is the risk that, in our view, they should accept, because there is a huge generator of wealth on the other side because there is a lot of money to be made in this type of business.

The other side of the coin is that they do it as well as they should. If they are unfortunate and the sea catches up to them and they have a catastrophic event and spill and sully the pristine coastlines of my great friends from British Columbia, the damage will be irreparable probably for the rest of the lifetimes of all of us who are in this House which, in some case, would be many decades. For me, it would obviously be a little less, as I am a little older. However, there are many folks in this House who are much younger than I who have many more decades to live. It will be like the *Exxon Valdez*, which is still not cleaned up, from what I have heard from my friends in British Columbia, in the sense it is still there decades later.

Government Orders

Now we are talking about new product that would come through the northern gateway, about which I still have not heard from my friends across the way what they are going to do there—somehow I do not think it is coming. Perhaps, of course, the Speaker knows and might share it with us when he stands.

Clearly, this type of product, this type of oil, which is now mixed with some other things, is a different piece from anything. With respect to the type of oil spilling into the Kalamazoo River, in Michigan, the American environmental agencies found a spill that they had no expertise to deal with because it sunk to the bottom of the river.

● (1335)

Oil normally floats, and gasoline floats and evaporates, not that either one is a good thing to have in the water. However, heavy oil sinks. That creates a new problem of how to deal with an oil that sinks to the bottom, be it the ocean or, as in this case, a river. The cost of that is probably not determinable as yet, and yet we have set a limit on folks.

I think it was my colleague from Victoria who said earlier that, while it is great to have fines, if there is no one to go collect them, then we actually would not get anything. If only traffic tickets were like that. If they actually wrote us a ticket for speeding but no one actually came to collect it, we would all just keep speeding. Getting a traffic ticket for speeding usually makes one cautious. We know we will have to pay it because, if we do not, our drivers licence will not be renewed; there is no denying it. Therefore, there is a cause and effect. I was driving too fast and got caught. The punishment was handed out in the way of a ticket. I know I will have to pay it, because someone will come and collect it. Unfortunately, in this regulation there will be a ticket writer, but no one is going to collect. People could just stick them up on the wall and say, “Yeah, that’s number 48 and two more will make 50” and not pay them. What would it matter if they were not actually being enforced?

We end up in a situation where we have a regulation that is not being enforced, so why do we bother? We look at some of these regulations and we think they are not what we would do, in the sense that we would make them tougher, but they are there, so perhaps the government will hear us and will find a way to regulate them and enforce them so they actually get done.

One of the things I find quite incredible is that the bill talks about regulations: how we need to do this and that, laying down the groundwork of looking as if we are really going to be safe and secure, so that when the government this afternoon says yes to northern gateway—as I am sure it will—it will say it put all the safety regulations in place. There is Bill C-3 and some other things the government has done, like double hull tankers and other things it is talking about, inspections and all those good things. However, the government’s budgets have literally closed Coast Guard centres right across the country on both shores. The Kitsilano centre is a prime example. I understand from my friends in B.C. it is the busiest security port of anywhere in the country. However, the government closed it because it did not think it was very important.

The government is actually saying that it is going to increase the number of ships up and down the Juan de Fuca, upside, inside, and in between Vancouver Island and the mainland, but we do not

actually need any extra Coast Guard. It reminds me of someone saying that the stop light does not work, but there are only two cars so we do not actually need a traffic cop to control the traffic, and then saying that we will let 2,000 through there and we still do not need a traffic cop. Well, we do. If we are going to actually increase the amount of tanker flow in those troubled waters—I say troubled waters with respect to the fact that they are dangerous and hazardous—we need to put traffic cops there. The Coast Guard are not just a traffic cops; they actually save lives. They actually respond.

We see the same thing on the east coast with the closures there. I have heard my colleagues from Quebec talk about the closing of a Coast Guard office in Quebec that actually provides French language service. If I am not correct someone will correct me during questions. There are a lot of Maritimers at sea. We need that type of essential service.

Just imagine a Maritimer at sea making a distress call and he actually cannot talk to the person and let him know where he is, because of a language barrier, because he speaks French and does not understand English. He is stuck out in the North Atlantic somewhere, bobbing around, waiting for his ship to flip over and end up in the North Atlantic Ocean, where he will last about 18 minutes, simply because we did not provide a language service.

● (1340)

How do we answer to that person’s family? How do we tell that person’s family that we are really sorry we did not provide service in the right language?

It is time for the Conservatives to re-evaluate their cuts. Those places are essential for Maritimers, they are essential for our coast, they are essential for our environment, and they are essential for Canadians.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the amendments proposes to change our port authorities. We have about 18 port authorities in Canada, and they play a very important role in terms of economic activity for our communities.

There is an expectation that there is a role of leadership that will emanate from those port authorities. One of the changes just deals with the appointment and the timing of appointments. It is not earth-shattering in terms of changes. However, the reason I bring it up is that within the legislation there are some minor changes, and whenever we are afforded the opportunity to comment on some of those minor changes, it actually causes me to think about the bigger picture and the importance of our port authorities and the roles they play. I wonder if the member might want to take advantage of talking about the important role of our port authorities here in Canada.

● (1345)

Mr. Malcolm Allen: Mr. Speaker, the member for Winnipeg North is right. Port authorities are important. They are critical pieces of infrastructure in making decisions about how ports will operate, whether they are safe, and whether they enact certain types of regulations.

Government Orders

It seems to me that it is incumbent, if we are actually going to do it and make appointments to port authorities, that we look at a few things. We should be transparent about it. We ought to vet people. If the last couple of appointments were vetted, I would like to know who the people were who vetted them; it is time for them to find something else to do. They ought to be capable and competent. What is the point of having people who really do not know what they are doing when it comes to a port authority?

I can imagine being the master of a vessel coming into a port and thinking, "I wonder if the chair of the port authority actually thought that maybe we should not put that pier there because I cannot get into the port now. Why did they build that there?" It is because the person in question who authorized it did not know anything about a port. He or she just said, "Well, we need some extra place to tie stuff up; we will tie another ship there." The person did not think about the supertanker coming in and not fitting in that little aisle.

That is the great undoing for us in central Canada and the Great Lakes, the fact that the locks in the Welland Canal only take ships of a certain size. They take large ships, but they do not take the ships of today that are huge. Consequently, in a place like Port Weller in the city of St. Catharines, the dry docks, they could not build the ships of that magnitude. It is not because they are not capable. They are very capable, but they cannot get them out. They cannot get them through the canal, so they cannot sail them back into the North Atlantic. That is the unfortunate part of Port Weller being where it is, that the ship builders are not capable of getting a ship out after building ships of that magnitude.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. friend from Welland for raising some very timely concerns as we look at the so-called safeguarding Canada's seas and skies act. As I mentioned before, it is the cobbling together of provisions for forensic studies of airline disasters and appointments to an aeronautics board, and calling it "safeguarding our skies", and putting it in with provisions to enforce a hazardous products convention for the marine environment. These really do not go together logically, and the title is pure public relations.

However, because he mentioned tankers and how big they are, I say this for that member. Regarding the supertankers that are proposed for the Port of Kitimat—and we will find out later today what is going to be said about that—if they laid the Empire State Building on end, the tanker would be slightly longer.

A tanker holds two million barrels, and not heavy crude. It will hold something called dilbit, which is bitumen. It is a raw product being exported because we do not seem to want the jobs of refining it in this country. It is mixed with other toxic substances called diluent. That Port of Kitimat will have some tankers coming in with toxic diluent and different tankers will come in to take away the dilbit, which is also toxic, and no study yet has determined how dilbit will behave in real conditions in a marine environment. How reckless is this scheme? I ask this for my friend from Welland.

Mr. Malcolm Allen: Mr. Speaker, the member is absolutely right. When it comes to the size, I appreciate the scaling of the Empire State Building and the size of these ships, because they are huge.

I do not know if anybody in this House has, but I have actually been to a port when there was one. They are mammoth. I do not

know how else to describe them. An individual is dwarfed by the humongous size of them. They are an amazing engineering feat.

I think the spill in Kalamazoo, Michigan, pointed out the very nature of not understanding this new material. It is not a new material in the sense that we know what it is when it comes out of the ground as bitumen, but when we mix it, we do not really know what it does. We do know there is a negative effect. Nobody on this side would say that if we had a spill, it is a positive thing. They would all say it was negative.

The issue is how we would manage it. What do we do with it? We need science to tell us what we should do to manage a spill, because we will have one. It is not a question of it never happening; it will happen. There will be a spill. The issue is about when it will happen and how we will handle it, but we actually do not know the science behind what the material would do. We have WHMIS sheets in this province, hazardous materials sheets that describe what to do to protect ourselves if a material spills. We do not have them for this particular material, and that is a shame.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Giguère (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question has to do with the security of our marine transportation system and the fact that the Canadian Coast Guard is not equipped with super tugs.

If one of these supertankers were to have engine trouble in Canadian waters, it could not be towed by a motor boat. An auxiliary coast guard made up of volunteers, who are often equipped with fishing boats, would not help either.

It is a huge problem that the companies that have destroyed the environment and caused oil spills in Alaska, the Gulf of Guinea and the Gulf of Mexico are the same companies that are operating in Canada and asking us to trust them.

Could my distinguished colleague explain to us how these factors add to the risks?

• (1350)

[*English*]

Mr. Malcolm Allen: Mr. Speaker, we talked earlier about the size of the transporting vessel compared to the tow vessels. They are not even comparable any more. The tow vessels were built to a different standard and for different ships.

I am sure there are colleagues here, or perhaps people in their families, who understand the maritime industries. They would know that it is a different situation when a ship is being towed.

Government Orders

Recently we witnessed one of our frigates become incapacitated. It had to be towed back. It took a long time to attach the tow, and then it broke. Then it had to be redone. These are difficult things to accomplish at sea in any circumstance, never mind with a vessel that is basically not manoeuvrable and relies on tugs and tows to manoeuvre. Tow lines break. It is not like towing a car. To do that, we simply stop, put the chain on again, and away we go. In the case of a ship, it could take days, and by that time the ship could have run aground. If it is in the passage between Vancouver Island and the mainland, it will be on the rocks. They do not have time. That is the problem.

Towing a ship or using tugs to try to move it makes for difficult physics on the water. I could not actually explain it, because I do not know the physics well enough to do so; all I can say is that it is extremely difficult. Anybody involved in the industry would tell us it is extremely hard, and when it goes awry, it is really difficult to get the situation back under control.

If a crosswind was blowing across one of these supertankers and the tow line broke at the stern, the ship would literally turn sideways. It would then go backward. It would literally simply float backward. If it had lost a rudder or lost an engine and was not under its own power when the tow line was lost, control of the ship would be lost, and the other tows would not be able to right it. They might be able to hold it off if they were lucky, but if all the tows could not be restored, that tanker would literally be on the rocks.

Then we would have an immense catastrophe of a proportion that we have never seen in our lifetimes, nor would we ever want to. That is the dilemma. Those are the things we are trying to point out to the Conservatives that they have not taken into consideration.

If northern gateway is approved this afternoon—which, as a betting man, I would say will happen—the Conservative really need to fix Bill C-3, and they ought to do that in the Senate, since it will be out of here at third reading.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I get the opportunity to address this bill.

It is really important to acknowledge, right from the beginning, that it is unfortunate that the government has chosen such a piecemeal way of dealing with what is a very important issue for all Canadians.

What we are talking about with Bill C-3 is everything from marine transportation to rail transportation to passenger safety to the airline industry and more. Instead of comprehensive legislation that deals with the issues in a more tangible fashion, what we see before us is legislation that deals with the issues in a very piecemeal way.

We think it is really unfortunate that the government has chosen to take that direction when it had a much greater opportunity for a more significant impact on the industries we are trying to deal with today.

Nowhere more can that be highlighted than with the government's anticipated decision on the northern gateway project. In questions not only today but in the past, whether from the leader of the Liberal Party or from critics in our caucus, we have been trying to get the government to understand the importance of the issues surrounding the northern gateway project.

In trying to get the government to understand, what we are doing, in good part, is trying to get it to look at the different stakeholders. One has to question how effective Conservative members of Parliament are when they have been sitting on their hands and not doing much advocating for what needs to be happening on a very important issue.

The pipeline issue is an important issue to Canadians. What needs to be highlighted today with the northern gateway project is that the government has really dropped the ball. It is about the risk factor. Let us think about the economic and environmental impacts. The government is putting Canadians, particularly those in British Columbia, under these economic and environmental risk factors.

The government has not done its homework on the importance of that very issue. The northern gateway has an unacceptable level of environmental and economic risk to British Columbia and the coastal region. In fact, the University of British Columbia did a study in 2012 that revealed that an oil spill stemming from the northern gateway could cost in excess of \$300 million. That is just the economics of it, and it does not include the long-term environmental impact.

One would think that the Prime Minister would want to work with the different stakeholders and listen to what the people of British Columbia have to say about pipelines, particularly in regard to the northern gateway project, but the government has fallen short. It has not listened to our first nations or people of aboriginal heritage or to the many different communities that have expressed legitimate, genuine concerns. The government appears to have made a decision that is not in the best interests either of the region or of all Canadians.

We have been putting the northern gateway issue forward for months. The response we have received from the government has been found wanting. It is a government that does not recognize the importance of getting our product from the Prairies to the coastline. It is a government that has failed to recognize that there needs to be a social contract, that it needs to work with the communities in order to make things happen.

● (1355)

The government has not been able to demonstrate that the northern gateway project is the project of the future. In fact, it has failed to demonstrate that it is the best route to go. As a result, many different stakeholders and communities are nervous about what we anticipate will be a likely decision. One has to question why the government has not listened to what people are saying about the project—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Order. The time for government orders has expired. The hon. member for Winnipeg North will have 14 minutes remaining for his speech when this matter returns before the House.

Statements by members, the hon. member for Ahuntsic.

*Statements by Members***STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

• (1400)

[Translation]

AHUNTSIC COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

Mrs. Maria Mourani (Ahuntsic, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, the organization we now know as the Union des familles d'Ahuntsic was founded in 1963. Like many community institutions in Quebec, the Union des familles d'Ahuntsic was originally established by a church, in this case, the Saint-André-Apôtre parish. In the 1970s, Loisir Saint-André-Apôtre became the Union des familles d'Ahuntsic.

I want to commend the women and men who have helped make high-quality leisure activities accessible to everyone: women, men, teens and children.

Day camps, sports, dance, wood carving, stained glass, Japanese embroidery, music and singing are just some of the activities offered at the UFA. Over the years, many residents of Ahuntsic have developed their skills in this respectful and accepting environment.

On behalf of my constituents, I want to thank the people at the Union des familles d'Ahuntsic and wish them well in the future.

* * *

[English]

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATIONS

Mr. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is graduation time in high schools across Canada, and I want to rise to mark this milestone in the life of our young people.

First, I would like to thank our teachers: the teachers, in Durham, Clarington, Scugog, and Uxbridge, for their dedication and mentorship to our young people.

I would like to congratulate the graduates on this achievement and wish them well as they embark on the path to college, university, or the workforce.

I would like to highlight three exceptional young leaders from Durham: Mitchell Wootton, from Holy Trinity Catholic School in Courtice, winner of the TD Scholarship for Community Leadership and the Schulich Leadership Scholarship, an academic and peer leader, headed to engineering at Queen's University; Callen Hageman, from Uxbridge Secondary School, winner of the prestigious Loran Scholarship for his academic and leadership potential, also headed to engineering at Queen's University; Keira Royle, from Clarington Central Secondary School, for her academic work and her advocacy for mental health with young people, headed to the University of Windsor.

Congratulations on these achievements, and continue to strive for excellence in the future.

* * *

[Translation]

SPORTS ON CBC/RADIO-CANADA

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Chambly—Borduas, NDP): Mr. Speaker, while our athletes made all Canadians proud during the Winter

Olympics in Sochi, the Conservatives' cuts may well compromise the media coverage of our top amateur athletes' performances by forcing CBC to cut its sports service to almost nothing.

May I remind the minister that participation in sports by young Canadians is at its lowest and that one way to fight the epidemic of obesity and physical inactivity among young people is to encourage them to be inspired by our greatest amateur athletes? By cutting this media coverage, we are preventing young Canadians from identifying with our amateur athletes, who are role models for living an active life and participating in sports.

[English]

The cuts imposed on CBC will jeopardize programs like *Sports Weekend*, which could have a huge impact on amateur sports coverage in our country. The Canadian amateur sports community is rightly worried, and many of our Olympians have signed a petition to urge Conservatives to stop their attacks on our public broadcaster.

After all our athletes have done to represent us so well and with so much pride, the least we can do is give them the coverage they deserve.

* * *

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton East, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I pay tribute to one of Edmonton's tireless community leaders.

Norm Aldi knows everyone on 118th Avenue, also known as Alberta Avenue. He has been a driving force in the revitalization of the avenue, helping transform a rather drab street into an architecturally designed cityscape of multicultural boutiques and ethnic dining, a delight for those who want to experience the breadth of Edmonton's cultural mélange.

A great Albertan and a proud constituent of Edmonton East, Norm has been instrumental in organizing the Eastwoodfest annual summer festival. He has been a director of the Alberta Avenue Business Association and president of the Eastwood Community League. Norm is sure to volunteer, whether it is organizing the successful Taste of 118th Food Festival or establishing an off-leash dog park.

I thank my friend Norm Aldi, recipient of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal for his years of community service.

* * *

JACK MACANDREW

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I pay tribute to the late Jack MacAndrew and ask the House to recognize his outstanding contribution to journalism and public affairs.

Born in New Brunswick, he moved at age eight and considered P. E.I. his heart's true home. Jack made his mark in broadcasting, print journalism, theatre, and television. Starting first as a Canadian Air Force radio officer, he soon moved into the public relations and marketing field with CBC Maritimes. As a reporter, he covered the Springhill mining disaster, broadcasting to the world.

Statements by Members

He wrote, produced, and hosted several Canadian television shows and contributed to productions such as *Anne of Green Gables* and *Johnny Belinda*. His company, Jack MacAndrew Productions, based in Toronto and L.A., created many more.

A man of strong opinions, his column “The View From Here” was well known. Jack called it like he saw it, and by doing so, he kept politicians and public figures aware and humble, always advocating for what he felt was right. He wrote without fear and spoke truth to power.

For Jack's wife Barbara and sons Shaun and Randy, our thanks and condolences. That is the view from here.

* * *

● (1405)

WOMEN OF DISTINCTION AWARDS

Ms. Wai Young (Vancouver South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on June 3, hundreds of people from across Vancouver gathered to celebrate the leadership and contributions of women in our community at the 2014 YWCA Women of Distinction Awards.

For 30 years, the awards have recognized outstanding women and workplaces. Since 1984, they have honoured over 250 award recipients and more than 1,450 nominees. In addition to recognizing the nominees, this event highlights and raises funds for the programs and services that help improve the lives of more than 55,000 people each year from across metro Vancouver.

This year, it was an honour for me to join 59 other amazing women as nominees for this prestigious award. The Women of Distinction Awards provide an ideal opportunity for our community to recognize these outstanding individuals and their contributions. Without the dedication of these inspiring and motivated women, Vancouver would not be the wonderful city that it is.

Congratulations to the recipients and to each nominee. I look forward to continuing to work with them to build a stronger Vancouver and Canada.

* * *

YOUTH OF THE MONTH AWARD

Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP): Mr. Speaker, across my riding there are kids doing extraordinary things. They model the way not only for their peers, but for us. In recognition of what they do and in an effort to encourage them and to encourage others to follow their lead, I created some time ago the Beaches—East York Youth of the Month Award.

For the month of June, that award goes to the kids of DeSantos Martial Arts, who participated in this year's 140-kilometre walk from Toronto to Niagara Falls. It was a journey of self-discovery, but it was also a journey to raise money for both local and international school breakfast programs. We all know there are many kinds of personal journeys, but the best are those that lead us to others who need help.

A special mention goes to Marisol, Ayoka, Allison, Tristan, and Victor, who, over four long days completed the entire journey this year. For Kwan Jan Nim De Santos, Ma'am Toni, and all of the

instructors at the school, thanks for teaching our kids that a black belt is just a white belt that never quit.

* * *

CALGARY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Mr. Devinder Shory (Calgary Northeast, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Calgary International Airport, located in my riding, is the third busiest airport in Canada, contributing \$6 billion to the economy.

Last weekend I joined 12,000 Calgarians to celebrate the opening of the longest commercial runway in Canada. This is the only runway in Canada that has a 100% eco-friendly LED lighting system. It will save 60,000 kilowatt hours per year, which is the equivalent to a saving of 41.3 metric tonnes of carbon dioxide annually.

Calgary airport is an economic driver for western Canada, and I congratulate the Calgary Airport Authority on this historic milestone.

Before my time is up, I would like to thank all of my colleagues who supported the passage of Bill C-24, the strengthening Canadian Citizenship Act, yesterday, especially our hard-working Minister of Citizenship and Immigration for including provisions from my private member's bill, Bill C-425.

* * *

CHRISTOPHER STANLEY

Mr. Jay Aspin (Nipissing—Timiskaming, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our community of North Bay is in mourning. On a joyful Father's Day this past weekend, we lost 17-year-old Christopher Stanley in a boating accident.

Chris was a hard-working young man who had a passion for football as a Widdifield Wildcat and a passion for the outdoors. He had just returned from a 5-day canoe trip. This would have been his graduating year and his 18th birthday would have been this Friday.

It is a very painful and tragic event in which this young bright life was lost. He will be dearly missed by his classmates, his family and our community.

I have been moved by the outpouring of support for Chris's family, as well as a profound sense of loss for him. Although his time in this world was brief, it was very clear that he enriched the lives of many around him.

I ask members of the House to please join me in extending our dearest sympathies and condolences to Chris's family. His life and spirit will never be forgotten. God bless Christopher Stanley.

Statements by Members

● (1410)

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Dany Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, NDP): Mr. Speaker, no one can forget the Conservatives' employment insurance reform. It would be hard to come up with a more regressive policy. This unfortunate reform has weakened the economy in Quebec, the Maritimes and my region of Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, which is having a hard time getting back on its feet.

It does not end there. Every day the Conservatives, who are the self-proclaimed job champions, are attacking the rights of Canadian workers and the gains they have made. They are attacking unions, labour-sponsored funds, the public service, and local services.

Allow me to provide some examples. Bills C-377 and C-525 were sad attempts at overhauling labour relations in Canada.

Bill C-4, the budget implementation bill, was another opportunity for the Conservatives to quietly turn back the clock on decades' worth of struggles for decent working conditions and good jobs.

The cuts to Canada Post will further eat away at local services and wipe out quality jobs for Canadians.

In my riding, workers and unions are clearly saying that the summer will be hot and that the declaration of war issued by the members opposite will not go unanswered.

2015 starts now.

* * *

[English]

JAGAT UPPAL

Mr. Andrew Saxton (North Vancouver, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honour the life of a prominent member of the B.C. Sikh community who, I am sad to say, passed away.

Jagat Uppal, known as Jack, arrived in Canada in 1926 as part of the first wave of Sikh immigration to the province. Following his father's death, Jack left school at age 13 to help support his family and spent much of his time in sawmills, where he eventually became an owner and leader in the industry.

He used his experience to help fellow Sikhs get their start in B.C. and held an open door policy for anyone who needed help.

Not only was he a selfless boss, friend, father, and husband; he was also perhaps best known for his tireless fight for equality. Jack helped lead the charge in the 1940s to secure the right to vote for Indian settlers in Canada, which was finally granted in 1947.

This is especially poignant this year, the 100th anniversary of the *Komagata Maru* incident, for which our Prime Minister was the first leader to officially apologize on behalf of the Government of Canada.

On behalf of all British Columbians, I want to extend my condolences to the Uppal family and thank Jack for being a role model and an inspiration to all.

[Translation]

SUMMER IN COMPTON—STANSTEAD

Mr. Jean Rousseau (Compton—Stanstead, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this summer, there will be lots to do for those who visit my riding, the most beautiful in all of the Eastern Townships, Quebec, and Canada.

Tourists will appreciate and enjoy Compton—Stanstead because of its lakes, rivers, mountains, and bed and breakfast establishments, and especially because of the people who live there. Some of the activities to enjoy are the 150th anniversary celebrations of Coaticook, which will welcome tourists with its cheese and famous ice cream; Expo Vallée de la Coaticook in August; the Comptonales, an agri-food fair in September in the picturesque region of Compton, where the wonderful Donabelle farm strawberries are ready to be picked; and the Raid de Jean-D'Avignon in East Hereford in July, which attracts 350 cyclists, as many as the people who live there. That is incredible.

Visitors can also watch the Perseids at the Mont-Mégantic observatory, walk the Sentier Poétique in Saint-Venant-de-Paquette, which is a real cultural jewel, and take in the agricultural fairs in Cookshire-Eaton and Ayer's Cliff.

By all means visit Quebec this summer and you will discover its distinctive character.

* * *

[English]

LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Scott Armstrong (Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal leader is at it again, this time with one of his senior supporters, Marc Emery, a convicted criminal and drug dealer.

Yes, Mr. Emery and his followers support the Liberal leader's irresponsible campaign to make it easier for children to gain access to and smoke marijuana, a campaign that continues.

This Conservative government wants to help prevent children from using drugs. The irresponsible Liberal plan to legalize and normalize marijuana, which includes the Liberal leader smoking it while holding public office, is dangerous to the health and well-being of Canadians, particularly our young children.

The Liberal leader needs to get his head out of the clouds. Listening to the advice of convicted criminals and drug dealers is probably not a good place to start.

* * *

WORLDPRIDE CELEBRATION

Ms. Chrystia Freeland (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this month Toronto will have the honour of hosting the WorldPride Celebration. My constituency of Toronto Centre will be at the heart of the festivities.

We can be proud this landmark celebration will take place nearly nine years after gay marriage became legal across Canada.

What better symbol of our decade of equality than our victorious premier, Kathleen Wynne, the Commonwealth's first openly lesbian elected head of government?

WorldPride is a moment for us to redouble our work to support LGBT rights. Here at home, a particular focus must be LGBT youth, who are too often a target of bullying and disproportionately find themselves homeless and unemployed.

WorldPride is an essential time for us to speak out about LGBT rights around the globe as well. Too many countries, ranging from Russia to Uganda, are turning back the clock.

LGBT rights are human rights. Canada must be both a world leader and a global haven on this crucial issue.

* * *

• (1415)

ARTS AND CULTURE

Mr. Parm Gill (Brampton—Springdale, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on July 1, the audiovisual coproduction agreement between the Government of Canada and the Government of India will come into force. It will allow producers and creators to combine their resources and expertise to develop audiovisual co-production projects contributing to the economies of both countries.

Canada takes pride in being a world leader in audiovisual treaty co-production. In the past 50 years, Canada has signed audiovisual co-production treaties with 53 countries.

In the past 10 years alone, Canada has produced close to 681 audiovisual co-productions, with total production budgets of close to \$5 billion.

In 2012-13, Canada's audiovisual sector generated almost \$6 billion to the Canadian economy and created approximately 130,000 jobs.

As always, this government strives to promote jobs, growth, and long-term prosperity. Canadians are disappointed that the anti-trade and pro-carbon tax NDP cannot say the same.

* * *

[Translation]

MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND ATTORNEY GENERAL OF CANADA

Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse (Louis-Saint-Laurent, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Peter principle states that, in a hierarchy, every employee tends to rise to their level of incompetence.

The Minister of Justice is a perfect example. After being minister of defence for years, where his disastrous management of the F-35 file forced the Prime Minister to take the department's chequebook away from him, he was catapulted to the Department of Justice.

In his new role, he caused a new crisis by appointing Justice Marc Nadon to the Supreme Court, which then asked him to step back. Yesterday, in the House, we had the perfect example of the confusion that reigns in the minister's mind. Showing his true colours, he started by pointing out how appreciated the talents of Justice Mainville will be in the Supreme Court. The only thing is that Justice

Oral Questions

Mainville was appointed to the Quebec Court of Appeal. Feeling cornered, he tried to explain that the Superior Court of Quebec is sort of like the Supreme Court in the province, which luckily is as coherent as the remarks of the Liberal Party leader on a good day. With opponents like that, we can feel pretty good about ourselves.

It is a really sad day when the justice minister does not even understand the Canadian court system. If he is the best Conservative in the justice sector, it is no wonder that courts constantly turn down their legislation.

* * *

[English]

ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION

Hon. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this week thousands of veterans gathered for the 45th Dominion Convention of the Royal Canadian Legion, and Edmonton rolled out the welcome mat in its usual exemplary fashion. I was pleased to be there.

I was especially pleased that the Minister of Veterans Affairs attended and announced that our government will increase its funding from \$120,000 to \$240,000 to the Royal Canadian Legion for its veterans outreach and visitation initiative.

This money will increase the Legion's capacity to spend time with their veterans who are living in long-term care facilities. This increased support allows us to further enhance the care we provide veterans and further support the important work the Legion does every day.

Since being incorporated by a special act of Parliament in 1926, the Royal Canadian Legion has been a focal point for Canada's veterans to better the lives of their colleagues and to foster remembrance across Canada.

I would like to congratulate the Royal Canadian Legion on its successful convention, and extend our appreciation for its service in support of Canada's veterans and their families. I look forward to working together with them in the decades ahead.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

JUSTICE

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, section 98 of the Constitution Act of 1867 states:

The Judges of the Courts of Quebec shall be selected from the Bar of that Province.

In the Nadon case, the Supreme Court was very clear about what that means. It is a question of complying with the Constitution and upholding the rule of law.

The Prime Minister already promised the House that he would uphold both the letter and the spirit of the Supreme Court's decision in the Nadon case.

Why is the Prime Minister not delivering on that promise?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are not talking about the Supreme Court of Canada. This is about a judge who asked to be transferred to the Quebec Superior Court. That judge has an impressive record, and he has long been a lawyer in that province. I am sure that he will do a good job.

• (1420)

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice made a telling slip of the tongue yesterday when he said that Justice Mainville's wealth of legal knowledge will be welcome at the Supreme Court, not the Quebec Court of Appeal.

We are not questioning Mr. Mainville's undisputed legal knowledge. We are questioning his eligibility.

Can the Prime Minister tell us whether he intends to appoint Mr. Mainville to the Supreme Court of Canada? Yes or no?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, at this point in time, there are no vacancies at the Supreme Court of Canada, and there is no ongoing process to choose a replacement for a future vacancy.

As I have said many times, we will uphold the letter and the spirit of the Supreme Court's decision.

[*English*]

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, he still will not answer.

First the Prime Minister ignored warnings from the Chief Justice about appointing a Federal Court judge to represent Quebec on the Supreme Court. Then the Prime Minister publicly attacked the Chief Justice, which is unprecedented in the history of Canada. Now he has made another appointment that violates a nearly identical rule, daring the Supreme Court to reject his appointment yet again.

Why is the Prime Minister starting a war with the Supreme Court? What can be accomplished by this?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, obviously, I categorically reject that. Before the leader of the NDP moves to yet another conspiracy theory, let me just outline the facts. There is no vacancy on the Supreme Court of Canada at the present time, and there is no process under way to look for a replacement for an eventual vacancy on the Supreme Court of Canada. I have said repeatedly that notwithstanding our disagreement with that decision, when it comes time to fill a vacancy, we will obviously respect the letter and spirit of the decision.

* * *

[*Translation*]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, for three years the Prime Minister has staunchly defended the northern gateway pipeline.

However, he was unable to get the support of the first nations, local communities, and British Columbia residents who oppose this pipeline project.

We will soon find out whether the Prime Minister cares about the interests of Canadians or the oil lobby.

Will the Prime Minister listen to the residents of British Columbia and reject this dangerous, risky project, or was the decision made before the process even started, as usual?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we all know that the NDP is ideologically opposed to all development of resources.

However, in terms of environmental evaluations, our government establishes independent panels of experts, examines their findings and makes safe decisions for Canadians and for the environment, in the best interests of our country.

[*English*]

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the municipalities of Kitimat, Terrace, Prince Rupert, and Smithers all say no. More than 130 first nations across B.C. all say no. Three hundred scientists all say no. The Prime Minister endorsed this pipeline publicly three years ago. No matter what evidence, how many people speak out, how many people stand up against him, he keeps pushing this project.

How can the Prime Minister deny that this whole process is a sham and that the decision was taken before the process even started?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is an interesting way for the Leader of the Opposition to cover his own tracks. We all know that the NDP is ideologically opposed to all development of resources, something the NDP has called a disease on the Canadian economy.

The process we have in our government, in terms of environmental evaluations, is we establish independent expert panels that follow a public and scientific process. We have received a report from that process. We will make a decision, obviously based on the facts, in the not too distant future.

• (1425)

Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, UBC researchers have told us that a single tanker spill from the northern gateway would be catastrophic for B.C.'s pristine north coast and its economy. A large spill would cost \$10 billion to clean up, and would wipe out over 4,000 full-time B.C. jobs.

Will the Prime Minister do the right thing and say "no" to the northern gateway pipeline?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we know very well the leader of the Liberal Party's and his party's deep hostility to Canada's energy sector.

Notwithstanding that, the reality is that when we do environmental assessments of these very important projects, what we do is we set up independent experts, scientific panels that examine the facts. This government has approved some projects, not approved others, and conditionally approved some, based on the findings of panels, based on the finding of fact.

We are examining that report. We will make a decision based on the facts and the expertise in the not too distant future.

Oral Questions

Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the north coast of British Columbia, people make their living on the water. The ocean is their economy, and it has been since before European contact.

Will the Prime Minister protect the B.C. economy, and say “no” to the northern gateway pipeline?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I repeat, we make our decisions on these kinds of things, whether we approve, not approve, or conditionally approve projects, on the basis of the findings of independent panels of experts.

We will not approve a project unless we can determine that it is safe for the environment and safe for Canadians.

[Translation]

Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the clock is ticking on the northern gateway pipeline project, and the Prime Minister needs to step up and take responsibility.

We still have no response to the questions about environmental impact, and aboriginal communities still have not been properly consulted.

Will the Prime Minister do the right thing and say “no” to the northern gateway pipeline?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the responsible approach is completely different from the approach the Liberals would take. We cannot make a decision before we know the facts. We have established an independent panel of experts to examine this project, as we have done for other projects.

We will make a decision, based on the facts and the expertise we have received, in the not too distant future.

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the northern gateway pipeline project is dangerous for the environment. The risks of a spill are high and navigating oil tankers in the area will be difficult.

Apart from alienating the first nations, the only thing that this pipeline will do is export thousands of jobs. Canadians know that the northern gateway pipeline is destructive at every level.

Why do the Conservatives want to destroy the magnificent yet fragile ecosystem on the north coast of British Columbia?

Hon. Greg Rickford (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are carefully reviewing this report and a decision will be made shortly. Projects will be approved only if they are safe for Canadians and safe for the environment.

Speaking of reports, let us talk about the report from the Board of Internal Economy, which had but one recommendation: that the NDP pay back the \$1.7 million it took from taxpayers. It is time for the NDP to pay it back.

[English]

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, like a schoolyard bully, the Prime Minister has targeted opponents, attempted to divide communities, and silenced the voices of anyone who dares to oppose Enbridge northern gateway.

First nations in British Columbia will not be bullied by the Prime Minister. Communities are more united now than ever. Try as they might, the Conservatives will not silence the voices of the people of British Columbia.

The 21 Conservative MPs from British Columbia, will one of them have the audacity, the courage to stand up and say “no” to the Prime Minister, “no” to the oil lobby, and say “yes” to British Columbia, and reject this bad pipeline?

Hon. Greg Rickford (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are carefully reviewing this report, and a decision will be forthcoming. Projects will only be approved if they are safe for Canadians and safe for the environment.

While we are on the topic of reports, let us talk about the report from the Board of Internal Economy. That report has one recommendation: that the NDP pay back the \$1.17 million it took from taxpayers. It is time for the NDP to pay it back.

• (1430)

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, not a single Conservative MP would stand up and answer that from British Columbia. It shows a lot about their convictions and their courage.

The Conservatives are preparing to rubber-stamp this project in just a few short hours. First nations are preparing their legal defence with their allies.

Who does the Conservative government have to blame for this opposition? According to its own special envoy, it is the Conservative Government of Canada. For years, the Conservatives put all of their efforts into berating opponents and insulting first nations. Do they know the best way to show first nations respect? It is to show first nations respect: Say no to this bad pipeline.

Hon. Greg Rickford (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first nations have and will continue to make important contributions as a full partner in the development of our natural resources. In fact, the natural resources sector is the largest private employer of first nations and people in Canada. The success of this sector depends on their full participation, from environmental stewardship to the economic benefits of responsible resource development.

* * *

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, time and again the Conservatives simply fail to respect first nations. Now four Alberta first nations have filed suit against the government for failing to ensure access to safe drinking water, arguing failure to respect treaty rights, the Constitution, and international law.

Far too many first nations still suffer the effects of contaminated water, yet all the government has done is enact a law to transfer liability to the first nations.

Oral Questions

How many more children will be denied safe drinking water before the government acts?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government is taking action so that first nations across Canada have the same quality of drinking water as all Canadians. That is why, since 2006, we have invested approximately \$3 billion in first nations' water and waste water infrastructure and related public health activities.

As a matter of fact, in the last economic development action plan 2014, we invested \$323 million, and that member and that party voted against it.

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we voted against Conservative budgets that failed first nations.

We have heard the minister's excuses many times before and from many different ministers. The shameful state of drinking water on first nation reserves has been ignored for far too long by far too many governments. Imagine parents being afraid to wash their children because the water is not safe. This has to change.

Will the minister stop stalling and ensure that first nation communities have the necessary funds for ensuring that everyone has access to safe drinking water?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, indeed, this has to change. That is why we passed the Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Act, which will, for the first time, provide first nation communities with drinking water and waste water standards that are comparable to other communities in the country. Again, on this one, the opposition voted against it.

[Translation]

Mr. Jonathan Genest-Jourdain (Manicouagan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the minister does not seem to be taking the matter seriously. I wonder how he would react if his home had no access to drinking water.

The problem of drinking water on reserves affects hundreds of people. By not living up to their commitment to provide resources to ensure access to drinking water on reserves, the Conservatives are leaving the communities exposed to shortages or, worse, to the contamination of their drinking water.

We do not want to know what the excuses are; rather, we want to know how the minister has managed to allow this situation to deteriorate and what he is going to do to correct it.

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are going to continue on exactly the same path that we started on: we will continue investing in aboriginal communities. Since 2006, we have invested approximately \$3 billion in water and waste water infrastructure in aboriginal communities across the country.

As a matter of fact, in budget 2014 we propose to continue implementing our action plan with an investment of \$323.4 million. That is a significant and meaningful investment.

• (1435)

PUBLIC WORKS AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Ms. Éline Michaud (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, NDP): Mr. Speaker, according to the Department of Defence's timeline, the contract to replace the CF-18s will not be finalized until 2018. That is the best-case scenario. The department has also acknowledged the possibility that the contract might not be signed until 2020. That gives the department plenty of time to launch a bidding process to get the best value for money and maximize spinoffs for aerospace industry workers.

Why does the Conservative government want to give billions of dollars to Lockheed Martin without even launching a bidding process to replace the CF-18s?

Hon. Diane Finley (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I have said many times, no decision has been made about replacing the CF-18 fleet. We have received reports from the air force, and those reports have been reviewed by a group of experts outside government. The experts confirmed that the analysis was both thorough and impartial. We will make a decision based on the reports, and that decision will be in the best interests of the forces that need this equipment.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Ms. Éline Michaud (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, NDP): Mr. Speaker, first we had Bill Graham and David Pratt, two former Liberal ministers who never hid their enthusiasm for the American missile defence shield. Now a committee of Liberal and Conservative senators is recommending that Canada join the missile defence program.

Unelected people are taking a position and the Liberal leader is dodging questions while the Prime Minister is being very vague about his intentions. Either the Conservatives want in or they do not. There are no half measures here.

In the midst of slashing services to the public, are the Conservatives really going to spend billions on this questionable project?

[English]

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Senate for this report. I point out that it was unanimous. All the Conservatives and all the independent Liberals, or Liberal independents, whatever they are, were on side with this. We will review it very carefully.

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister and his cabinet have already launched a few trial balloons on missile defence, and the answer from Canadians will always be "no" to this very expensive and ineffective system.

Yesterday's report from unelected and unaccountable Liberal and Conservative senators called on the Conservative government to favour joining the missile defence scheme. Is the government going to buy into this expensive boondoggle?

*Oral Questions***TOURISM**

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what we are going to do is review the recommendations very, very carefully, as we should, and we are going to continue to monitor the international developments. Our focus will always be on the safety and security of Canadian families.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday we witnessed a remarkable admission from the justice minister. By moving Mr. Justice Mainville from the Federal Court, with a brief stopover at the Quebec Court of Appeal, he indicated his clear intent to put him on the Supreme Court of Canada.

It is clear that he has a legal duty to comply with not just the spirit but the letter of the Nadon decision. If the minister believes that he is acting constitutionally, will he now release the departmental advice he has received that validates his decision to move Justice Mainville from the Federal Court to the Quebec Court of Appeal?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, again, those are very convoluted, conspiratorial comments.

As the Prime Minister has just clearly indicated, this has nothing to do with the Supreme Court of Canada. This is about an appointment to the Quebec Court of Appeal. Mr. Justice Mainville, as I said yesterday, is an eminently qualified Quebec jurist, and under section 3 of the Judges Act, he is certainly qualified and eligible to join the Quebec Court of Appeal. We do not have a process in place to replace the Supreme Court judge next December.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, why must the Conservative government spoil everything it touches, including the appointment of judges?

Although he is now denying it, yesterday the minister suggested that he wanted Justice Mainville to be appointed to the Supreme Court. Does the minister realize that such an appointment—which comes just weeks after Justice Mainville transferred from the Federal Court to the Quebec Court of Appeal—would blatantly violate the Supreme Court's decision and result in another legal battle, once again depriving Canadians of a ninth judge for many months?

● (1440)

[*English*]

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is coming from the architect of Kyoto and the stunning electoral victory of the Liberal Party, speaking of wrecking things.

As was already indicated, yesterday's comments had nothing to do with the Supreme Court of Canada. They had everything to do with the recent transfer, on request, of a Federal Court judge to the Quebec Court of Appeal. That has happened, and with respect to a Supreme Court appointment in the future, next December, to replace Mr. Justice LeBel, there is no process in place as yet.

Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every dollar invested to support travel and tourism yields \$56 in return. This is easy math, even for a mediocre economist.

Global travel is increasing, but Conservative cuts have knocked Canada from 7th to 16th place as a destination, making us one of just five countries to experience a drop in visitors. Instead of selling Canada as a destination point, Conservatives would rather sell Canada out by slashing the Canadian Tourism Commission by over 20%.

When are the Conservatives going to start promoting Canada instead of just promoting themselves?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Maxime Bernier (Minister of State (Small Business and Tourism, and Agriculture), CPC): Mr. Speaker, clearly my colleague was not in Vancouver a few weeks ago during Rendezvous Canada, the Canadian tourism industry conference. This event was a great success. The entire tourism industry was in attendance, as well as international buyers.

This tourism conference was the biggest one that has been held in Canada for years. What was celebrated? The success of the Canadian tourism industry.

* * *

[*English*]

PRIVACY

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative government's inability to balance reasonable legislation with respect for the Constitution and the privacy rights of Canadians is getting embarrassing. The Conservatives ignore legal experts, reject amendments, and end up banging their heads against the Supreme Court, as they did last Friday, when the Supreme Court had to remind them that snooping on Canadians without a warrant is illegal. Well, *quelle surprise*.

This brings us to the cyberbullying bill. Why did the minister not listen to the experts, separate the cyberbullying provisions so that it would be passed through this House, and then allow us to amend the clearly unconstitutional parts of the Conservatives' agenda for snooping on the private rights of Canadians?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we received the Spencer decision from the Supreme Court a full two business days ago, but let me tell the member this. The Supreme Court's decision actually confirms what the government has said all along, that Bill C-13's proposals regarding voluntary disclosures do not provide legal authority for access to information without a warrant.

The Supreme Court's affirmation, in fact, of Mr. Spencer's conviction on possession of child pornography charges very much reinforces the long-held position of this government that children and Canadians in general must be protected from the scourge of cyberbullying, online criminality, and certainly sexual exploitation.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Ms. Charmaine Borg (Terrebonne—Blainville, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last Friday, the Supreme Court reiterated that police must obtain a warrant from the court to obtain a customer's IP address.

This decision casts serious doubt on the constitutionality of Bill C-13 on cyberbullying.

In light of this ruling by the highest court, will the government finally agree to the NDP's request to divide Bill C-13 in order to combat cyberbullying and prevent the law from being struck down because it infringes on people's privacy?

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the answer is the same. We are reviewing that decision, which was made on Friday.

The letter from the Supreme Court confirms what our government has been saying all along, which is that Bill C-13's proposals regarding voluntary disclosures do not provide legal authority for access to information without a warrant. It is absolutely essential to review this Supreme Court decision and pass this bill.

* * *

JUSTICE

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it would be prudent to wait before moving forward with Bill C-13 and to conduct an analysis to see whether this works or not.

Under the Conservatives, and especially under this Minister of Justice, the Supreme Court appointment process has become a real farce, and I would go even further. The Prime Minister does whatever he wants without any regard for the Constitution or the courts.

The Minister of Justice, who is supposed to be standing up for our justice system and our Constitution, cannot even tell the difference between the Quebec Superior Court and the Supreme Court.

Why is the Minister of Justice trying to circumvent the Supreme Court decision on Justice Nadon?

● (1445)

[English]

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, of course we are doing no such thing, as the Prime Minister has already said, and as I repeated yesterday. It had nothing to do with the Supreme Court of Canada. It had everything to do with the appeal court of Quebec. That is what I said in the House. That is what I said outside the House.

Mr. Justice Mainville is an eminent jurist. He is someone who is highly qualified and eligible to take up his position as an appeal court judge in the member's province of Quebec.

Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I guess the Prime Minister not only does not take the Chief Justice's phone calls, he does not open her letters, because she already informed the government that Justice LeBel will be gone by November. Mr. Mainville and Mr. Nadon may be fine jurists, but that does not mean they meet eligibility criteria to sit on the Supreme Court.

The court was clear: Federal Court judges are not eligible for Supreme Court appointments. Moving a judge to the Quebec Court of Appeal for a few months is not respecting the letter and the spirit of the law. There are laws. Will the Minister of Justice respect the law, or will he—

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. Minister of Justice.

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have already clearly answered that question, as has the Prime Minister. Mr. Justice Mainville has been appointed to the Court of Appeal of Quebec. This has nothing to do with the Supreme Court of Canada.

I must admit, however, that the justice critic for the NDP from Quebec seems to be siding with a downtown Toronto lawyer who appears to be trying to block and limit the pool of jurists who are available to be appointed to superior courts in the province of Quebec.

* * *

NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Ryan Leef (Yukon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, various elements of the Arctic Archipelago are separated from one another and the Canadian mainland by a series of waterways collectively known as the Canadian Northwest Passage. However, questions continue to be raised about Canada's sovereignty in this area.

Canada's north is a fundamental part of our national identity and vital to our future. Could the Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and chair of the Arctic Council explain to this House whether Canada has any proof that there is sovereignty over this land?

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (Minister of the Environment, Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency and Minister for the Arctic Council, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a new atlas of the Arctic was released last week that shows Inuit discovered the Northwest Passage even before we thought of it. There are trails and place names that are hundreds of years old and are still used by Inuit today. This proves that the Northwest Passage is very much a part of Canadian history. We will continue to claim this area as ours and ensure that northerners continue to occupy these lands today and into the future.

* * *

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP): Mr. Speaker, with tragic events in Iraq, the Syrian refugee crisis is getting worse and here we are having a hard time getting straight answers from the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, so let us put it in context.

Sweden has over 14,000 Syrian refugees; Germany, 19,000; and the Canadian government has promised to help 200, and still cannot tell us how many are actually here.

It is a simple question for the minister: how many government-sponsored refugees from Syria are here in Canada today?

Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again that member is misinforming the House; his question is completely wrong.

Oral Questions

I met with a senior German official today who confirmed to us that the large number of Syrians that Germany is taking are going to be there on a temporary basis. Canada has accepted 1,150 Syrian refugees since the beginning of the crisis. They are all here in Canada, and we are prepared to do much more, building on our very strong credentials as the fourth-largest donor to the humanitarian response to the Syrian crisis and the country that refugees around the world rely on to resettle one out of ten—

The Speaker: Order, please. The member for Pierrefonds—Dollard.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe (Pierrefonds—Dollard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the minister can pretend not to understand the question and throw all these grand figures at us out of context, but that does not change the fact that we still do not know the number of refugees.

It is simple. The Syrian Canadian Council tells us that in fact the government will probably not reach its targets. We want proof that these 200 refugees that the government promised to sponsor will be here, if not yesterday, then today or tomorrow. Can the minister tell us how many of the 200 refugees he promised to sponsor are here in Canada right now?

• (1450)

Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, why do our hon. colleagues insist on focusing on such a small number when there are already 1,150 Syrian refugees in Canada? Why does the opposition not talk about the more than 18,000 Iraqis—almost 20,000, in fact—who have settled in Canada since the conflict in Iraq in 2003? Several thousand of them began as refugees in Syria and are now in Canada.

Countries like Sweden, Germany, and our European and United Nations partners know that Canada is a world leader in this regard.

* * *

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, because of the changes made by the Conservatives to the Social Security Tribunal, wait times for EI appeals have quadrupled. The unemployed who have to deal with the new tribunal must wait an average of eight months with no benefits. That is unacceptable. Ironically, the Conservatives got rid of the previous system, claiming that it was slow and ineffective.

Do they realize that they have implemented a system that is even slower and more ineffective, and that the unemployed are once again the ones paying the price for their mismanagement?

[*English*]

Hon. Candice Bergen (Minister of State (Social Development), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Social Security Tribunal did receive a large number of cases from the legacy tribunal. That said, it has a plan in place to get these cases through in a faster manner, and we are going to support it in that.

However, the member is misleading the public in terms of the wait times. They are not as extreme as she is saying and it is disappointing that she would do that.

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP): Mr. Speaker, only the Conservatives thought it was a good idea to replace 1,000 referees with just 39 tribunal members. Here we are a year later, and wait times for employment insurance appeals have quadrupled. These are unemployed Canadians who paid into EI their whole lives, but when they need help, their government abandons them.

Why have Conservatives destroyed the social security appeal system?

Hon. Candice Bergen (Minister of State (Social Development), CPC): Once again, Mr. Speaker, the member is completely distorting the facts, and it is disappointing.

Although the Social Security Tribunal is dealing with a large number of cases, it has a plan in place. It is an independent tribunal. I would suggest the member, instead of trying to find ways to cheat the system in terms of offices, contact the Social Security Tribunal on behalf of her constituents if she has concerns.

* * *

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government continues to ignore major structural problems plaguing the Canadian economy. Our decline in competitiveness has hurt our exports. Highly indebted households will not sustain past levels of domestic demand. David Dodge tells us to invest much more in infrastructure that will stimulate demand and increase our competitiveness, especially at a time when low interest rates make infrastructure investment more affordable than ever.

Instead of cutting infrastructure investment by 90%, why is the government not acting?

[*Translation*]

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, once again, this member is misleading the House. He is not talking about the overall program of the Building Canada fund and the Building Canada plan. We have signed agreements with almost all the provinces to renew the excise tax on gasoline. On Friday of last week, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans signed the agreement with Minister Vessey in Prince Edward Island.

There are investments across the country and we will continue with the longest and most significant Building Canada plan in the country's history.

Oral Questions

[English]

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, David Dodge says current low interest rates and excess manpower makes it the ideal time to make needed infrastructure investments. Instead, the government is slashing infrastructure spending by almost 90% this year. Voters in Trinity—Spadina and Scarborough—Agincourt are asking why the government is turning its back on their needs for more affordable housing, better transit, and other critical job-creating investments.

Will the Minister of Finance listen to the experts and immediately commit to these investments that will boost our economy and create jobs now?

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, our Building Canada plan includes several components, which my colleague prefers to forget. There is the community improvement fund, which includes background on the gas tax and the GST credit, amounting to \$32 billion. There is the Building Canada fund, which includes \$4 billion to support projects of national importance, and \$10 billion is reserved for the provinces and territories. We have no lessons to learn from them.

* * *

•(1455)

[Translation]

HOUSING

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last Saturday 600 victims affected by pyrrhotite came together in Trois-Rivières to discuss the outcome of the Superior Court ruling. The ruling was very clear, and agreed with the victims on every point. The judge based his decision on the consensus of experts, and he is calling for changes to the regulations. The standards fall under federal jurisdiction. The federal government therefore needs to stop off-loading the problem onto Quebec City.

When will the government read the ruling and review the regulations to protect the public?

[English]

Hon. Candice Bergen (Minister of State (Social Development), CPC): Mr. Speaker, in fact, the ruling that was made recently in Quebec actually said the opposite of what that member asserts. What it did rule is that industry is responsible. It is not a federal issue.

We hope that the ruling will bring some resolution for these homeowners.

* * *

ASBESTOS

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I know that members are well aware that asbestos is the greatest industrial killer that the world has ever known. In fact, more Canadians now die from asbestos than all other occupational causes combined, yet the current government insists there are still safe uses for asbestos and it refused to join the rest of the developed world to ban asbestos in all of its forms.

I want to ask the Minister of Labour, as a medical practitioner, as a physician, how, in all good conscience, does she defend her government's reprehensible policy on asbestos?

Hon. Greg Rickford (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government will not oppose the listing of chrysotile at Rotterdam. Economic action plan 2013 supports the economic diversification efforts of the communities of Thetford Mines and Asbestos. Resource management is the responsibility of the province.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Lawrence Toet (Elmwood—Transcona, CPC): Mr. Speaker, lower taxes make Canada's economy stronger and create good, long-term jobs for Canadians. That is why our government has cut taxes on job-creating businesses. By leaving more money in the hands of entrepreneurs and businesses, entrepreneurs and businesses can hire more Canadians and expand their operations.

In a study released today, KPMG assessed the tax competitiveness of several countries, including the United States, the United Kingdom, and Germany.

Would the Minister of Finance please tell us how Canada ranked in this report?

Hon. Joe Oliver (Minister of Finance, CPC): Mr. Speaker, KPMG concluded that Canada remains the most tax-competitive country in its study, with total taxes more than 46% lower than in the United States. Thanks to our low-tax plan, more businesses are investing in Canada. We have over one million new jobs since the recession.

In contrast, the opposition wants to increase taxes on business, which would hurt the Canadian economy, kill jobs, and undermine our competitiveness.

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we learned at health committee last week, during its study of the unsafe drugs act, that 28% of hospitals in Canada reprocess medical instruments and devices meant to be used only once. We also learned that the federal government is completely absent from regulating the reprocessing of single-use instruments and devices, unlike in the U.S., where the FDA is front and centre.

The government regulates the medical devices industry. Why is it not exercising its right to regulate the reprocessing of used medical instruments and devices?

Oral Questions

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Health, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question. It gives me the opportunity to highlight Vanessa's law, which, I am happy to say, passed the House of Commons yesterday. I want to thank the member for Oakville for a law that would help identify potentially dangerous drugs and ensure the quick recall of unsafe drugs. It requires reporting on serious adverse drug reactions when they are aware of the risks.

When it comes to medical devices or drugs, we work closely with the provinces and territories and health institutions to ensure that we can take action.

* * *

[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives continue to neglect official languages and the Francophonie.

A number of programs in the Roadmap for Official Languages, launched over a year ago, have not even started, and several organizations are waiting for their funding. Some are even living off their credit line. It is unacceptable to penalize minority communities.

Can the Minister of Canadian Heritage tell us what she is going to do to fix the situation, and when the organizations will receive their money? They may not survive the wait.

● (1500)

Hon. Shelly Glover (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the new Roadmap for Official Languages is the most comprehensive investment made in Canada. We are very proud of this \$1.1 billion in funding. There is no question about it.

My colleagues also care about minority communities, and they are doing everything in their power to ensure that the roadmap money is spent as announced.

* * *

[English]

HEALTH

Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon (Mississauga East—Cooksville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this week is Sarcoma Cancer Awareness Week. Sarcoma is a type of cancer that attacks connective tissue within the body, often causing tumours in muscles, bones, nerves, fat, and blood vessels. It is especially common in children and young adults. In fact, Terry Fox had a form of sarcoma cancer, leading to his death.

Close to 1,200 Canadians will be diagnosed with sarcoma each year. Tragically, approximately 500 will die from one of its 50 identified types.

Would the minister tell us what steps our government is taking to address this important health issue?

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Health, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was pleased today to kick off Sarcoma Awareness Week. Earlier today, I was able to visit the Ottawa Hospital and the researchers to announce \$1.2 million to carry out a specialized research project on

sarcoma. This builds on our government's investments of more than \$1.1 billion into cancer research since we formed government.

I would like to acknowledge the Sarcoma Cancer Foundation of Canada for its great work to raise awareness on this issue. I encourage all Canadians to learn more about sarcoma by visiting sarcomacancer.ca.

* * *

COPYRIGHT

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, over 90% of published materials are simply not accessible to blind and visually impaired Canadians. The Marrakesh treaty on copyright seeks to fix this problem. Sixty-seven countries have signed on, including the EU, the U.K., India, and China, but not Canada.

The Conservatives left these measures out of their proposed copyright changes. The treaty's deadline is June 27. Will the Conservatives do the right thing and sign this treaty so we can improve access for visually impaired Canadians?

Hon. James Moore (Minister of Industry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, of course our government has taken the lead with our Copyright Modernization Act. In fact, just today we put in place the notice and notice regime to further modernize our copyright regime in this country.

With regard to those who are perceptually disabled, my colleague should know very well that when we put together the Copyright Modernization Act, we worked with the Canadian National Institute for the Blind and others. Of course, we are more than willing to look at ways to improve our copyright legislation to ensure that all Canadians recognize that their needs are met in Canadian law.

* * *

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay—Superior North, GP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians do not want to ship our oil to Red China at discount prices through the gateway pipeline, especially when eastern Canada depends on expensive imports. If we are going to build any pipeline—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Natural Resources.

Hon. Greg Rickford (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure I caught a question there, but I appreciate the point the member tried to make, obviously, in principle about shipping western Canadian oil to eastern Canada as a possibility. We will leave it to the independent National Energy Board to undertake a thorough scientific review of such a project. We are going to rely on science and facts, not ideology, in making decisions on energy infrastructure projects. That is why we will wait for the open and transparent review process rather than jump to conclusions.

*Government Orders***GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

• (1505)

*[English]***PROHIBITING CLUSTER MUNITIONS ACT**

The House resumed from June 16 consideration of Bill C-6, An Act to implement the Convention on Cluster Munitions, as reported (with amendment) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

The Speaker: Pursuant to an order made on Tuesday, May 27, 2014, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded divisions on the motions at report stage of Bill C-6.

Call in the members.

Before the taking of the vote:

The Speaker: Is the member for Thunder Bay—Superior North rising on a point of order?

Mr. Bruce Hyer: Mr. Speaker, I realize you were distracted, but I was unable to present my question due to the overwhelming din from the other side. I sat down and I never did get to ask my question.

Might I be able to ask my question?

The Speaker: I have already indicated that question period is over and we are moving on to the vote. I do not know if there is consent of the House to revert to question period.

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: There does not seem to be.

The hon. member for Ottawa South is rising.

Mr. David McGuinty: Mr. Speaker, I am looking for unanimous consent this afternoon to table three documents.

The first is the budget document from Australia, which tables building Australia's infrastructure—

Some hon. members: No.

The Speaker: I am hearing nays before the member has even finished.

I sense the desire of the House to get on to the deferred recorded divisions. We had tabling of documents earlier today. Perhaps we will go ahead with the vote, and then if the member wants to seek unanimous consent of the House, the House might be in a better mood and may be inclined to grant it.

We will now move on.

The question is on Motion No. 1. A vote on this motion also applies to Motion No. 3.

During the taking of the vote:

• (1510)

The Speaker: Order. I think that members are getting awfully close to holding up a prop, and I do not think that it suits the House very well. I will ask members to come to order, and we will resume with the vote.

[Translation]

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

*(Division No. 213)***YEAS**

Members

Allen (Welland)	Andrews
Angus	Ashton
Atamanenko	Aubin
Bélangier	Bellavance
Bennett	Benskin
Bevington	Blanchette
Blanchette-Lamothe	Boivin
Borg	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brahmi
Brisson	Brosseau
Byrne	Caron
Casey	Cash
Chicoine	Choquette
Christopherson	Cleary
Comartin	Côté
Crowder	Cullen
Cuzner	Davies (Vancouver East)
Day	Dewar
Dion	Dionne Labelle
Donnelly	Doré Lefebvre
Dubé	Dubourg
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Dusseau	Easter
Eyking	Foote
Fortin	Freeland
Freeman	Garrison
Genest	Genest-Jourdain
Giguère	Godin
Goodale	Gravelle
Groguié	Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Harris (St. John's East)	Hsu
Hughes	Hyer
Jones	Julian
Kellway	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Larose
Latendresse	Laverdière
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	Leslie
Liu	MacAulay
Mai	Marston
Martin	Masse
Mathysen	May
McCallum	McGuinty
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	Michaud
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
Mourani	Mulcair
Murray	Nantel
Nash	Nicholls
Nunez-Melo	Pacetti
Papillon	Patry
Péclet	Pilon
Plamondon	Quach
Rafferty	Rankin
Ravignat	Raynault
Regan	Rousseau
Saganash	Sandhu
Scarpaleggia	Scott
Sellah	Sgro
Sims (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)	
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	
Sitsabaiesan	St-Denis
Stewart	Sullivan
Thibeault	Tremblay
Trudeau	Turmel
Valeriote— 127	

NAYS

Members

Ablonczy	Adams
Adler	Aglukkaq

Government Orders

Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Allison	Ambler
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	Armstrong
Ashfield	Aspin
Baird	Bateman
Benoit	Bergen
Bernier	Bezan
Block	Boughen
Braid	Breitkreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinooge
Butt	Calandra
Calkins	Cannan
Carmichael	Carrie
Chisu	Chong
Clarke	Clement
Crockatt	Daniel
Davidson	Dechert
Devolin	Dreeschen
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Dykstra
Falk	Fantino
Fast	Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Fletcher
Galipeau	Gallant
Gill	Glover
Goguen	Goldring
Goodyear	Gosal
Gourde	Grewal
Harper	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hawn	Hayes
Hiebert	Hillyer
Hoback	Holder
James	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kerr
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lake	Lauzon
Lebel	Leaf
Leitch	Lemieux
Leung	Lizon
Lobb	Lukiwski
Lunney	MacKay (Central Nova)
Maguire	McColeman
McLeod	Menegakis
Miller	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Nicholson
Norlock	O'Connor
Oliver	O'Neill Gordon
Opitz	O'Toole
Paradis	Payne
Poilievre	Preston
Raït	Rajotte
Reid	Rempel
Richards	Rickford
Saxton	Schellenberger
Seeback	Shea
Shipley	Shory
Smith	Sopuck
Sorenson	Stanton
Strahl	Sweet
Tilson	Toet
Trost	Trottier
Truppe	Valcourt
Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Wallace	Warawa
Warkentin	Watson
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	
Weston (Saint John)	
Wilks	Williamson
Wong	Woodworth
Yelich	Young (Oakville)
Young (Vancouver South)	Zimmer — 148

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare Motion No. 1 defeated. I therefore declare Motion No. 3 defeated as well.

[English]

The next question is on Motion No. 2.

● (1520)

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

(Division No. 214)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Andrews
Angus	Ashton
Atamanenko	Aubin
Bélanger	Bellavance
Bennett	Benskin
Bevington	Blanchette
Blanchette-Lamothe	Boivin
Borg	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brahmi
Brison	Brosseau
Byrne	Caron
Casey	Cash
Chicoine	Choquette
Christopherson	Cleary
Comartin	Côté
Crowder	Cullen
Cuzner	Davies (Vancouver East)
Day	Dewar
Dion	Dionne Labelle
Donnelly	Doré Lefebvre
Dubé	Dubourg
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Dusseault	Easter
Eyking	Foote
Fortin	Freeland
Freeman	Garrison
Genest	Genest-Jourdain
Giguère	Godin
Goodale	Gravelle
Grogulé	Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Harris (St. John's East)	Hsu
Hughes	Hyer
Jones	Julian
Kellway	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Larose
Latendresse	Laverdière
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	Leslie
Liu	MacAulay
Mai	Marston
Martin	Masse
Mathysen	May
McCallum	McGuinty
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	Michaud
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
Mourani	Mulcair
Murray	Nantel
Nash	Nicholls
Nunez-Melo	Pacetti
Papillon	Patry
Péclet	Pilon
Plamondon	Quach
Rafferty	Rankin
Ravignat	Raynault
Regan	Rousseau
Saganash	Sandhu
Scarpaleggia	Scott
Sellah	Sgro
Sims (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)	
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	
Sitsabaiesan	St-Denis
Stewart	Sullivan
Thibeault	Tremblay
Trudeau	Turmel
Valeriote — 127	

NAYS

Members

Ablonczy	Adams
Adler	Aglukkaq

Government Orders

Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Allison	Ambler
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	Armstrong
Ashfield	Aspin
Baird	Bateman
Benoit	Bergen
Bernier	Bezan
Block	Boughen
Braid	Breitkreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)
Brown (Barrie)	Bruinooge
Butt	Calandra
Calkins	Cannan
Carmichael	Carrie
Chisu	Chong
Clarke	Clement
Crockatt	Daniel
Davidson	Dechert
Devolin	Dreeshen
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Dykstra
Falk	Fantino
Fast	Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Fletcher
Galipeau	Gallant
Gill	Glover
Goguen	Goldring
Goodyear	Gosal
Gourde	Grewal
Harper	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hawn	Hayes
Hiebert	Hillyer
Hoback	Holder
James	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kerr
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lake	Lauzon
Lebel	Leaf
Leitch	Lemieux
Leung	Lizon
Lobb	Lukiwski
Lunney	MacKay (Central Nova)
Maguire	McColeman
McLeod	Menegakis
Miller	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Nicholson
Norlock	O'Connor
Oliver	O'Neill Gordon
Opitz	O'Toole
Paradis	Payne
Poillievre	Preston
Raitt	Rajotte
Reid	Rempel
Richards	Rickford
Saxton	Schellenberger
Seeback	Shea
Shipley	Shory
Smith	Sopuck
Sorenson	Stanton
Strahl	Sweet
Tilson	Toet
Trost	Trottier
Truppe	Valcourt
Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Wallace	Warawa
Warkentin	Watson
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	
Weston (Saint John)	
Wilks	Williamson
Wong	Woodworth
Yelich	Young (Oakville)
Young (Vancouver South)	Zimmer— 148

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare Motion No. 2 defeated.**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC)** moved that the bill, as amended, be concurred in.**The Speaker:** 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:*

● (1525)

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

*(Division No. 215)***YEAS**

Members

Ablonczy	Adams
Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Allison	Ambler
Ambrose	Anderson
Armstrong	Ashfield
Aspin	Baird
Bateman	Benoit
Bergen	Bernier
Bezan	Block
Boughen	Braid
Breitkreuz	Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)	Brown (Barrie)
Bruinooge	Butt
Calandra	Calkins
Cannan	Carmichael
Carrie	Chisu
Chong	Clarke
Clement	Crockatt
Daniel	Davidson
Dechert	Devolin
Dreeshen	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Dykstra	Falk
Fantino	Fast
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Fletcher	Galipeau
Gallant	Gill
Glover	Goguen
Goldring	Goodyear
Gosal	Gourde
Grewal	Harper
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Hawn
Hayes	Hiebert
Hillyer	Hoback
Holder	James
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kerr	Komarnicki
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake
Lauzon	Lebel
Leaf	Leitch
Lemieux	Leung
Lizon	Lobb
Lukiwski	Lunney
MacKay (Central Nova)	Maguire
McColeman	McLeod
Menegakis	Miller
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Moore (Fundy Royal)	
Nicholson	Norlock
O'Connor	Oliver

Government Orders

O'Neill Gordon	Opitz	Regan	Rousseau
O'Toole	Paradis	Saganash	Sandhu
Payne	Poilievre	Scarpaleggia	Scott
Preston	Raitt	Sellah	Sgro
Rajotte	Reid	Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)	
Rempel	Richards	Sims (Newton—North Delta)	
Rickford	Saxton	Sitsabaiesan	St-Denis
Schellenberger	Seeback	Stewart	Sullivan
Shea	Shipley	Thibeault	Tremblay
Shory	Smith	Trudeau	Turnel
Sopuck	Sorenson	Valeriote— 127	
Stanton	Strahl		
Sweet	Tilson		
Toet	Trost		
Trottier	Truppe		
Valcourt	Van Kesteren		
Van Loan	Wallace		
Warawa	Warkentin		
Watson	Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to		
Sky Country)			
Weston (Saint John)	Wilks		
Williamson	Wong		
Woodworth	Yelich		
Young (Oakville)	Young (Vancouver South)		
Zimmer— 147			

PAIRED

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

RESPECT FOR COMMUNITIES ACT

BILL C-2—TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC) moved:

That, in relation to Bill C-2, An Act to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, not more than five further hours shall be allotted to the consideration at second reading stage of the Bill; and

That, at the expiry of the five hours provided for the consideration of second reading stage of the said Bill, any proceedings before the House shall be interrupted, if required for the purpose of this Order, and, in turn, every question necessary for the disposal of the said stage of the Bill shall be put forthwith and successively, without further debate or amendment.

The Speaker: There will now be a 30-minute period for questions. I will recognize the hon. member for Vancouver East.

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to see how the government House leader acts in sort of a flippant and dismissive way when he reads this motion. It is no wonder, as this is the 74th time since 2011 that the government has introduced closure on a piece of legislation before the House. That means that most of its legislation has been rammed through, forced through by closure, because it cannot bear to have a proper comprehensive debate in the House of Commons by members of Parliament from all parties on any government legislation. It is bent on the idea that it has to ram it through.

Bill C-2, which is an amendment to the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, is a particularly important bill because it follows a decision of the Supreme Court of Canada concerning safer injection sites in this country. As we have seen with other legislation, most notably Bill C-36 recently, which also has to do with a decision of the Supreme Court of Canada concerning laws pertaining to prostitution in this country, this is yet another bill in this House that basically does not stand the test of the decision of the Supreme Court of Canada.

NAYS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Andrews
Angus	Ashton
Atamanenko	Aubin
Bélangier	Bellavance
Bennett	Benskin
Bevington	Blanchette
Blanchette-Lamothe	Boivin
Borg	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brahmi
Brisson	Brosseau
Byrne	Caron
Casey	Cash
Chicoine	Choquette
Christopherson	Cleary
Comartin	Côté
Crowder	Cullen
Cuzner	Davies (Vancouver East)
Day	Dewar
Dion	Dionne Labelle
Donnelly	Doré Lefebvre
Dubé	Dubourg
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Dusseault	Easter
Eyking	Footé
Fortin	Freeland
Freeman	Garrison
Genest	Genest-Jourdain
Giguère	Godin
Goodale	Gravelle
Groguhé	Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Harris (St. John's East)	Hsu
Hughes	Hyer
Jones	Julian
Kellway	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Larose
Latendresse	Laverdière
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	Leslie
Liu	MacAulay
Mai	Marston
Martin	Masse
Mathysen	May
McCallum	McGuinty
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	Michaud
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
Mourani	Mulcair
Murray	Nantel
Nash	Nicholls
Nunez-Melo	Pacetti
Papillon	Patry
Péclet	Pilon
Plamondon	Quach
Rafferty	Rankin
Ravignat	Raynault

Government Orders

I would ask the minister why the government has decreed that this bill will not go to the health committee where it should go, because it is a matter pertaining to the health and well-being of Canadians who are very much at risk and who have been marginalized, rather than going to the public safety committee. That demonstrates the conclusion that the government sees this as just another law and order measure, as opposed to a measure that is affecting the health of people. Why were people not properly consulted on this bill, such as front-line service workers, so that we would have the benefit of that in terms of debating the bill? Why will it now go to the public safety committee instead of where it should be going, which is for a thorough examination at the Standing Committee on Health?

• (1530)

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would first like to address the whole question of the timing of this bill and the debate. This has received a huge amount of debate in the House of Commons. As a matter of fact, 97 members have been on their feet. There were more than 18 hours of debate in the House of Commons. I am not sure the Magna Carta had that many hours of debate. That being said, there were 18 hours of debate.

The position of the New Democrats is that 18 days or maybe 18 years would not be enough on bills that they do not like, which is consistent in this particular area.

I am pleased that the House leader is moving forward with this. Let us get it to committee. If members want to hear debate, let Canadians, Canadian groups and Canadian individuals, come before the committee and make their opinions known. That is appropriate here. It is not enough for the New Democrats to say that they want to debate it forever in here; let us hear from Canadians who have something to say about these drug consumption sites for illegal drugs. Let us get Canadians and Canadian groups aboard. That is what we should do.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Order, please. Before we get to questions, I will remind hon. members that in order to get enough time in, as there is a 30-minute time period for questions, around one-minute interventions on either side are always helpful to get more people involved.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is noteworthy to recognize that what we are witnessing is a breakdown in the tradition of how legislation is passed through the House of Commons. Typically, we would have government working with opposition parties to build some sort of a legislative agenda that would allow for a good, healthy number of hours of debate on controversial legislation, while at the same time legislation that is straightforward and has the support of all parties would be passed through quickly.

Ever since we have had a majority Conservative government, it has used time allocation more than in the history of any other political entity inside the House of Commons. My colleague is right in saying shame, on that point.

The legislation we are limiting debate on is of a serious nature. The question I would ask the government House leader is why he believes the government has failed Canadians by not allowing for the

appropriate passage of all forms of legislation through negotiation, as opposed to a majority rule inside the House, which is not healthy for democracy in Canada.

Hon. Rob Nicholson: Mr. Speaker, I completely disagree with the hon. member. As a matter of fact, there have been 97 members of the House of Commons who have had the opportunity to speak to this bill. In fact, I am surprised that the House leader was as patient as he was. This is an important piece of legislation. We want to get these things passed. However, apparently they allowed 97 members to come forward, and they had the right to get up. However, I am concerned and surprised that the hon. member is not more concerned; I want to get this before a committee. Let Canadian groups and individuals have their say. What is so wrong with that? This is what will happen at the committee. This is important legislation; let us move it through the process. Come on; let us go.

• (1535)

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Defence demonstrates a somewhat shaky grasp of parliamentary democracy: first, with his reference to the Magna Carta, which of course preceded Parliament; and second, in talking about how much debate is enough debate. It misunderstands representative democracy. The idea that people come here and represent their ridings seems completely foreign to the members on the other side.

When we get to referring a bill to committee, I have my biggest concern. I sit on the public safety committee and I will be happy to debate this bill there, but what we have seen lately is that it is of course going to the wrong committee because it is a health question. However, I hope we are not going to see this, and this is my question. Can the minister give us the assurance that he will not try to limit the debate on this bill in committee to only the public safety aspects, so that we can have a full examination of its health aspects in the public safety committee?

Hon. Rob Nicholson: Mr. Speaker, to the final part of the member's comments, of course that is up to the public safety committee. I am not going to start dictating what it should do or should not do. He talked about parliamentary democracy. It is up to the committee members to decide how many speakers and representations it wants to have, and appropriately so.

However, I would only say for the hon. member that we should always find common ground as to where we agree. Even though there have been over 18 hours of debate, for the NDP 18 years would not be enough. At least we agree that there is no limit to how far we could go before they would be satisfied. However, in terms of the member's comments with respect to parliamentary democracy, he has to agree with me that this is part of the parliamentary process. Let Canadians come forward and let groups come forward and make representations on that. That is only right.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am glad that the hon. minister who is before us today also has a background as a lawyer. I have been researching and considering a substantial question of privilege to be made at a later date, because the use of time allocation in this place is not part of parliamentary procedure; it is unprecedented.

Government Orders

I look to the decision of the Supreme Court of Canada in the case about a previous Speaker, Gib Parent, and Satnam Vaid and the Human Rights Commission. There are some very interesting comments by the Supreme Court about the nature of privilege. It is basically that in our work here, as a matter of privilege, and the court stated that we must function:

...as a legislative and deliberative body, including the assembly's work in holding the government to account, that outside interference would undermine the level of autonomy required to enable the assembly and its members to do their legislative work with dignity and efficiency.

I put for the hon. minister that surely 74 limitations of debate in a period of one Parliament is not only unprecedented by a bit, but it is unprecedented by a country mile over anything that has ever taken place in this Parliament, ever since Confederation. Would the minister not agree with me that it begins to be an abuse of democracy that offends our privileges here as members to do our work on behalf of our constituents?

Hon. Rob Nicholson: Mr. Speaker, we have to respect what it is the court has said. The court has set down a number of conditions for drug consumption sites where illegal drugs are used. It has set out conditions, and we want to ensure that they are implemented, that they are part of the law of this country. The minister actually goes further than that. She has added another 10 different considerations that should go into this; so every precaution is taken to ensure that we get it right.

I am surprised that the hon. members of the opposition do not want to have this before a committee. That too is a vital part of our parliamentary system, the committee hearings. That is the only thing I would urge her. There has been full debate on this. If they are part of a group that says there will never be enough debate on it, I accept that, but this is why we in government have to make decisions. However, I would say this for the member. Let us move forward. Let us have Canadians have their say on this important legislation.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, since this is the government's 74th time allocation motion, the question I am going to ask may seem sarcastic, but I am really starting to wonder about this.

Do the Conservatives intend to introduce a bill that would make the usual and current rules of the House the exception, since the exception has become the rule?

[*English*]

Hon. Rob Nicholson: Mr. Speaker, I want to discuss this with the government House leader. I believe, from my perusal of this, that he has been very patient with all the dozens and dozens of members who have spoken. We want there to be a full debate, and that is appropriate at second reading, but that is only one part of the parliamentary process.

I am going to tell him that he was very patient, because for me and so many of us, including the government House leader, this is a very important piece of legislation. This is responding to a Supreme Court of Canada decision setting out a number of conditions for this, and it is very important that we move on that. I have to tell him that he has obviously been very patient and that is a wonderful virtue in the

parliamentary system, but I also say that this is only one part of the process. Let us move it forward and get it before committee.

• (1540)

Hon. Gary Goodyear (Minister of State (Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will ask my hon. colleague a question regarding injection sites and what is laid out in this bill about them.

I know there have been considerable community consultations. I know that there has been considerable debate in the House, as the minister himself has mentioned. Some 97 members of Parliament have stood to voice their opinions on this. I also have to agree with him that, as we sit through debates and listen to members on the opposite side, we hear that the speeches are almost all the same. It does not matter how many hours we sit here. Even if it is one hour, we end up hearing the same speech three or four times. As much as I like listening to my friends across the way, there is an obligation to Canadians that we actually enact what is going to improve the safety of their communities and these injection sites where, in fact, illegal drugs are offered to people.

I wonder if the minister could comment on community consultations and how this act would benefit my community in Cambridge and North Dumfries, for example. I know the NDP wants to put an injection site in Cambridge. I do not think the folks in Cambridge would be at all happy with that, and I wonder if the member could comment on that.

Hon. Rob Nicholson: Mr. Speaker, the minister covered a lot of ground. He pointed out that the New Democrats have made dozens and dozens of speeches basically saying the same thing. I do not mean this as disagreement, but they are certainly entitled to do that. As justice minister, I heard hundreds of speeches, all basically saying the same thing, that they did not like our crackdown on crime. That is their business. If they all want to oppose these things, I understand that and I do not have any particular problem with that. They are making their position very clear.

Quite frankly, even as Minister of Justice, I heard many times that people want to have some input with respect to this issue that is before the House right now. I am pleased that even when the minister gets an application, she is going to give Canadians another opportunity, 90 days, to give her their input. This is the way to go.

Mr. Jamie Nicholls (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there have been 74 time allocation motions, as disturbing as that is; as you know, it is the curtailment of debate in the House. However, even more disturbing than the 74 times that debate has been shut down is the fact that the government is trying to change what has been a precedent in the House of allowing one further sitting day to now what is becoming a precedent of five hours of debate. This is a dangerous precedent.

Does my colleague not agree with me that changing this precedent in the Standing Orders of having one sitting day to interpret it as five hours is the height of cynicism and that it will feed the cynicism of Canadians who want us to make Parliament work? Does he not agree that this dangerous precedent will certainly do damage to this institution in the future and our work as parliamentarians?

Government Orders

Hon. Rob Nicholson: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is concerned about the number of hours of debate. Again, I have indicated that I believe the House leader has been quite generous and accommodating on that.

The hon. member has to answer to Canadians, who want to have some say. If someone wants to open up one of these sites next door to where people are trying to raise their children or put it right across the street from a school, what are we supposed to say? Should we say the NDP is unhappy and it wants to debate this issue forever? People would say no; they want us to comply with what the courts are saying, that we should lay down conditions and make sure Canadians have the opportunity to have some say as to where, how, and the circumstances under which these sites are going to be implemented.

Again, there is a process where the minister can look at these. I am very impressed. The Supreme Court of Canada put five different conditions and she was good enough to add 10 more in this bill to make sure it is completely clear. That is very helpful to anybody setting up one of these sites.

• (1545)

Mr. Jasbir Sandhu (Surrey North, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Defence keeps saying that we should give the opportunity to Canadians to have input into this. Why do we not start with the elected officials, the very people Canadians elected to the House, and give them the opportunity to talk about the bill?

I know the Conservatives are not very good with facts and figures. The minister talks about having 97 members speak in the House, which is about 30% of the members in the House. What about the other 70% of the members? They have not spoken. I am sure that even the Conservative members would want to get up and have the opportunity to represent their constituents. Democracy is all about that.

Why is the Minister of National Defence trying to shut down debate? It is not only in the House, as I am absolutely sure the Conservatives will shut down debate at the committee stage, where we will hear from many research analysts and experts in this area and try to make some amendments to the bill.

Could the minister assure us that there will not be time allocation at the committee stage so we can hear from the experts at the ground level who will help us improve the bill?

Hon. Rob Nicholson: Mr. Speaker, the member pointed out that almost one-third of the members have already spoken on the bill. This is only second reading.

Again, I said that if the bill goes to committee, if those members are inclined to filibuster or ask the same questions over and over again, they are entitled to do that. I told my colleague that even at third reading, if there are dozens of NDP members who want to get up, say the same thing and make the same speech over and over again, that is their right to do that. However, what we have here is important legislation that Canadians are very interested in.

When I was justice minister, many people raised this subject with me and they did the same when in British Columbia. All I am saying at this point is that if we get the bill to committee, Canadians,

Canadian groups and institutions will have that opportunity to have some input. What is wrong with that?

I love to hear the hon. members go on and on and fight all of our efforts to crack down on crime, for instance. I have heard that for years. They can go ahead and do that, but let Canadians have their say. That is all we are asking for.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Blanchette (Louis-Hébert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, what does a 74th guillotine mean? It means that we have one half hour to talk as we are doing now—which is not productive—one half hour waiting for the bells and the actual vote. It means that almost 90 hours of debate did not take place in the House.

How many bills—if everyone had time to speak—would have gotten through had we made good use of those 90 hours?

I have the following question for the minister. Will he promise not to use the guillotine at committee and third reading stage?

[*English*]

Hon. Rob Nicholson: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member cannot make a commitment to get the bill out of the House of Commons. The NDP members are fighting this at every step of the way, even though there has been a very full debate, with a considerable amount of time, within our parliamentary system.

However, those members are saying that they cannot agree to anything. That is the position they are taking, and they are welcome to it. However, I would ask them to please explain that to Canadians who are concerned about this subject. They are worried, for instance, about an application for a site that may go next door to them or one across the street from a school.

The NDP members have to admit that not only are all the protections and conditions set out by the Supreme Court of Canada in the bill, but the Minister of Health went considerably further and added another 10 to ensure these things would operate properly, that people's safety would be taken into consideration and to ensure that everything would be done in accordance with health procedures.

It seems to me that the bill should have the support of those members. Rather than fight it every step of the way, they should be asking how they can get the bill through. We know Canadians want this. It is important for Canada, and that is what I would urge them to do.

• (1550)

Ms. Libby Davies: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, the minister has not answered a couple of basic questions.

I would note, and I am sure he is aware, that the last time this bill was debated in the House was at the end of January of this year. It has already been five months. I am curious to know why, at the eleventh hour, the government is now bringing in closure. We could have had debate on the bill in February, March, April or May. I am afraid the minister's responses just do not cut it.

Government Orders

The other question he has been unable to answer is why this bill, which is clearly a health measure, is not going to the health committee. This is about a health intervention to save lives, and that is very clear from the Supreme Court of Canada decision. Why is it going to the public safety committee?

That is a very basic question about the government's attitude to this issue and the bill. Why is the bill going to the public safety committee and not the health committee?

Hon. Rob Nicholson: Mr. Speaker, to be fair to the hon. member, whether we debated the bill in January or in June, or six years from now, those members would oppose it, and they certainly are entitled to do that.

However, I do not agree with the member's description as to what this is all about. The Supreme Court of Canada said that one of the conditions should be the impact of such a facility on crime rates. Again, that is one of the five conditions set out by the Supreme Court of Canada.

I am pleased the minister, in drafting this legislation, has added, as one of the ten conditions, the potential impact of the proposed site on public safety, including law enforcement research statistics, if any, related to such issues as crime, public nuisance and public consumption of illicit substances.

This is very complete. This is one of the things that has to impress anybody looking at this. It goes beyond the conditions set out by the Supreme Court of Canada.

I would ask the member if the NDP members would have been happier debating it in February, but let us face it, and all be honest, they would have opposed it in January, February, next March or 10 years from now, and that is their right to do so.

However, let us get it before a committee, so Canadians can have their say.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Giguère (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, NDP): Mr. Speaker, some drug traffickers in Montreal are getting very greedy and are trying to increase profits by selling low quality drugs. This caused a massive increase in deaths associated with these bad drugs.

I am pleased to support the government's desire to punish these drug traffickers and put them in prison, and especially those greedy ones. However, Bill C-2 also deals with public health.

The minister said that he was proud that we had adopted 10 other Supreme Court recommendations, but that is the problem: it turns a public health issue into a punishment issue.

The NDP wants to combat this dangerous aspect of illegal drug use by making this a public health issue. When the government puts an end to debate like this, it is maintaining this confusion between public health and punishment.

Why is it so important to turn a public health issue into a punishment issue?

[*English*]

Hon. Rob Nicholson: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member may disagree with this. In his example, he was talking about Montreal or

wherever his constituency is. If some group were opening up one of these drug consumption sites next door to him, would the member find it so unreasonable that the minister would want to do a criminal record check on those individuals? Does that sound so unreasonable?

I have a feeling that the members across, if this were being opened up across the street from the school where their kids were or next door to them, might say that it was a pretty reasonable condition by the minister, a criminal records check for the people that were moving in next door to them.

However, with respect to what the member says about it being a health issue, a description of the available drug treatment services at the site is there. One of the health components is what drug treatment services will be available. That is pretty reasonable.

I would have thought the members would have welcomed that. Okay, the member may not agree that the staff should have criminal records checks. That may be one of the bad ones on that list. However, what about the drug treatment services? That is pretty reasonable. I would hope the member would have embraced that.

• (1555)

Hon. Gary Goodyear: Mr. Speaker, as I have sat here and listened to this conversation about limiting debate, when there has, in fact, been no limit to the debate, I am getting more and more concerned.

Obviously, I am here to represent my community of Cambridge-North Dumfries. Maybe in my hon. colleagues' ridings, it is okay to have injection sites beside a school without criminal record checks and without actual proper drug treatment programs. However, I can assure the members of the House that no one in Cambridge is willing to have drug injection sites for drug addicts beside a school. This is common sense.

This is Canada. We need this legislation passed. The best place for it right now is at committee, after 97 members have spoken during 18 hours of debate. It is time for the committee to hear from Canadians so those folks will know what Canadians think.

Hon. Rob Nicholson: Mr. Speaker, it will be difficult to top that. That was very good, and I appreciate it.

The hon. member makes an excellent point. What is the problem with having Canadians come forward and give their opinions? They would have strong opinions on this.

When I went across the country as the justice minister, and certainly now as the defence minister, people did not say that they wanted to get more of these sites in their neighbourhoods and that they did not want to put conditions on these people. I never have heard that from people, and I have a feeling that this is what they are worried about. They are worried that we are going to have groups come forward and say that they would like to have this regulated and that they would like to have a say in whether it would move in across the street from a school. They would like to ensure that these people have criminal record checks.

I think Canadians will have a look at this and say that it is all very reasonable and that this is what the government should be doing. It is certainly in compliance with the court orders.

Government Orders

Mr. Randall Garrison: Mr. Speaker, what we have going on is a bit of a pretence, with the minister talking about what happens if they are next to schools or in our neighbourhoods. We know from the experience of the safe injection in Vancouver East that crime rates go down. The number of needles found in alleyways goes down. The whole community becomes safer. There is amazing community support for the one existing safe injection in Vancouver East. We have a bit of fearmongering from the other side.

Again, I would like to come back to the question of the committee. We are going to the public safety committee. We know that with the study of marijuana that has been commissioned, the government has said that we can only talk about the harms in committee and that we cannot talk about anything else that might happen.

I want reassurance from the government that the Conservatives will not use their majority on the public safety committee to limit the scope of the debate so as to exclude the health benefits, which was the primary reason that the Supreme Court made its decision. Could we get assurance that the government will not use its majority to prevent the discussion of the health benefits of safe injection sites?

Hon. Rob Nicholson: Mr. Speaker, if, in fact, these sites reduce crime, as the hon. member has said, and they are a great addition to any neighbourhood in the NDP's opinion, it is not unreasonable to ask, as the bill says, key stakeholders, including provincial ministers for health and public safety, local government, heads of police forces and lead health professionals in the province. The NDP is asking them to come forward just to confirm that everything is would be great, that crime rates would go down and that this would be a great addition to the neighbourhood.

When Canadians have a look at this, they will say that it is all pretty reasonable. That is all we are saying on this. The Minister of Health has taken a very balanced approach on this. Again, that is all I am urging the opposition to do.

This will come back for third reading. To be sure, there will be lots of members from the NDP up opposing this. It is their right, but at the same time, let us hear what Canadians have to say. I think they will have some strong opinions on this.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): It is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith the question necessary to dispose of the motion now before the House.

● (1600)

[*English*]

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Call in the members.

● (1635)

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

(*Division No. 216*)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy	Adler
Aglukkaq	Albas
Albrecht	Alexander
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Ambler	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson
Armstrong	Ashfield
Aspin	Baird
Bateman	Benoit
Bergen	Bernier
Bezan	Block
Boughen	Braid
Breitkreuz	Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Brown (Newmarket—Aurora)	Brown (Barrie)
Bruinooge	Butt
Calandra	Calkins
Cannan	Carmichael
Carrie	Chisu
Chong	Clarke
Clement	Crockatt
Daniel	Davidson
Dechert	Devolin
Dreeshen	Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Dykstra	Falk
Fantino	Fast
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Fletcher	Galipeau
Gallant	Gill
Glover	Goguen
Goldring	Goodyear
Gosal	Gourde
Grewal	Harper
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Hawn
Hayes	Hiebert
Hillyer	Hoback
Holder	James
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kerr	Komarnicki
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake
Lauzon	Leaf
Leitch	Lemieux
Leung	Lizon
Lobb	Lukiwski
Lunney	MacKay (Central Nova)
Maguire	McColeman
McLeod	Menegakis
Miller	Moore (Fundy Royal)
Nicholson	Norlock
O'Connor	Oliver
O'Neill Gordon	Opitz
O'Toole	Paradis
Payne	Poillievre
Preston	Raitt
Rajotte	Reid
Rempel	Richards
Rickford	Saxton
Schellenberger	Seeback
Shea	Shipley

Shory
Sopuck
Stanton
Sweet
Toet
Trottier
Valcourt
Van Loan
Warawa
Watson
Sky Country)
Weston (Saint John)
Williamson
Woodworth
Young (Oakville)
Zimmer— 145

Smith
Sorenson
Strahl
Tilson
Trost
Truppe
Van Kesteren
Wallace
Warkentin
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to
Wilks
Wong
Yelich
Young (Vancouver South)

NAYS

Members

Allen (Welland)
Angus
Atamanenko
Bélangier
Benskin
Blanchette
Boivin
Boulerice
Brahmi
Brosseau
Caron
Cash
Choquette
Cleary
Crowder
Cuzner
Davies (Vancouver East)
Dion
Donnelly
Dubé
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dusseault
Eyking
Fortin
Freeman
Genest
Giguère
Goodale
Groguché
Harris (St. John's East)
Hughes
Julian
Lamoureux
Latendresse
LeBlanc (Beauséjour)
Liu
Mai
Martin
Mathysen
McCallum
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Mulcair
Nantel
Nicholls
Pacetti
Patry
Pilon
Quach
Rankin
Raynault
Rousseau
Sandhu
Scott
Sgro
Sims (Newton—North Delta)
St-Denis
Stoffer
Thibeault
Trudeau
Valériote— 123

Andrews
Ashton
Aubin
Bennett
Bevington
Blanchette-Lamothe
Borg
Boutin-Sweet
Brisson
Byrne
Casey
Chicoine
Christopherson
Côté
Cullen
Davies (Vancouver Kingsway)
Day
Dionne Labelle
Doré Lefebvre
Dubourg
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Easter
Foote
Freeland
Garrison
Genest-Jourdain
Godin
Gravelle
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Hsu
Jones
Kellway
Lapointe
Laverdière
Leslie
MacAulay
Marston
Masse
May
McGuinty
Michaud
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)
Murray
Nash
Nunez-Melo
Papillon
Péclet
Plamondon
Rafferty
Ravignat
Regan
Saganash
Scarpaleggia
Sellah
Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor)
Sitsabaiesan
Stewart
Sullivan
Tremblay
Turmel

Government Orders

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

● (1640)

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra, Aboriginal Affairs; and the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands, The Environment.

[*English*]

SECOND READING

The House resumed from January 30 consideration of the motion that Bill C-2, An Act to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the motion that this question be now put.

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-2 was first introduced in June 2013, a little over a year ago, as Bill C-65 and came back to the House as Bill C-2 in October.

I am proud of the fact that about 50 members of the NDP caucus have spoken to this important legislation. However, I am ashamed to say that what we have heard from the government side is divisive debate. From day one the Conservatives have portrayed the issue of respecting the Supreme Court of Canada's decision on safer injection sites in Canada as a black and white issue.

I go back to January 27 of this year when the government House leader told the *Hill Times* that he will tell people that opposition parties want drug injection sites to be established in their neighbourhoods without people having any say. He then talked about the extreme position that the NDP was taking. Nothing could be further from the truth.

For the government House leader to portray our discourse on this legislation in that manner shows first, how the Conservatives like to create division and fear among people, and second, that they know absolutely nothing about North America's only safe injection site, which is located in Vancouver's downtown east side and called InSite. The fact is that InSite was set up over 10 years ago after extensive consultation with the local community.

The Supreme Court of Canada ruled that InSite and other supervised injection sites must be granted Section 56 exemptions under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act when they “decrease the risk of death and disease, and there is little or no evidence that it will have a negative impact on public safety...”

Upon reading the decision of the Supreme Court of Canada it is clear that it understood the arguments that were being made by the litigants, that this was a health measure, that it was about saving lives and that it was about preventing people from needless drug overdoses. Over the past 10 years, InSite has gone on to become incredibly successful and has helped improve the health and well-being of many people. It has saved literally countless lives in the Downtown Eastside.

Government Orders

Over 30 peer review studies have been done on InSite. It received its first exemption in 2003. From the extensive research that has been done since it opened, Vancouver has seen a 35% decrease in overdose deaths. Furthermore, InSite has been shown to decrease crime and communicable disease infection rates and relapse rates for drug users. That is quite remarkable. NDP members have always said that InSite is just part of the solution; it is not the only solution.

It is quite remarkable that this facility has been able to accomplish so much. One would never know that after hearing the speeches from government members. One would think it was just about chaos and law and order, that it was about imposing something on a community.

InSite did get a further exemption under the act for another year. I want to put firmly on the record that InSite has done a remarkable job in Vancouver.

I would also note that over those 10 years, organizations like the HIV/AIDS Legal Network, the Canadian Drug Policy Coalition, the Canadian Medical Association, and the Canadian Nurses Association, never mind the 30-plus peer review studies, have all come out firmly on the side of evidence that InSite is about saving lives. They came to this conclusion upon their analysis of how InSite is operated. They have been critical of Bill C-2 because they know, as we know having examined the bill, that it is really about setting the bar high. So much discretion and subjectivity is given to the minister that it would be very easy for her on flimsy, non-evidence-based opinion to turn down other applications across Canada.

That is the fundamental problem with this legislation. At the end of the day, Bill C-2 would not meet the test of the Supreme Court of Canada's decision on InSite.

• (1645)

Again we have a familiar pattern, as we just saw with Bill C-36 on the laws pertaining to prostitution. We have a government that is bent on its own ideological agenda and refuses to examine the evidence before it on some of these very important measures that pertain to safety, health, and well-being.

Just to show how important this facility is and that others across the country could provide the same kind of service, in Vancouver, on June 4, I happened to notice an item in the paper that said, "Vancouver Police are issuing a public warning after officers responded to seven reports of suspected heroin overdoses in the Downtown Eastside in the span of a day." Clearly, there was some really bad stuff on the street and people were really suffering.

The article further stated, "Sgt. Randy Fincham said active drug users need to be 'extremely cautious' and to visit InSite." There we have it. Even the Vancouver Police Department recognizes that InSite has been a very important health and safety measure for drug users. It provides a safe place to inject, and there is medical supervision and support when it is needed so that people do not die by overdose. As is said so often in the Downtown Eastside, dead people cannot get treatment. I find it very interesting that local police are actually telling people to make sure they go to InSite to take advantage of its services so people can have the medical support and safety that is required.

New Democrats believe that the provisions of this bill before us are very onerous and very partisan. This led us to suspect what research had actually been done in preparing the bill. I put a question on the order paper back in October of last year and asked specifically what kind of consultation the government had conducted before it brought the bill in, particularly for front-line service providers, medical research professionals, and so on. The response that I got from the government, in part, said, "In the development of the proposed legislation, Health Canada consulted with Public Safety Canada, Justice Canada, the Public Health Agency of Canada, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and central agencies." Basically, nobody on the government side actually bothered to talk to the people who are providing the service.

I know that not one Conservative minister of health that I visited and spoke to about InSite over the past years has visited InSite. There is a complete lack of knowledge about what this facility does. I am very concerned that with this bill the minister will confer on herself enormous discretion and power to make decisions based on political opposition and not on the merits of what is what is taking place in the local community and how such a facility can help a population that is very much at risk and marginalized.

There are a couple of other points that I want to make. A very important one is that there was the recent passing of a very wonderful activist, Bud Osborn, a poet, and pioneer at InSite in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. He was much beloved in the neighbourhood, a former drug user himself. He understood from the very beginning, through the poetry he wrote and the words he spoke to people, how important this facility was in fostering a united community, where people were not divided between good and bad.

I want to pay tribute to the remarkable life and work of Bud Osborn and what he did not only in my community but across the country. He became a hero to many people for his courageous, outspoken way of putting the truth before people. He convinced politicians of all political stripes and met with the Minister of Health here in Ottawa a number of years ago, as well as the media, lawyers, prosecutors. He had an enormous amount of influence in my community because he spoke the truth from his own experience and believed very strongly that InSite was a life-saving measure.

As this bill goes to committee, I want to say that New Democrats are very distressed that it is going to the public safety committee and not the health committee. It seems completely in conflict with what the goals of this bill should be in terms of a necessary health measure. We know that the bill is heavily weighted against the acceptance of these medically necessary services, so we will be demanding that there be a thoughtful and thorough review of the bill.

Government Orders

• (1650)

There have been a lot of scientific studies. We need to debunk the myths, the misinformation, and the rhetoric that we have heard about safer injections sites from the government side. When the bill gets to committee, I do hope very much, as we have said earlier today, that there will not be a censor of the witnesses, that there will be a thorough review and that we can make sure that the bill does indeed meet the test of the Supreme Court of Canada.

Mr. Rod Bruinooge (Winnipeg South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite has a lot of knowledge of this area as it is located in her riding. Obviously, I agree that we need to be very concerned with the plight of heroin addicts. I think all of us in this House are seeking the best path forward to find the solution.

She asked that maybe we should tamp down the rhetoric, so I will attempt to remove any rhetoric from my question. The first question I would ask would be in relation to a comment she made on the criminal rate. She indicated that there was a 35% reduction in the occurrence of crime. Might that be in relation to the new legal status or treatment that is being put on to these acts, relative to Supreme Court rulings? Maybe it is not, so I would love to hear her thoughts on that.

My second question would be this: as a member of Her Majesty's official opposition, in theory there may be a future government that this member is part of. What is her view on having these facilities in Canada? Should every major city in Canada have something similar to what she sees in her home city, and in how many cities does she think her government would bring in centres like this?

Ms. Libby Davies: Mr. Speaker, those are two very reasonable questions and I will do my best to answer them.

In terms of the decrease in crime, the fact is, there were more than 30 peer review studies that were done around InSite, so all of these questions were looked at. I would encourage my colleague to look at the report so he can see for himself, from these objective, evidence-based reports. What happened in that neighbourhood? Did things improve or not? I can tell him that the reports say that it did improve, but he can read it for himself.

In terms of what the NDP would do, first, we need to understand that InSite came from the local community. It was not imposed by Ottawa. It came from the city. It came from a grassroots involvement, and in fact right now, across Canada, I believe that there are applications from Montreal, from Toronto, even from here in Ottawa, possibly Victoria and even Edmonton.

There are applications being considered right now. A clear response needs to be evidence based. The local community needs to have done its homework and want to go ahead with it. We do not want to see the bill, though, squash that, which it will do, given the enormous powers that it gives to the minister.

• (1655)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from Vancouver East for her fine representation of her constituency. I certainly think we need to maintain these facilities.

I have been shocked by the bill, because it is so transparently an attempt to circumvent what the court has said. I have never seen a

subsection of a bill that ran out of A to Z, and then began to come up with other things past Z, that constitute a list of conditions.

Just to give my colleague the sense of how these conditions are clearly efforts to stop centres from being built, an applicant must provide in section (w) the name, title, and résumé, including relevant education and training of the proposed responsible person in charge, of each of their proposed alternate responsible persons, and each of the other proposed key staff members.

This is at the stage an applicant is applying to put together a facility. I do not know any charity or business that, at the stage of application, could fulfill the conditions. These are not the conditions of a government that understands this facility saves lives. This is a transparent attempt to stop the facility from going forward.

Ms. Libby Davies: Mr. Speaker, the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands is very correct. When I spoke the first time to the bill, I actually went through A to Z. I went through all of those conditions. What makes it even worse, though, to add insult to injury, is that even if it were possible for an applicant to meet all of those conditions—and the member has outlined how difficult that would be—the minister could still turn it down, so it is very discretionary.

It seems abundantly clear that the purpose of the bill is to ensure that no further safe injection facilities will be set up in Canada. That would be a huge issue in many local communities, because the homework has been done. There are organizations and advocates who want to see this kind of health facility and health intervention set up for people who are very marginalized.

It is very unfortunate. I hope we will get into it at committee. We hope to see the bill significantly changed so that it is objective and based on evidence.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Giguère (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we all have all known or seen people struggling with addictions. Very often the problem is with alcohol. Unfortunately, some are addicted to illicit drugs. It is not a happy situation for their parents, their friends, their loved ones or themselves.

These people not only need help, but also some supervision to reduce the problems they can cause. A neighbourhood where drugs are sold is also one where discarded dirty needles litter the ground and where people use drugs out in the open.

In this situation, people could well be using extremely dangerous drugs, perhaps cut with unknown substances by unscrupulous drug traffickers who are only interested in making money on the backs of their customers. This means we are facing a serious public health problem.

Clearly, the fight against drugs includes a policing component: some people need to go to jail. An individual bringing in a container of cocaine or heroin is not really someone who is socially responsible. In fact, quite the opposite is true. People who become victims of this drug need medical supervision. It has been said that all it takes is a little willpower and they could take care of themselves. This is not true. They need medical supervision to leave drug use behind or to not die from it.

Government Orders

Earlier, I spoke about a problem we are currently facing in Montreal. The same problem can be seen from time to time everywhere in Canada when someone cuts drugs with a harmful substance or when the drug purity is too high or too low. This leads to overdoses, and people using this drug are at risk of dying in an alley or a squalid apartment. The risk is extremely high.

People in one Vancouver neighbourhood recommended a medical solution. Right away, this makes it possible to get rid of one problem: no drug trafficker has control over that area. A centre is not meant to sell drugs or encourage people to use them. It is not meant to be placed across from a school, where children could see things.

The danger is already there. If we want to avoid having used syringes in a schoolyard and having children find drug users taking drugs out in the open, the solution is a safe injection site. Obviously, there is a lot of confusion. People think that we want to encourage drug use. However, that is not true. Nothing in the InSite project aims to encourage drug use. The opposite is true. This is a public health project.

Moreover, the Supreme Court has been very clear about this. In 2011, it stated that InSite's services were essential and that it had to remain open under the exception set out in section 56 of the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act. It is an essential service in the context of a medical action.

• (1700)

It is understandable that the minister wants to impose conditions to ensure that safe injection sites do not become places where drugs are sold. No one wants that. However, we want at all costs to prevent a situation where a functional medical institution is not allowed to operate under the pretext of ensuring public safety.

At this safe site, drug users can get immediate support if they react badly to a drug. This person may be an old friend or a member of an MP's family because, unfortunately, no one is safe. Also, if someone decides one day that they want to stop using drugs, the employees at the safe injection site can give that person medical and psychological support.

We could go on and on about this. I understand that people are afraid, but this should in no way be turned into a police issue. Would conditions like this be imposed on an Alcoholics Anonymous chapter? Never. Would such restrictive conditions be imposed on other public health organizations? No, we would not do that either. The government obviously has a double standard. Is alcohol more socially acceptable than drugs?

It is not easy living with an addiction, whether it is to alcohol or drugs. These people have the right to our support. We must have a minimum of decency and empathy towards our fellow Canadians in difficulty. Is there anything more difficult than dealing with an addiction? We have to extend a hand to these people who are suffering greatly and provide them with medical, physical and emotional support.

Since a centre was established in Vancouver, there have been 35% fewer deaths. That kind of centre is really needed. The Supreme Court recognized that it was necessary, so, do not tell me it is not. We could talk a long time about the merits of this institution, and I

believe that many of my colleagues on both sides of the House think that it makes sense from a medical perspective.

What we really cannot agree on are the conditions for establishing this site. The Conservatives say that it would be horrible for these sites to be located near hospitals or schools, and that we have to think of the children. However, the risk of finding dirty needles on school property is much higher if the neighbourhood does not have a safe injection site. I know that there are some police officers and former police officers in the House.

These centres fall within the realm of public health not just because they help people with addictions, but also because the general public would no longer have to experience the most obvious problems associated with living in a neighbourhood where there is a major addiction problem.

• (1705)

[*English*]

Mr. David Wilks (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there are a couple of things I wanted to note in the member's speech with regard to the treatment centre.

Certainly I agree with him about alcohol treatment centres. The difference, of course, is that people going to the alcohol treatment centres are normally sober when they go there. In the case of the safe injection site, the fact is that someone purchases heroin illegally—because not one point of heroin, the tenth of a gram that is normally bought, can be purchased legally in Canada—and then the person takes it to the safe injection site.

The challenge we have is that although safe injection sites are meant to help those people, does the member not believe we should be providing more services for these people to get off the drug, as opposed to having a place where they can take the drug?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Giguère: Mr. Speaker, his wealth of experience should remind him that these people need help. However, they must take the first step themselves. We cannot do it for them.

You can urge someone to stop drinking or taking drugs, but they have to take some action too. That action has to be encouraged materially and medically. He is right to a considerable extent, except on one major point: people do not buy drugs at these sites. They come in with their drugs.

Giving someone a syringe is an important way to prevent them from contracting AIDS or any other disease. It is especially important to get rid of the used syringe. It really is a matter of public health. These sites do not sell drugs.

The more services that encourage them to get out of the drug market, so to speak, the better it is. Better, not worse. I support his position overall, except on one major point. It is a place where people take drugs but it is not a place where people sell them.

Government Orders

• (1710)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the points that gets lost in this debate is the fact that Canada has one site, which is often referred to, out on the west coast. That site coming into being did not happen overnight. It took a great deal of effort and thought and looking at how the community and the potential clients might benefit.

A number of professionals weighed in on it, whether they were health care professionals, officers of the law, or provincial and federal politicians. The overwhelming consensus was that they should move forward in trying it out. After a number of years, the overwhelming consensus was that it was a huge success.

There are no communities jumping up and down saying that they want sites. That is because of the government's attitude and ideological opinion, which does not necessarily match up with what the different stakeholders and professionals are actually saying.

I wonder if the member might comment on how important it is for us to reflect on what the community leaders and these professionals are saying about the success of that site in Vancouver.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Giguère: Mr. Speaker, there is no problem in demonstrating that it is a success. The major problem is what I would call the “not in my backyard” syndrome.

If you live in a neighbourhood with lots of children and lots of parks, you might wonder whether it is really an appropriate place for activities of that kind. However, the neighbourhoods with drug addiction problems are usually downtown, in places where there are no schools.

There are a lot of problems, however. A lot of the police officers here today could tell you that you do not generally find young schoolchildren in those rough and unpleasant neighbourhoods. Neighbourhoods like that are much more of a problem and require more police intervention.

The goal of all this is to turn police intervention into medical intervention. As for the “not in my backyard” mentality, I would say that, in most places where such sites could be set up, it would almost be better for them and life there would become more pleasant.

[*English*]

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan (Scarborough—Rouge River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the last time this bill was brought up for debate was in January, and I did not get a chance to speak to it then. Since the government has waited six months to bring it back as an important issue it would like to have discussed, I am happy I have the opportunity to speak to it.

I also have a question for the government. What is the hurry? The last time the government wanted to talk about Bill C-2 was January 30, when it called it up for debate. Today, on June 17, there seems to be a huge hurry, because the government needs to stop debate again. It needs to curtail the debate that happens in this House, again. The government wants to make sure that it limits the debate in this House by moving yet another time allocation motion.

I just do not understand. If this is so important for the government, why did it not bring it up sooner? Why did the government wait six months? Now it is so important that it needs to stop debate and push it through the House. That just goes to show, once again, the lack of respect for Parliament.

I will come back to Bill C-2 now. This is a deeply flawed bill based on an anti-drug ideology and false fears for public safety. The government continues to talk about public safety concerns and how Bill C-2 would actually protect our communities and make them safer. In reality, that is not the truth. It really should be a health bill, not a public safety bill. Looking at the details and the actionable items that would come out of the bill, it should actually be a health-related bill.

This is yet another attempt by the Conservative government to rally its base. We witnessed its “Keep heroin out of our backyards” fundraising it did on its website just moments after the bill was introduced in the House. It just goes to show that the Conservatives are trying to continue fearmongering and rallying their base, raising money from their ideological standpoint.

The NDP feels that sound public policy should not be based on ideology but on facts and evidence. That is what we are pushing for.

I would like to talk a little about the background of Bill C-2, if I may, because my constituents who are listening at home may not know what Bill C-2 is all about or what safe injections sites are.

Canada only has one safe injection site in the country, and it is located in Vancouver. Since the opening of InSite in 2003, I believe, Vancouver has actually seen a 35% decrease in overdose deaths and has also had a decrease in crime, communicable disease infection rates, and relapse rates for drug users in the community around the safe injection site called InSite.

This bill is about the section 56 exemption InSite receives and that other drug injection sites would receive. InSite was originally granted the exemption in 2003 to operate under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act for medical and scientific purposes to provide services and to do research on the effectiveness of supervised injection facilities.

Section 56 is the section of the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act that grants the minister the authority to approve operations using drugs for medical, scientific, or law enforcement purposes.

In 2008, the section 56 exemption granted by the minister had expired, and the minister of health at that time denied InSite's renewal of the section 56 exemption, which of course triggered a series of court cases in which the B.C. Supreme Court ruled that InSite should be granted the exemption. We then had the Federal Court appeal to the B.C. Court of Appeal, which also ruled that InSite should stay open.

Government Orders

●(1715)

I do not want to talk too much more about the background, but I want to make sure that people at home in Scarborough know what I am talking about.

The Supreme Court ruling said that InSite and other supervised injection sites must be granted the section 56 exemption where they decrease the risk of death and disease and where there is little or no evidence that they would have a negative impact on public safety. Even the Supreme Court decision showed that there was no decrease in public safety but rather that it could help the community. The Supreme Court decision in 2011 refused the government's argument. The Conservatives had tried for four years to force the closure of InSite.

I mentioned some of the statistics, but I have more. For example, between 1987 and 1993, the rates of overdose deaths in Vancouver had increased from 16 deaths per annum to 200 deaths per annum. That is from evidence provided to the Supreme Court. However, the rate of overdose deaths in east Vancouver had dropped 35% since InSite had opened. That is just from the one site. This information was from Marshall, Milloy, Wood, Montaner, and Kerr and published in *The Lancet* in 2011.

Over a one-year period, 2,171 referrals were made for InSite users. They did not just use the services of the safe injection site under the supervision of health care professionals but actually took it one step further. More than 2,000 people sought addiction counselling or were able to receive other types of support services.

There was a significant improvement in the lives of the people who live in the Vancouver area near InSite and a significant improvement in the safety of the community, because there was also a significant drop in the number of discarded syringes, injection-related litter, and people injecting on the streets one year after InSite opened.

Injection drug users who use InSite are 70% less likely to share needles. This statistic came from Kerr et al, who I mentioned earlier, in 2005. The internationally known best practice to reduce the rate of HIV-AIDS is to reduce the sharing of needles. This has been proven to be what is happening in the Vancouver area around InSite.

Going back to the Supreme Court decision, it refused the arguments made by the government. The Supreme Court said that if it supported the closure of InSite, it would actually be violating the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, because it would prohibit Canadians from having access to health care services that were making them healthier. To stop the provision of these services would increase the danger to their lives.

We are supposed to be prudent law-makers. We have a fiduciary responsibility to the constituents we represent and to all Canadians to make sure that we are doing the due diligence needed to put forth laws that make our country better and make communities safer and healthier. The bill before us would not do that. The Supreme Court's ruling was quite clear in making that argument.

The Conservative government likes to talk about Nimbyism, "not in my backyard", or "we do not want heroine in our backyards, do we?"

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure what the Conservative member is heckling about, but I have a statistic here that says that 80% of people surveyed living or working in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside actually support InSite and the work it is doing to improve the community and the quality of life of the people in the community.

●(1720)

This legislation is defiant of the Supreme Court's decision. It should be with the health ministry and not the public safety ministry. It should not be forced through this House under time allocation.

I would be happy to take any questions.

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have listened to the comments of my colleague across the way with great curiosity. I am from British Columbia and have experienced InSite being an issue in my province for many years.

I have one question. I wonder if the member could answer whether she thinks injecting heroin is safe.

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan: Mr. Speaker, I think it is quite funny that this Conservative member wants to know if injecting heroin is safe.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Yes or no?

Mr. David Wilks: Yes or no?

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Is it a good idea?

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure what the other member is yelling at me over here right now, but the question that the member asked does not have a yes or no answer. Maybe we need to have a little workshop about open-ended and closed-ended questions.

The injection of heroin is not the issue here. The issue is making sure that people who are already having substance abuse problems have access to safe injection sites and then to improve the quality of their life and get away from the drug abuse situation that they might be in.

This type of fearmongering and trying to bully or intimidate me in the House will not stop me from trying to support Canadians and making this country a better place.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have waited a long time to speak.

In my neighbourhood, there are a lot of addicts. I heard some Conservative ministers ask whether we would want such sites in our backyard. Oh yes, I would.

Moreover, out of the four sites that are planned for Montreal, one will be in my riding. We find a lot of syringes in the parks and that is dangerous for the children. In Hochelaga, there are unfortunately a lot of bad drugs, which affect a lot of people.

An organization called Dopamine is already helping protect children and adults by picking up the syringes. It also gives clean syringes to addicts to stop people from getting sick. However, there is nothing Dopamine can do about bad drugs.

At a supervised injection site or a supervised injection service, specialists would be on site to ensure that people who inject too many drugs are protected, do not die and do not transmit diseases to others.

That is what we call harm reduction. That is what these sites are used for, and it has been proven effective in a number of cities.

I would like to know what my colleague thinks about that.

• (1725)

[English]

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her intelligible question and her comments about her constituency. She is right when she says that places like InSite are not for drug dealers but for health care professionals. It is where our health workers are making sure that the members in their community are safer and are living healthier lives. Weaning these people off their addictions could be a slow process, but it is our health care professionals who are overseeing this.

I want to talk to the second point that my hon. colleague mentioned with respect to harm reduction. We know that the Conservatives do not like the idea of harm reduction in our drug strategy, because in 2007 they took the words “harm reduction” out of the national drug strategy. Now it seems they are looking to dismantle anything in our legislation, our laws, our policies, and our regulations that would support and endorse the approach of harm reduction.

We strongly believe that harm reduction is the way to move forward.

Hon. Gary Goodyear (Minister of State (Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for proving a point that we have been trying to make in this House; that is that the members opposite want more time to debate. They have already had 18 hours on this particular subject. More than 97 members have stood in this House to speak to this issue. One of the complaints I have heard from my colleagues is that the NDP members continue to stand up and read virtually the same speech and raise the same issues.

The member asked a pertinent question, whether heroin is safe. Heroin is made by bad guys. It is not a controlled substance. It is not produced in a government lab. Is that the next issue? That is a very pertinent question. Is the NDP saying that the Government of Canada, if run by the NDP, would use taxpayer dollars to make the heroin so that it is safe to be injected at safe injection sites? Is that where the NDP is going with this?

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan: Mr. Speaker, the minister's question is quite interesting; that is all I will say.

Heroin is a dangerous substance. This is why we should not be using heroin. This is why most people do not use heroin. However, there are some who have, for whatever reasons, fallen into a negative

Private Members' Business

spiral of substance abuse, whether it is heroin or any other substance abuse.

Take alcohol, for example. Many people in this country drink alcohol, and it is all right. It is culturally accepted. However, there are people who have substance abuse problems with alcohol.

I am not saying that it is for the government to get into the production of heroin; I am not sure if the minister is suggesting that. No, heroin is not a safe substance to be using. That is not what the NDP is saying.

The NDP is supporting harm reduction in our communities. That is what the only safe injection site in Canada is doing: making the community actually better by improving harm reduction in that community

• (1730)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): It being 5:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business, as listed on today's order paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[Translation]

DAIRY PRODUCERS

The House resumed from May 28 consideration of the motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): The last time the House considered the issue, the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot had six minutes remaining. She may resume debate.

Ms. Marie-Claude Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I may be repeating some of the things that were said when we last examined this motion. If so, I apologize for this in advance.

I want to focus on the excellent motion brought forward by my colleague from Berthier—Maskinongé which calls on the government to keep the promise it made to dairy and cheese producers.

To set the context, last October 18, Canada and the European Union concluded an agreement in principle on a comprehensive economic and trade accord. Seven months on from this announcement, an agreement has yet to be finalized.

We are talking here about an industry that generates many jobs. It is also important to point out that dairy and cheese producers have publicly expressed their concerns over the possible economic and commercial repercussions of this agreement on Canada's dairy and cheese industries. Direct and indirect jobs are at stake, in both the production and processing sectors.

This motion aims to mitigate the potential impact of this agreement on the dairy and cheese industries. It also seeks support for Canada's supply management system, which guarantees stable and fair prices, and in so doing protects our producers. We have consistently supported supply management in the dairy, poultry and egg sectors. This system is extremely important to our agricultural industry.

Private Members' Business

I am especially mindful of how important this system is, having talked to a great many producers from various sectors in my riding. If the terms of the agreement in principle are formalized in the final agreement, the EU will secure greater access to the Canadian cheese market. This would weaken one of the pillars of our supply management system, namely the regulation of imports. In the process, the system's effectiveness would be threatened. As everyone knows, supply management is built on three pillars and if even one of those pillars is weakened, the entire system is put at risk. That is where the problem lies. Canada's producers and dairy industry could incur losses. Canadian dairy farmers and their communities could lose a portion of their revenues to the European industry. That is not something we want to see because the economic development of communities and the jobs directly and indirectly linked to this sector would be affected.

As I said, the federal government has promised to compensate dairy and cheese producers, an offer that both Ontario and Quebec have accepted. This shows that producers are acting in good faith. However the government has yet to release any details of possible compensation options. This is not very reassuring for our producers or for the rest of us. My riding is home to a great many producers and its economy could be threatened.

I would also point out that in Canada, and in Quebec in particular, the dairy and cheese industries are flourishing. We have good reason to be proud of the growing variety of high quality products that have become available in recent years. In my view, it is critically important that we continue to support this industry, which helps sustain farms and farm labour.

Supply management does not involve subsidies. It does not provide handouts. At present, dairy producers are not receiving any government assistance. By comparison, in Europe, some producers are receiving government subsidies of up to 60%. Our dairy producers are not operating on an equal footing with European producers. This constitutes unfair competition. The situation does not work and is untenable.

The government conducted negotiations with Europe in a setting of utmost secrecy. The uncertainty created by this lack of transparency obviously had repercussions for the industry.

Investments in this sector are on hold while people wait to see how the industry will be affected by the agreement.

As I stated earlier, supply management is a system that works very well.

• (1735)

My six minutes have flown by. In the sixty seconds remaining, I will run down the list of organizations that support this motion: the Dairy Farmers of Canada, the Union des producteurs agricoles du Québec, the Quebec Milk Producers Federation, the Fédération de la relève agricole du Québec, the Association des artisans fromagers du Québec and the Association des transporteurs de lait du Québec.

All of these wonderful organizations support our motion and want to work constructively with the government to resolve the problems associated with this agreement.

[English]

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand and express our government's strong support for Canada's dairy industry. Canadians look to our dairy farmers for the high quality, nutritious milk and cheese products to which they have become accustomed. Our hard-working farmers consistently deliver.

My riding of Kitchener—Conestoga is home to some of the most innovative and productive farmers in all of Canada. Whether it is on Huron Road or Pinehill Road in Wilmot township, Gerber Road in Wellesley township, or Floradale Road in Woolwich township, all through the beautiful riding of Kitchener—Conestoga, we will find well-managed and well-kept dairy farms that are producing high quality milk and cheese products. That is why when it comes to promoting Canadian agriculture at home and around the world, we ensure that the interests of our dairy farmers and their families remain at the top of mind.

Our government is proud to put farmers first, to defend our supply managed industries, and to promote the competitiveness of the dairy sector. This support extends to our international trade negotiations, including the Canada-EU free trade agreement. We are committed to the completion of this historic deal.

With the exception of a new tariff rate quota for cheese and the elimination of the milk protein substance tariff, Canada has not provided any additional access to the EU on any of Canada's supply management products. In addition, the three pillars of Canada's supply management system remain in place: production, border controls and pricing.

That said, we understand the concerns of the cheese and dairy industry. This is why our government has pledged to monitor the impacts from the implementation of the Canada-EU trade agreement on dairy producers' income, and to provide compensation to address such impacts if they materialize. It is a big "if". I am very confident of the ability of our dairy farmers and the dairy sector to compete, and I am confident that there will be no negative impacts. In fact, I see great potential for positive impacts through the Canada-EU trade agreement for our dairy farmers.

We have been consulting with industry on this issue over the past five months and we continue to do so.

As members know, Canadians love cheese. They especially love Canadian cheese. In fact, demand for our great Canadian cheese made from our high quality Canadian milk has been on the rise in the past few years. In my riding, on the very road where my farm is located and where I have lived for over 60 years, I just recently visited Mountainoak Cheese. I tasted the cheese, and I am very confident that this cheese producer, which is producing cheese for a niche market, can compete with any cheese made anywhere in the world.

Across Canada, we have our classic cheeses, Monforte Toscano, Avonlea Clothbound cheddar, Grey Owl, Oka, and Mont-Jacob, which deliver exactly what we expect: mouth-watering flavour and great textures. Our cheeses are recognized globally for their taste and quality, and for very good reason.

Private Members' Business

This past December, at the 86th annual British Empire Cheese Show, the St-Albert Cheese Co-operative from eastern Ontario was crowned Grand Champion and received two prestigious awards for its aged cheddar. In addition, in October, Glengarry Cheesemaking, just north of Lancaster, Ontario, walked away with the Supreme Global Champion award at the Global Cheese Awards in Somerset, England. Its Lankaster cheese was crowned the winner among 167 categories in Somerset, England, which is the birthplace of cheddar. This stuff is now flying off of the shelves in Ontario.

In fact, one cheesemaker told the standing committee meeting that she believed that there is an opportunity for Canadian cheese in world markets, including the European market, provided that exporters had the tools they needed to take the leap.

Beyond our award-winning cheese, there is a lot of good news on the horizon for Canadian dairy producers. Our government has boosted innovation investments and initiatives under Canada's new agricultural policy framework, Growing Forward 2. Growing Forward 2 is about helping farmers capture new opportunities, while building a strong agriculture sector for the future.

Under the previous Growing Forward framework, we invested in research clusters, including \$7 million in the dairy research cluster. This cluster brought together industry experts, scientists and universities to focus on enhancing this industry's competitiveness.

Whether it is about the pork industry or the dairy industry, I am repeatedly hearing from farmers that they would rather see our government invest in research and marketing opportunities than go to their mailboxes for their cheques that come from the government. I am convinced we are on the right track.

● (1740)

Previous research found new practices to help improve the health of dairy cattle and the safety and quality of our milk. The Dairy Farmers of Canada did a great job in leading this initiative.

We followed up this great work by increasing our original investment under Growing Forward in the dairy sector by investing \$12 million for a dairy cluster under Growing Forward 2. This investment will help to continue the cluster's great work over the next five years.

Overall, research in a new cluster is focusing on nutrition, sustainable milk production, as well as dairy genetics and genomics. In collaboration with our world-class scientists at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, this leading edge research will make our dairy sector more competitive.

Genetic improvement for dairy cattle will boost productivity and profitability on the farm through greater health and feed efficiency. Canada is world famous for its dairy genetics, and the results of research and our strong dairy cattle improvement programs have helped to significantly improve milk production per cow over the last 30 years. We have opened markets in the Middle East, the Pacific Rim and South America, with exports of over \$90 million in dairy genetics last year.

We appreciate the valuable role of the numerous organizations working alongside Dairy Farmers of Canada and our scientists who advance the work of the cluster, including the Canadian Dairy

Network. I am proud that our government is supporting what industry has identified as the highest priority research by the best experts in the field.

Overall, through Growing Forward 2, we are boosting innovation spending to roughly \$700 million at the federal level. With proactive investments of \$3 billion by federal, provincial and territorial governments over five years, Growing Forward 2, as it is called, is driving sector growth and productivity. We are helping to achieve these goals by increasing our focus on strategic investments and innovation, markets and competitiveness. As we know, the dairy industry is a key economic driver, creating thousands of jobs across Canada.

Our government is committed to keeping this sector strong and profitable and helping all producers stay on the cutting edge. This is just part of the government's broader commitment to growth, to jobs, and to long-term prosperity, not just for the agricultural sector but for Canadians everywhere.

This is why our government will be supporting Motion No. 496. In fact, we have already taken action on a number of the initiatives that are described in this motion. Through the new dairy research cluster and Growing Forward 2, we can all look forward to continued growth and prosperity in this great industry in our rural communities and for our hard-working Canadian farmers.

I am thankful for the time that I have been given to express my support for the dairy industry, which has really been the backbone of the agricultural sector in the riding of Kitchener—Conestoga. I am very proud to represent the farmers there. I have had many opportunities to exchange ideas with them. Just recently, I hosted a round table with the dairy farmers and we were able to dialogue about some of the challenges that this presented. However, it would also provide to them with the opportunities that would be given to dairy farmers as they could benefit from the Canada-EU free trade agreement.

● (1745)

Ms. Chrystia Freeland (Toronto Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it does seem cruel to be talking about Canada's excellent cheeses at a quarter to six. I got very hungry listening to the previous presentation.

Having heard about the hon. member's great love for Canadian cows and Canadian dairy, I cannot resist sharing with the House the fact that I am not only the daughter-in-law of a dairy farmer but also a granddaughter of dairy farmers, and so I join everyone here in our support for our great dairy industry and the tremendous innovations that are happening there.

Private Members' Business

What I would like to talk about today, and what I think this gives us an opportunity to talk about more broadly, is our trade policy. I would like to discuss what is happening with the CETA deal and the need for transparency in our trade policy so that Canadians can see what is happening and the House can discuss what the deal actually contains. I want to talk about a trade policy that actually delivers, a policy whereby deals that are announced are actually concluded and whereby the deals that now stand concluded actually deliver the results. We in the Liberal Party know a good trade policy can and must deliver for the Canadian economy.

We need trade to work for us because we are a small country—not in geography, but in population—in a huge world economy. Without effectively joining Canada into the global economy, Canada will fail. Our middle class will fail to have the rising incomes that we are not getting now and that we really need.

We are really supportive of an effective trading policy. However, I am sad to say that we do not feel we are getting the results that a truly liberal trade policy should be delivering. In particular, I would like to talk about CETA.

The CETA deal, as we all know, was signed with a lot of fanfare on October 18 of last fall by the Prime Minister and the President of the EU, José Manuel Barroso. We still do not have that deal concluded, although we have had some opportunities. The Prime Minister was recently in Brussels. There was a lot of speculation and a lot of hope among Canadians that he would come home with a done deal. He has not done that. We would like to hear why. We would like to know what is going on.

The irony of the situation for us as Canadian legislators, at least for those of us on this side of the House, is that right now we and Canadian citizens are hearing more from EU officials and EU diplomats. They have been quite open in talking about how the deal is not quite ready and talking, quite frankly, about how that initial agreement was signed much earlier than is normal in these trade negotiations and that much more work needed to be done then. More seems to still need to be done now than we were led to believe when the agreement was signed with such great fanfare.

It is even the case that we have had a hard time tracking down what was actually signed. We submitted an access to information request to access the agreement that was actually signed by the Prime Minister and the President of the EU. Here is what we were told by the Privy Council Office:

A thorough search of the records under the control of PCO was carried out on your behalf; however, no records relevant to your request were found.

This really is theatre of the absurd. We really would like to know. I think everyone in the House would like to know and needs to know. As the private member's bill suggests, we need more transparency on what is happening. We need not just great photo ops, but the details of what is going on with these trade deals that are so essential for the Canadian economy and for Canadians.

What I am particularly concerned about when it comes to the CETA deal is that because of the timing, because of the lag between today, in the middle of June, and October 18, Canada now finds itself behind the United States in the queue of nations that are negotiating trade with the EU. The story of Canada, the story of Canadian

diplomacy in the world, is understanding what it means to be the neighbour of the United States. There can be big advantages, but it also means we have to dance delicately and lightly and act smarter.

● (1750)

While we were ahead of the U.S., while the U.S. proposals were not on the table, there was a real opportunity for us to have the full attention of EU officials and EU negotiators. Now, however, I am very sad to say that people informed about these deals are saying that EU officials are, understandably, focusing much more time and energy on their negotiations with the United States. We are now, I am afraid to say, in a position where important concerns, including concerns of the Canadian dairy industry and of Canadian auto manufacturers, are going to have to take a back seat to the deal being hammered out by the Americans, and we may well find ourselves having to settle not for a deal made for Canada in Europe but for a copy of what the Americans are able to negotiate.

It did not have to be that way, given that this deal was being worked on earlier, and we would really like to hear why we have let ourselves fall behind a party that has a bigger economy to bring to the table.

I would also like to point out that despite the fact that many of us in this House agree that trade and exports need to be, and are, an essential part of a healthy Canadian economy, we are just not seeing that performance today. We have photo ops and we have trade deals announced, but they are not moving the dial when it comes to Canada's actual economic performance.

I do not ask members to blindly trust my assertion. I do not ask members to simply take my word when it comes to the undeniable fact that Canada's trade policy, although we are getting the photo ops and the announcements, is not delivering for the Canadian economy. Here is who I do ask members to trust: the Bank of Canada.

In its financial system review published this month, this is what the Bank of Canada had to say, in part, about export and trade and its performance for the Canadian economy: "In Canada, the anticipated rebalancing of economic growth toward exports and investment remains elusive...."

These are damning words. It is not enough to have photo ops of trade deals. It is not even enough to have trade deals. What we need are trade deals that do the job we need them to do, and that is to strengthen the Canadian economy. Right now, as the Bank of Canada economists say, we need a tilt toward exports. Trade deals are meant to facilitate that, but as the Bank of Canada says, that shift remains elusive.

We really need to see and would like to see more transparency about what the government is doing on this file. We need and want to see harder work on this file and more delivered results.

I would like to cite another source, another group that is deeply concerned about Canada's export performance. This is another group that we in the Liberal Party listen to very closely, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce. What business has to say about Canada's trade and about export performance in particular is very worrying. Its report was issued just last month, and even the title is very worrying: "Turning it Around: How to Restore Canada's Trade Success". It states that "... the increase in exports and outward investment has been slow in recent years, and diversification to emerging economies has been limited."

This is echoing the Bank of Canada report. We are just not seeing the export performance that we need.

The Chamber of Commerce is worried. In referring to "Canada's lagging trade performance", here is what it says:

Despite more firms looking abroad, Canada is lagging its peers according to several measures. Over the past decade, the value of exports has increased at only a modest pace.

Most worrying of all, the chamber did an interesting calculation in which it backed out the increase in commodity prices that has flattered Canada's export performance. It concluded:

If these price increases are excluded, the volume of merchandise exports shipped in 2012 was actually five per cent lower than in 2000 despite a 57 per cent increase in trade worldwide.

Therefore, the real story—what the numbers say, what the Chamber of Commerce is worried about, and what the Bank of Canada is warning us about—is that our trade performance is lagging behind. We need to do better.

To conclude, we very much hope that we will have more transparency and better performance on the CETA deal and on deals with some of the big emerging markets in the world.

• (1755)

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will do something I usually do not do, which is to actually give my speech in English this time. The reason is that in Quebec, there is no debate about supply management. People get it. There is no controversy about it.

When I read economists or pundits from large urban centres such as Montreal, Toronto, or Quebec—actually, rarely from Montreal, but from Toronto, Vancouver, or any other large setting—they are always against supply management. It does not make sense to me.

It happens largely in urban centres because they take the perspective of the consumer, even though they are wrong in this perspective or they are wrong in their statements. I would like to explain why supply management actually makes sense from an economic perspective.

It makes sense because there are coordination problems that are unique to agriculture. Some other domains can have those problems, but we witness them in agriculture. If in natural resources, for example, the price of copper decreases, the mining company or processor will tend to reduce supply by laying off people and reducing its production until prices rise again. The people on the boards making those decisions will make them without fearing for their livelihoods: the company will still be standing, so they can afford to make the decision to reduce supply.

Private Members' Business

For farmers faced with the same type of decision—if the price of milk drops, for example—the sensible move would be to do the same thing and decrease supply. That is what we might see if there was coordination. However, the lack of coordination in a pure market in determining the need for milk, for example, makes it impossible for the individual farmer to do that, because the farmer relies on production for a livelihood. Even though the individual decision should be to reduce supply, the mass of farmers will actually increase their supply, because they need to sell more to compensate for the drop in price. This is what we call the "tragedy of the commons": individually it makes sense, but as a collective decision, it is a call for disaster.

The other point is that there is also a problem of asymmetry in market power. In the pure market economy, the individual farmer is a price taker. He has to take the price. He has no market power compared to the large processors, the large buyers of his product. Those companies, such as Agropur, Parmalat, or Saputo, are the price setters.

If there is no coordination among farmers, obviously the power in itself is really unbalanced. This is why there is a need for a countervailing power to make sure that the farmers can actually get organized. In some other jurisdictions, it takes different forms. In Canada, we have chosen to go with supply management.

To address this type of market failure, different countries have taken different routes. We often hear from the opponents of supply management that New Zealand is the way to go. New Zealand used to have supply management, but scrapped it. According to opponents of supply management, New Zealand let the market do its part.

The example is actually a fallacy, because in New Zealand there are now fewer farmers and fewer milk-producing farms. They decided to go a different route. Basically there is only one buyer, the Fonterra Co-operative Group, which is the result of the merger of 12 co-ops in New Zealand. Fonterra is buying 95% of the milk produced. Basically it is a large co-op that exports to about 140 countries.

There is one single buyer for all the milk. That means that the farmer actually has some protection. This process is very reminiscent of the Canadian Wheat Board, which we scrapped here in Canada thanks to the Conservative government. That is the way New Zealand decided to go. It is not a pure market economy. They have not scrapped supply management. They are not leaving anything behind. They left that large co-op, that large single buyer.

Looking at the European Union or even the United States, we see that they have taken the direction of subsidies. Even though there has been some progress in decreasing the level of subsidies in the European Union, it is still significantly high, to the point where the gains that we could make in the dairy industry in Europe are very theoretical at this point.

Private Members' Business

●(1800)

Obviously if the dairy products from Europe actually come to Canada, they are supposed to come without any subsidy to help production. On the other side, if we are exporting, we will be faced with a subsidized industry in Europe, so it is not sure at this point if we are going to be on a level playing field with the European Union on its own turf.

The United States is often referred to when we talk about the “high cost” of supply management because we tend to compare our prices to the consumer here with those in the U.S. We look at the U. S. and think the prices there are much lower. We say supply management has been a failure, but the prices are subsidized either directly or indirectly by the U.S. government or by the individual state's government.

Between 1995 and 2012, a period of 17 years, U.S. farmers actually received over \$5 billion in direct subsidies from the federal government in the U.S. That is an average of \$313 million a year. Looking at the last year available, 2012, it was actually close to \$450 million in subsidies to the farmers in the U.S. The prices we see there are largely subsidized, which makes many economists say that basically the U.S. consumer is paying twice. The consumer is paying the regular retail price and paying through taxes as well, which is not the case here. Supply management is not something that the taxpayer is subsidizing. It is a mechanism that actually helps to ensure stability in the price that the producer receives.

Looking at Australia, which is probably the closest example of the liberalized market, it is almost liberalized, but it had so many problems when it decided to scrap what was akin to supply management that it basically had to subsidize those farmers who were in jeopardy. At the time when it started to fully deregulate at the end of the 1990s, it attached to the deregulation bill about \$1.8 billion Australian, to actually help the transition. If things were not bad enough, because the farmers could not actually live on what they were getting, they had to add about \$122 million Australian by the end of 2000, to help the industry, and that was given to about 7,750 producers.

As an example of the impact this deregulation had on farmers, the number of dairy farms actually dropped from 2000 to 2007 from 13,000 to 8,000, while the average herd, which is an important number to evaluate the productivity of the farm, increased from 170 cows to 225 cows during the same period. Therefore, we are seeing increased productivity, but supply management has also increased productivity. In my riding and in my region, even small family farms are a lot more productive than they used to be.

Economists say that prices are much higher here. There are many more aspects to the equation than just supply management. If we look at the price for pork in the U.S., for example, which is not a supply managed industry, and compare it to Canada, often it is half the price. It is not supply managed.

There are many more reasons, and I know my time is limited, so I will not be able to address some of those criticisms, but we know that supply management is not something that is a hindrance to our international trade negotiations. It is not detrimental to our processors, who are doing very well, and the criticism that it does

not give incentive to make efficiency gains is not accurate, because obviously if they are working through a quota system, producers have to decrease their costs and be more productive, so they can make a better living.

For all these reasons, supply management is a productive and positive element of our dairy industry. We urge all members to support it by voting yes on this motion.

●(1805)

Mr. Alex Atamanenko (British Columbia Southern Interior, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Berthier—Maskinongé for tabling this very important motion. However, I would have much preferred not to be speaking to a motion that should not even have been necessary had the government not compromised supply management in its negotiations with the European Union on CETA.

It is no secret that there has been tremendous pressure by the corporate sector as well as our trading partners to dismantle, or at least modify, supply management. This attack is driven in our country in part by the Conference Board of Canada. As NFU President Jan Slomp outlined in a recent op-ed:

The CBoC claims to be an independent think tank, but is affiliated with the New York-based Conference Board, run by and for US-based multinational corporations. While pretending to serve the public it advocates for a suite of policies—including dismantling dairy supply management—that promote corporate interests at the expense of the values and aspirations of Canadian people.

Our supply management works well for Canadians and does not cost the taxpayer a penny. It was created in 1969 as a reaction to erratic milk-handling practices to depress farm-gate prices paid to farmers. Supply management is not a barrier to trade. Many other countries, including the EU and the U.S., enact policies that directly subsidize domestic production. We do not do this.

It is also important to note that Canada gives more access to imported products than many other countries give in any sector. We currently import over 6% of the market for dairy products and more than 7.5% for poultry. In contrast, the U.S. gives only 2.75% access to its market for dairy products and Europe offers a mere 0.5% for poultry.

There is absolutely no reason for Canada to sign a trade agreement that allows an additional 17,700 tonnes of cheese from the EU. In effect, our dairy farmers who receive no government subsidies would be competing with European farmers who receive state subsidies as high as 40% to 50% of their income. According to the Dairy Farmers of Canada, it is estimated that the new EU access of 17,700 tonnes of cheese would cost Canadian farmers some \$150 million annually, with cumulative losses of \$300 million industry wide.

It is also important for Canadians to be aware that our dairy prices are comparable to other countries'. In fact, in New Zealand, which has dismantled supply management, consumers pay among the highest prices for dairy in spite of their farmers' low costs of production.

A few years ago I criss-crossed Canada in my "Food for Thought" tour, and one of the recurring themes that came up during the community consultations was the simple need to take agriculture out of free trade agreements.

For example, it is absolutely ludicrous that, as a result of NAFTA, many vegetable and fruit growers went out of business. Had they been protected, as in the supply management sector, our horticulture industry would be thriving today. Instead, many farmers have been forced to go into grapes and scramble to plant new varieties of fruit. An Ontario broccoli producer once told me that he only makes money when there is a drought in Florida. This is completely unacceptable.

Many are fearful that the CETA concessions on cheese imports is the start of a slippery slope.

It is no secret that countries such as the U.S. and New Zealand would like to see supply management on the table during the negotiation of the proposed trans-Pacific partnership trade agreement. Canada must not, and I repeat, must not make any further concessions in regard to supply management.

● (1810)

[Translation]

For the reasons I just mentioned, it is extremely important that Parliament support Motion No. 496. The federal government must keep its promise to the Quebec and Canadian dairy and cheese producers who will be affected by the Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement by revealing, without delay, details related to the compensation that will be paid and by providing for an implementation period for the agreement that is as long as possible.

[English]

I would like to take this opportunity to share some of my thoughts on trade, since everybody is listening to my speech. The first point is that Canada has always been and will always be a trading nation. To say that I, or members of my party, are anti-trade is simply ludicrous.

The bottom line is that any trade agreement we sign should not do harm to our country or its citizens.

As I have outlined, allowing 17,700 tonnes of European cheese into our market will harm our dairy industry.

CETA would also contain a clause that allows European multinational corporations to sue the federal government if there is a perception of unfair treatment, such as local sourcing of contracts. This provision, or chapter 11, already exists in NAFTA and has allowed U.S. corporations to collect over \$157 million in compensation from the Canadian federal government since NAFTA was signed.

We need to take a hard look at this provision, as other countries have done. It is a total affront to our nation's sovereignty. Australia,

Private Members' Business

for example, will not allow a similar provision to be included in any future trade agreements it signs. We should do the same. Canadian tax dollars should not be going as payment to foreign corporations.

Now I will go back to Motion No. 496.

[Translation]

This motion seeks to mitigate CETA's potential impact on the dairy and cheese sector and support Canada's supply management system, which guarantees fair and stable prices. In other words, if our dairy and cheese producers are at risk of losing \$300 million per year, then the Canadian government must commit to compensating them for that.

It is important to remember that our dairy and cheese industry also promotes the survival of farms and farm labour. Producers reinvest in their farms and support local suppliers and businesses, which contributes to the Canadian economy as a whole. The dairy industry's contribution to the GDP went from \$15.2 billion in 2009 to \$16.2 billion in 2011.

[English]

It should also be noted that it is Canadian dairy producers themselves who invested their own money to build up the Canadian market. It is simply unfair for the Conservative government to give market share away to European Union producers.

As the House is aware, the dairy industry is not the only fortunate industry to have supply management. The egg and poultry sectors do as well. Together, these three sectors are responsible for generating billions of dollars of revenue to our economy as they provide jobs and invest in our communities.

It is inconceivable that our federal government would even think about introducing any policies that have the potential of destroying the fine balance we have in our agriculture sector. As a matter of fact, as we have jumped from crisis to crisis in our grain, beef, and cattle sectors throughout the past decade, farmers in the supply managed sector continue to receive a stable, predictable income. Others were forced to deal with the shifting patterns of the open market or government protectionist policies, such as the U.S. country of origin labelling.

Make no mistake: the pressure and propaganda is out there for Canada to get rid of its farmer-driven supply management sectors. They are being attacked on a regular basis as ads appear in small community newspapers like those in my riding from organizations such as the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, which consistently trash supply management. They forget, however, that supply management does not cost the government or the taxpayer any money, while it guarantees us good quality food and contributes significantly to the Canadian economy.

The fact that now our farmers are under threat because of the increase in cheese imports is a betrayal by the Conservative government. It is morally wrong to talk about supporting supply management while at the same time eroding its pillars. One has to wonder who the next victim will be when the terms of the trans-Pacific partnership are released.

Private Members' Business

I would like to once again thank my colleague, our hard-working deputy agriculture critic, for bringing this motion forward. It is my sincere hope that it will pass unanimously in the House and that the federal government will make known in short order how exactly it will assist farmers hit by the terms of our trade agreement with the European Union.

● (1815)

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Pilon (Laval—Les Îles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise in this House today and to support my esteemed colleague from Berthier—Maskinongé and the cheese producers in Quebec and throughout the country by supporting Motion No. 496.

This motion calls on the Conservative government to keep its promise to dairy and cheese producers of Quebec and Canada by revealing details without delay related to the compensation that will be paid under the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement between Canada and the European Union. It also calls on the government to provide an implementation period for the agreement for these producers and to put an end to the circumvention of tariff quotas and the misclassification of products at the border, while imposing the same production and processing requirements on products to be imported and committing to provide support for commercialization.

On October 18, 2013, Canada and the European Union reached an agreement in principle on what is now known as the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement. Seven months later, no final agreement has been announced. According to the terms of the agreement in principle, the European Union will have an additional tariff-free access for 16,000 tonnes of high-quality retail cheeses and another 1,700 tonnes of industrial cheeses.

This announcement has of course caused a certain level of concern among Canadian dairy and cheese producers, who are publicly expressing their concerns about the economic and commercial repercussions of this agreement on their industry.

The motion before us today seeks to mitigate the impact that CETA may have on the dairy and cheese industry and to support supply management in Canada, which helps us ensure fair and stable prices. It also calls on the government to keep its promise to provide financial compensation to the producers involved following the signature of the agreement in principle, and finally asks the government, seven months after the fact, to tell the House of Commons—formerly the most sacred place of Canadian democracy—the details of the agreement in principle.

As we know, the NDP supports the supply management system in the egg, dairy and poultry sectors and for the agricultural industry. Under the agreement in principle with the European Union, the EU will have greater access to the Canadian cheese market. This undermines one of the very pillars of supply management, that is, import controls, and at the same time jeopardizes the system's effectiveness for Canadian producers. This potential agreement represents a loss for Canada's dairy producers by taking away part of their income to the benefit of the European industry.

Canadians are aware that the economic development of many Canadian communities, as well as a number of jobs in this sector,

would be jeopardized. The Conservatives promised to protect supply management, but the conclusion of the negotiations with the European Union has undermined the foundations of the supply management principle. This is one of the reasons why the government must tell Canadians, especially Canada's dairy and cheese producers, the details of this agreement, without delay.

In this regard, it is important to mention the reason why the motion put forward by my colleague from Berthier—Maskinongé is so important. The dairy and cheese industry is booming in Quebec and Canada. We have the right to be proud of the industry's growth in recent years and of the tremendous quality and diversity of its products.

It is of the utmost importance that we continue to support this industry, not only for the reasons mentioned earlier, but also because the producers reinvest in their farms and support local businesses and suppliers, thereby contributing to the development of Canada's local, regional and national economies.

It is also important to point out that the supply management principle that we are talking about here is not a subsidy. Dairy producers do not receive any government support, unlike what is seen in Europe, where 60% of the income of some producers is made up of government subsidies. As a result, our dairy producers begin with two strikes against them if they are placed on the same footing as their European competitors. This is why it is so important for our government to respect the principle of supply management to the letter.

Furthermore, the uncertainty and secrecy surrounding this agreement in principle also affects investments in the Canadian cheese industry, because the people who want to invest are waiting to find out what impact the agreement will have on the industry. It is therefore crucial that the government reveal the terms of the agreement in principle as soon as possible, not just for the sake of transparency, but for the well-being of dairy and cheese producers in Quebec and Canada, in particular.

● (1820)

That is what we are trying to make the government understand with Motion No. 496, which is being debated today in the House.

Trade rules need to acknowledge the special and strategic role of agriculture and provide policy measures to promote stability in the food supply, leaving countries with enough flexibility to manage their own unforeseen circumstances through the availability of mechanisms for appropriate market regulation.

In this case, the agreement jeopardizes the supply management principle currently in place, which allows Canadian producers to have growth in their industry. It is therefore vital, first of all, to reveal without delay the details of the compensation that will be paid to producers, because all of the stakeholders have asked for more details. The producers want assurances that the Conservative government will keep its promise so that they can then make business decisions.

We are also calling on the government to provide for an implementation period for the agreement. Canadian dairy and cheese producers have called for measures in the agreement affecting their industry to be phased in over at least seven years.

We are also calling for an end to the circumvention of tariff quotas and the misclassification of products at the border. The supply management system is built on three pillars; undermining one of them—circumvention of quotas—could potentially compromise the integrity of the system.

It is necessary to impose the same production and processing requirements on imported products. Canadian standards are sometimes higher than those in Europe, making reciprocity important so that Canadian producers are not penalized.

Lastly, the government must commit to provide support for commercialization. This agreement will penalize Canadian cheese producers. This is not news to anyone. It is therefore important that they receive government support so that they can promote their products in new markets.

With this motion, the NDP is showing its firm and clear commitment to our dairy and cheese industry and to the existing and effective supply management system.

Dairy Farmers of Canada agrees with our demands. I hope that the Conservative government cares just as much about the well-being of producers as we do. That is why I urge the government to support the motion moved by my colleague from Berthier—Maskinongé.

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am proud and pleased to rise today in the House during the second hour of debate on Motion No. 496, which supports dairy and cheese producers. I sincerely wish to thank all those who have taken part today in this important debate.

The motion that I brought forward seeks to mitigate the impact of the CETA on the dairy and cheese industries and to support Canada's supply management system, which guarantees stable and fair prices. It comes in response to the demands of dairy and cheese producers from across Canada.

The Canadian government maintains that concessions to the dairy industry would represent annually 4% of the overall market, an amount that in its view could be easily recovered. Dairy producers on the other hand argue that 4% represents a market in excess of \$300 million annually.

After speaking to producers and to Canadians, I know that they trust the supply management system. This system has truly stood the test of time. It does not cost the government or the taxpayers anything because producers do not receive any subsidies. Producers would like to see a compensation framework in place to protect supply management, which was introduced in the early 1970s to offset price instability. For the past 40 years, dairy producers have been able to rely on a stable environment and to weather the challenges of changing market conditions.

The intent here is not to initiate a debate on supply management but rather to remind the government of its importance. The agreement in principle will give the EU greater access to the Canadian cheese market, which operates under supply management. It will directly weaken one of the pillars of supply management, namely import controls, and at the same time, the effectiveness of supply management will be put at risk. The stability afforded by supply management allows producers to reinvest in their farms and to draw an income without having to rely on government assistance.

Private Members' Business

Supply management does not involve subsidies since dairy producers do not receive any kind of government assistance. By comparison, certain European producers receive government subsidies of up to 60%. Our dairy producers are therefore not on an equal footing with their European counterparts. All across the country, flourishing dairy and cheese industries are a boon to local economies. Canada produces 133,270 tons of specialty cheeses, a by no means insignificant amount. This is the end result of many years of work and innovative practices. However, I cannot help but be concerned. For every European cheese sold in our supermarkets, one Canadian cheese loses its spot on store shelves.

My motion ensures that Canadian cheese producers will receive the support they need to compete with European cheeses. It is not a question of providing financial compensation, but rather of giving them much needed support.

I want to point out that 2014 has been designated as the International Year of Family Farming. As a result of government policies, Canada has lost over 8,000 family farms since 2006. Now is not the time to bury our heads in the sand. We must take steps to ensure the survival of our farms and farm labour. Producers reinvest in their farms and in so doing, they support local suppliers and businesses, all of which helps sustain the country's overall economy.

I know that this has already been mentioned several times this evening, but I will say it again. My motion has received the support of the Fédération de la relève agricole du Québec, the Dairy Farmers of Canada, the Producteurs de lait du Québec, the Association des fromagers artisans du Québec, the UPA, Solidarité rurale du Québec and the Association des transporteurs de lait du Québec.

These groups agree that we need a long-term vision for agriculture and dairy and cheese producers. During the first hour of debate on May 28, my colleagues on the other side of the House spoke in favour of my proposal. I hope they will act accordingly.

• (1825)

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 yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Pursuant to an order made on Tuesday, May 27, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, June 18, at the expiry of the time provided for oral questions.

*Government Orders***GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

● (1830)

[English]

RESPECT FOR COMMUNITIES ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-2, an act to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the motion that this question be now put.

Mr. Mike Wallace (Burlington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I did not think I was speaking, but I will just go on the record as saying this about Bill C-2.

I was on the council for the city of Burlington for about 12 years. As a former councillor, it is important to have community input on where these injection sites can operate. Bill C-2 provides the opportunity for public and community input. Where these sites should be located is a community decision because they know better than we do in Ottawa.

Therefore, I am supportive of Bill C-2.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, would the member like to elaborate as to why the government has made the decision to bring in this legislation, understanding full well that it is in response to a Supreme Court ruling. The government seems to be offside with many of the different stakeholders. When I talk about stakeholders, I am talking about professional law enforcement officers, health care providers, social workers, victims, communities and different levels of governments, whether municipal, provincial or national, that worked together to put into place Canada's first injection site out in Vancouver. The numbers have shown that it has been beneficial to the community, so why is the legislation in its current format?

Mr. Mike Wallace: Mr. Speaker, the important message is that with the legislation we are respecting what the Supreme Court has indicated. We believe that if these sites are to continue in different locations across the country, those communities in which the sites wish to operate have a responsibility to discuss their locations, debate them and understand what the needs of the community and those injection sites are. Where they are to be located should be accepted by the local communities in which they will exist, if they exist in the future.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to ask my colleague a question. He did not go into much detail about his personal opinion on this bill during his speech.

I would like to know whether he thinks that injection sites like the one in Vancouver promote public health and safety.

If Vancouver did not have the site—I am talking about Vancouver because it is the only site we have in Canada—where would the people who, unfortunately, use illegal drugs go?

How can having safer places improve public health and safety even if the ultimate goal is to help all Canadians be healthy and not use drugs that are bad for them?

How can these sites ensure public health and safety in communities that can be dangerous because of drug use and used needles found in public places?

Why is this a good thing for public health and safety?

● (1835)

[English]

Mr. Mike Wallace: Mr. Speaker, the premise of the question is that because an injection site, where people who take illegal drugs can get them legally, is in a defined location that this is safe and healthy. Since I am giving my personal opinion, I am not convinced that just because a spot has registered nurses or whomever to provide the clean needles, that the government of the day, whether it is municipal, provincial, or federal, should provide that site. Nobody disagrees that these are harmful substances for those who take them.

Personally I am not sure whether this is the right approach for any government to take.

[Translation]

Ms. Annick Papillon (Québec, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak today to Bill C-2, An Act to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act. It is important to say it again and again: Bill C-2 is a thinly veiled attempt to shut down safe injection sites.

This legislation is in direct opposition to a 2011 ruling by the Supreme Court of Canada that called on the minister to consider exemptions for safe injection sites as a way to reconcile public health and safety issues.

I would like to spend a few minutes talking about the only supervised injection site we have in Canada, in Vancouver's sadly infamous Downtown Eastside. InSite was developed as part of a public health project by the City of Vancouver, and its community partners, of course, in response to a twelve-fold increase in overdose-related deaths in Vancouver between 1987 and 1993. It took years for InSite to be up and running, and it went under incredible local and national scrutiny.

In Vancouver, not only do the police support the safe injection site, which is already quite something, but so do local businesses, the business district, the board of trade and municipal politicians. The project has been the focus of over 30 scientific reports and studies that have described the benefits of InSite. These findings have been peer-reviewed and published in journals such as *The New England Journal of Medicine* and the *British Medical Journal*. As well, studies of more than 70 supervised injection sites in Europe and Australia have reported similar benefits.

Government Orders

InSite first received an exemption in 2003 for conducting activities for a medical and scientific purpose, under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act. Since then, InSite has seen good results. This is important. It helps save lives, prevents accidental overdoses and makes the neighbourhood safer for everyone.

However, in 2008, InSite's exemption under the legislation expired, and the Conservative government rejected InSite's renewal request. The debate went as far as the Supreme Court, which decided that InSite was a very important health facility. The ruling urged the minister to examine all of the evidence in light of the benefits of safe injection sites, not to devise a long list of principles on which to base his decisions.

I would like to quote a critically important excerpt from the Supreme Court of Canada's decision, since the bill now before us is supposedly based on this ruling. Here is what the Supreme Court had to say in its decision:

On future applications, the Minister must exercise that discretion within the constraints imposed by the law and the *Charter*, aiming to strike the appropriate balance between achieving public health and public safety. In accordance with the *Charter*, the Minister must consider whether denying an exemption would cause deprivations of life and security of the person that are not in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice. Where, as here, a supervised injection site will decrease the risk of death and disease, and there is little or no evidence that it will have a negative impact on public safety, the Minister should generally grant an exemption.

I think that the ruling is quite clear. In my riding of Québec, I have had the opportunity to meet several times with stakeholders and volunteers, including those from an organization called Point de repères. That organization's mission consists of health promotion, prevention and the delivery of care and services, especially for people dealing with addiction. It is important to understand this difference: an organization like Point de repères does not encourage drug use, but, rather, it advocates a harm reduction approach.

As the Point de repères website indicates:

The harm reduction approach is a community-based approach to health that focuses on helping people with addictions develop ways to mitigate the negative consequences of their behaviour, rather than on eliminating the use of psychotropic drugs.

● (1840)

I think it is important to understand the fine points of this often sensitive subject. As explained on the Point de repères website:

Drug use has a significant impact on both the user and the community. Often, lack of knowledge, misconceptions and prejudices about people who use drugs lead to a series of inappropriate actions that cause additional harm to the user and the community.

I had the opportunity to watch a documentary made in Quebec City by people from Quebec City entitled *Pas de piquerie dans mon quartier*. They realized the effects that drugs were having on the people using them. They wanted to make sure that they would not find syringes in the streets or in the parks where children played. We do not want a shooting gallery in our neighbourhood, but at the same time, we have to help these people.

The documentary sheds light on the addiction issue in Quebec City. Let me quote the opening sequence, which reflects the glaring truth:

The war on drugs is often turned into a war on drug users. It is a bit like the war on poverty—we have to be careful not to turn it into a war on the poor.

It is full of common sense. It is a way of entering into that world, which we do not know very well at all, in an attempt to finally come up with good solutions.

We must ask ourselves why the government is so lacking in objectivity when it comes to this issue. Why are the Conservatives refusing to recognize the facts laid out before them?

The NDP believes that decisions about programs that could enhance public health should be based on facts, not ideological stances. We are not alone in thinking that. According to the Canadian Medical Association, supervised injection programs are an important harm reduction strategy. Harm reduction is a central pillar in a comprehensive public health approach to disease prevention and health promotion.

For its part, the Canadian Nurses Association said:

Evidence demonstrates that supervised injection sites and other harm reduction programs bring critical health and social services to vulnerable populations—especially those experiencing poverty, mental illness and homelessness. A government truly committed to public health and safety would work to enhance access to prevention and treatment services—instead of building more barriers.

Evidence has shown that supervised injection sites effectively reduce the risk of contracting and spreading blood-borne diseases, such as HIV and hepatitis C, and reduce deaths from overdoses. Evidence has also shown that these sites do not adversely affect public safety and that, in certain cases, they actually promote it by reducing the injection of drugs in public, the violence associated with such behaviour, and waste related to drug use.

Safe injection sites strike a balance between public health and public safety goals. They also connect people in urgent need of health care with the services they need, such as primary health care and addiction treatment.

The NDP believes that any new legislation concerning safe injection sites must respect the spirit of the Supreme Court ruling, which this bill does not do.

As my colleague from Vancouver East has said, Bill C-2 contains as many criteria as there are letters in the alphabet, and those 26 criteria are so restrictive and biased that they are practically impossible to comply with.

The NDP believes that harm-reduction programs, including safe injection sites, should benefit from exemptions based on evidence that they improve community health and save people's lives, not on ideological beliefs.

To conclude, I would once again like to highlight the exceptional work that my colleague from Vancouver East has done on this. She has moved it forward step by step. We will not give up. We believe in working on this issue, because the lines are too vague, and the Supreme Court ruling is not being honoured.

● (1845)

[English]

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, halfway through her speech my colleague mentioned the documentary *Not in My Backyard*, which I have to admit I have not seen yet. Critics tell me it is very good and very informative.

Government Orders

One thing she mentioned was that waging war on drugs results in waging war on addicts themselves. I wholeheartedly agree. We heard an example. The member for Burlington was kind enough to give us his personal opinion about this. He told us that many local neighbourhoods do not want this. It is a similar situation all around, which results in a lack of understanding.

We must remember that this is a fundamentally evidence-based situation. Section 56 exists to allow this exemption. Why? It is because it helps. This safe injection site has resulted in a 35% reduction in the abuse of drugs. The member also illustrated her point by using examples from around the world, and I appreciate that.

Does my colleague not feel that in the future, all the rules that will have been handed down will ensure that this will not proliferate beyond the one site in Vancouver?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Annick Papillon: Mr. Speaker, I have been to east Vancouver. It is a dangerous place, but I did not go into the centre of the neighbourhood, where it is particularly bad. I went onto the neighbouring streets because I wanted to see the most extreme aspects of the problem for myself.

There are also people struggling with addictions in Quebec City, where I am from, but the situation there is nowhere near as critical as it is in east Vancouver. These people need help. We cannot simply ignore the problem. We have no choice but to find solutions.

The situation in Vancouver is so bad that I am no longer able to watch documentaries on Canal D showing this part of Vancouver as one of the most dangerous places in the world in terms of addictions.

I would really like the government to take action on health and safety.

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Québec for her speech. She illustrated the need to not simply abandon people with drug addictions, especially those using hard drugs, since it is basically a disease.

I remember some of the meetings my colleague from Québec and I had with certain agencies that help people suffering from addictions and experiencing all sorts of problems in their lives, since everything is interrelated.

Could my colleague report to the House the very worthy things several people who managed to escape addictions of their own volition, but also with a great deal of support, had to say about the desperate need for a safe place where addicts can get help with their problems until they can break free of their addictions?

• (1850)

Ms. Annick Papillon: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his comments. I know he also works very closely with these community agencies. Listening to these agencies gives us, as members of Parliament, a much more realistic view of the problem.

I have spoken with Point de repères, an organization that plays a crucial role in this issue. However, I know of other organizations. I wish to acknowledge Projet intervention prostitution Québec and Pech, two organizations my colleague is very familiar with that have

been doing outstanding work in partnership with the Quebec City police, for example.

This demonstrates that it is possible for community organizations to work together with people struggling with addictions to find a solution.

Ms. Marie-Claude Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank you for giving me opportunity to speak to this bill, which seeks to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act.

Before I begin, I would like to commend my colleague for Vancouver East for her excellent work on this file. She has worked tirelessly, and I believe we should recognize that her efforts have contributed to the progress our country has made in this regard.

This bill is an attempt to close down supervised injection sites. This would go against a Supreme Court ruling that recognized Vancouver's InSite, currently the only site in Canada, as a key player in this field, an indispensable stakeholder when it comes to public health and safety.

Decisions of this kind that have such a direct impact on public health and safety must not be taken lightly. They must be based on fact, not driven by ideological positions that stem solely from the belief that there should not be any drugs in Canada. I understand the principle here and there is something to be said for it, but that is not how things work. There are many things that we would gladly dispense with but that are still around. At some point what we need to do is deal with the situation. We need to set up sites where these individuals will receive support and maybe even find solutions to overcome their addiction and mitigate its harmful effects.

I used to be a social worker. I worked not with addicts but with young people. I can therefore say that the solution does not lie with repressive measures or scare tactics about drug use. I really do not agree with the Conservative government's ideology.

The benefits of a safe injection site have been borne out by the facts. There are benefits to operating this type of facility. Studies on more than 70 injection sites in Europe and Australia have shown that these sites have a positive impact on people, communities and drug addicts.

I mentioned harm mitigation. It is impossible to eliminate all the harmful effects but, by adopting this type of philosophy, harm can be mitigated. I cannot speak for my colleagues, but I for one believe that this is a sensible approach.

Vancouver's InSite is currently the only facility of its kind in Canada. However, other cities have plans for sites that they want to set up.

Earlier, in response to certain members opposite who asked whether we wanted to see injection sites in our own ridings, my colleague from Hochelaga stated that she would welcome such a site in her Montreal riding. The need for such sites is overwhelming. The health and safety of Canadians and communities depend on it.

Government Orders

Safe injection sites save lives and it would be highly irresponsible of the government to take steps to prevent such facilities from opening in the future.

Bill C-2 is seriously flawed. It is based on an unrealistic anti-drug ideology and on false concerns over public safety. In my view, it is another attempt to rally the Conservative base, as evidenced by the Conservatives' "Keep heroin out of our backyards" campaign. However, when heroin has already found its way into our community, it is rather difficult to eradicate it unless this type of recourse is available.

•(1855)

The bill will make it almost impossible to open safe injection sites and will have the adverse effect of promoting the return of heroin to our neighbourhoods. Drugs are illegal, and we are well aware of it. I know that I do not have the right to walk around with heroin, but a lot of people will do it, just the same. If we only had to legislate on an issue for it never to happen again, life would be very easy. However, this is not the way things work.

Basically, Bill C-2 goes directly against the Supreme Court's 2011 decision that called on the minister to consider exemptions for safe injection sites, in an effort to reconcile health and public safety considerations. In its ruling, the court urged the minister to consider all of the evidence in light of the benefits of supervised injection sites, rather than devise a long list of principles on which to base his decisions.

There is no safe injection site in my riding. However, there is one agency, the Centre d'intervention jeunesse des Maskoutains—it does not work just with young people—which does a lot of work on harm reduction, primarily through needle exchanges and awareness programs. It does not take them into care. The workers meet with people who have a drug problem and give them a helping hand. In my view, safe injection sites can also play this role.

As I said earlier, at the moment, no injection sites are open in Canada with the exception of InSite, in Vancouver, which has been running since 2003. Since it opened, there has been a 35% decrease in overdose deaths. That is quite significant. It is also been noted that InSite has led to a decrease in crime, communicable disease infection rates and relapse rates for drug users. It also gives drug users a helping hand toward recovery. It is not a place where people go to inject drugs and to party. It is not anything like that. It is a place where people who want help can go. This also helps make our communities a safer place. I do not think these are elements that can be ignored.

As I said earlier, supervised injection sites reduce the risk of contracting and spreading communicable diseases such as HIV and hepatitis. They also help prevent overdose-related deaths. It has also been shown that they pose no threat to public safety. On the contrary, they promote public safety by reducing the injection of drugs in public, the violence associated with such behaviour and drug-related waste. Personally, I would rather have an injection facility in my neighbourhood than see my child going off to play in the park and getting pricked accidentally by a syringe. Injection sites do not reduce the risk to zero but do reduce it significantly.

I would like to explain what a supervised injection site is all about and provide some information about how InSite operates.

In order to use the services of InSite, users must be at least 16. They must sign a user agreement and comply with a code of conduct. They cannot be accompanied by children. InSite is open seven days a week and has 12 injection bays. Users bring their own drugs and staff provide them with clean injection equipment. Nurses and staff supervise the centre and provide emergency medical assistance if necessary. Users who have completed an injection are assessed by staff and taken to a post-injection lounge or treated by a nurse in the treatment room for injection-related conditions.

As members can see, this type of facility is a serious initiative. In my view, these facilities are essential to the well-being of our communities.

•(1900)

Ms. Annick Papillon (Québec, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened intently to my colleague's speech. She raised some interesting points. At the end of her speech, she said it was very important to point out that these sites will not be used by just anybody. Users will have to meet certain criteria. We do not want children using these sites. Individuals will need to be at least 16 years old. There will also be medical supervision when necessary, which is quite interesting.

I would like my colleague to elaborate on the health and safety aspect of this issue. It is important to come up with solutions that will protect the health and safety of our children and families.

We all go to the same places around the city, such as parks. We live in the same neighbourhoods, which is why we need to come up with concrete solutions for everyone.

Ms. Marie-Claude Morin: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her very pertinent question.

As I said earlier, this type of site will not be used by just anyone. These sites will not be run in a haphazard way either. When people hear "safe injection site", right away they think of a place where people will simply go to shoot up. This is not what we are dealing with here.

A safe injection site is a place where there is medical staff, where someone can be treated in an emergency and where people can be referred. If someone comes to the site looking for help and wants to stop using injected drugs, that person will be referred to the right place and given help.

If there are places where people can go to inject drugs safely, it prevents the problem of having used needles and drug-related waste littering our parks. That helps keep our communities and children safe.

Mr. François Pilon (Laval—Les Îles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague for her wonderful speech.

People who do not want such a site in their neighbourhood think that way because they are misinformed. If people were better informed about the benefits of these sites, they would not be opposed to them. Does my colleague share my view?

Government Orders

Ms. Marie-Claude Morin: Mr. Speaker, I understand why people who have been in contact with this problem and who have seen the resulting harm would be afraid of seeing such a site open near their home. They are afraid because of a lack of knowledge and understanding.

Politicians and those who work in this field need to raise public awareness about these sites. They need to clearly explain exactly what a safe injection site is and what it is for, as well as the benefits such sites can bring to our communities and to people struggling with addictions.

● (1905)

[English]

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to speak to Bill C-2, an act to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act. I want to be clear from the outset that New Democrats oppose the bill at second reading.

Bill C-2 is a deeply flawed bill based on a deeply flawed premise. This premise, advanced by Conservatives, takes the position that I think goes back to the Reagan years in the United States. Members may remember Nancy Reagan's "just say no to drugs" position. It is a very simplistic appealing approach, but it has been proven in the United States that this anti-drug and abstinence approach on the issue of addiction has been a colossal failure.

The approach of New Democrats is one of promoting health and safety for those who, sadly, are suffering from addiction, but also promoting the safety of communities and neighbourhoods. Our approach is one of harm reduction. In other words, it would promote healthy outcomes and hopefully reduce the harm that those who suffer from addictions are exposed to.

The bill, in fact, is a thinly veiled attempt to stop safe injection sites from operating. At present, in Canada, there is only one safe injection site, InSite, which is operating in Vancouver. However, since the Conservatives took the provision of harm reduction out of the national drug strategy in 2007, they have been opposed to the operation of InSite. Finally, this issue was taken to court and there was a Supreme Court decision on this. I will get to that in more detail in a few minutes.

In essence, Bill C-2 is an attempt to lay out conditions that are so extensive, so arduous, with benchmarks so high that InSite or other potential sites would be unable to surmount these obstacles and thus unable to operate. We believe that, in fact, is the goal behind the proposed legislation. Thus, the "do no harm" approach or "harm reduction" approach would be thrown out the window.

Our belief on this side of the House among New Democrats is that decisions about programs must be based on whether or not there are benefits, which must be based on facts rather than ideology. However, we believe that those on the other side of the House are driven by ideology on the bill and are wilfully ignoring the facts in this case.

I mentioned the Supreme Court. In 2011, the Supreme Court ruled that InSite, this facility in Vancouver that provides a safe injection site for people with addictions, provided life-saving services and in fact should remain open. To do that, it required an exemption from the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act under section 56. This is

an exemption under which InSite has been operating for a number of years. The court ruled that it was within the Charter of Rights and Freedoms for InSite users to access this service, not only in Vancouver, but at sites that operate elsewhere.

What is this scientific proof that I am talking about based on?

● (1910)

In fact, there have been over 30 peer-reviewed studies published in reputable, distinguished journals, such as *The New England Journal of Medicine*, *The Lancet*, and the *British Medical Journal*, which have described the beneficial impacts of InSite.

Furthermore, studies of more than 70 safe injection sites in other countries, in Europe and Australia, have shown similar benefits. InSite has been extremely beneficial for those who use it and should be allowed to continue to operate, but we would argue that it has been beneficial not only for those who use InSite but for the community in which it is located.

The Conservatives, with the launch of this bill, also immediately tried to rally their base and launched a campaign called "Keep heroin out of our backyards". I am sure they raised a lot of money with that campaign and generated a lot of data in preparation for the next federal election, but in fact, it is based on a false premise. This bill would actually put heroin back into people's backyards, because if there are no safe injection sites, people who are hopelessly addicted will resort increasingly to crime and to injecting in communities, on our streets, and in our neighbourhoods rather than in a safe injection site. Therefore, not only will people who have a serious health issue due to an addiction put themselves at greater risk, but they will also be putting communities at risk.

I come from a community that is, I believe, one of the finest communities anywhere. My riding of Parkdale—High Park is a very diverse community. There are people from all different socio-economic levels, and in spite of one of the local city councillors attacking the Parkdale community and trying to label, stigmatize, and stereotype people in the community, the people who live there do not feel that way. They believe that society as a whole includes people who have imperfect lives, people who have mental health challenges, family problems, and yes, sometimes suffer from addictions, regardless of what income level they happen to be in. There are certainly people at very high income levels who suffer from addictions and sometimes spend a lot of money supporting those addictions.

Therefore, my community includes a wide cross-section of people, but whether it is community agencies, neighbourhood organizations, police, or community helpers, people have come together with political representatives and said our goal has to be one of harm reduction. They say if people are suffering from poor mental health or addictions or whatever challenges they are facing, we should find a way to help them through this in as safe a way as possible and, hopefully, help them to recover and lead normal lives. One of the big advantages of a facility like InSite is that the people who use that facility can access health professionals, counselling, and support and, hopefully, transition through their addictions and come out the other end to lead normal lives. There are certainly many instances of that.

Government Orders

In conclusion, I want to say this is a deeply flawed bill. New Democrats believe it is in defiance of the Supreme Court ruling and, once again, pits the government against the judicial system. It will do far more harm than good and should be rejected by the House.

• (1915)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the last issue that my colleague raised is extremely important. I will give her a chance to tell us more about the Conservatives' approach to the Supreme Court.

As we know, the Conservatives have been trying to destroy all of our institutions, including environmental regulatory bodies and administrative tribunals. What is going on between the Conservatives and the Supreme Court? As Canada's highest institution, the Supreme Court makes rulings and sets out principles, things that the Conservatives do not seem to give a damn about, if you will excuse my language.

Could my colleague tell us more about the Conservatives' habit of violating Supreme Court rulings?

Ms. Peggy Nash: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

As she pointed out, in 2011, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that InSite provided essential services and that it could stay open under the exemption provided for by section 56 of the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act.

The court held that the charter allowed users to access InSite's services and that similar facilities should also be allowed to operate under an exemption.

Apparently, the government thinks that it is not ruled by the charter, and that its own legal judgment is better than the Supreme Court's. That is mind-boggling. The charter underpins Canada's entire legal system. It is imperative that the government comply with the charter and with these rulings.

[*English*]

Mr. John Carmichael (Don Valley West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this bill would require organizations to submit evidence demonstrating why they feel an injection site is warranted. I wonder if the member could first answer why she opposes the Minister of Health making an informed decision based on scientific evidence and in the public interest.

There is also the issue of consultation. Would the member opposite want a safe injection site that was, for example, to be located next to a schoolyard, a church, or a building where young children were located, or should there be a consultation process established there as well?

I wonder if the member would comment on those issues.

Ms. Peggy Nash: Mr. Speaker, of course, we believe in community consultation. That is why, when there is some kind of new facility going into a community, there would normally be consultation with community leaders, law enforcement, and political leaders. The community would be involved.

What would not make sense is to have an opportunity for a fearmongering campaign to say, as a city councillor did in Toronto yesterday, that a community is full of pedophiles, so our children are going to be in danger. Here, we can imagine a campaign that would say that people who are addicted would be injecting drugs in front of our children when, in fact, the opposite is true.

With a very long drawn-out consultation period and tests and barriers so high, many organizations will probably not have the resources to even fulfill this long drawn-out process. It seems that the intent of the government is to prevent any such facilities from being established. The Conservatives may feel that makes more sense.

I do not doubt the member's sincerity in his question, but I ask him to consider that, if there are not safe sites where people can go when they are addicted to try to get what they need, and hopefully get some help and support, maybe they will be out in the community, truly putting kids at risk. For us, that is a greater risk.

• (1920)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, whether it is this evening, back in January, or whenever it was that the government last brought this legislation before the House, I have heard a number of the Conservative members stand in their place and pose questions like "Do members oppose consultation?" and "What's wrong with consulting with others before any form of decision is made?" because that, after all, is incorporated in the legislation.

It is important for us to recognize that Canada has one InSite location, in Vancouver. I can assure all Conservative members that there was, in fact, a great deal of consultation. In the questions and statements they put forward, they try to give the impression that, without this legislation, there would not be any sort of community consultation. Nothing could be further from the truth. We have seen a great deal not only of consultation but of individuals within our community who truly care about what is happening in our communities and who believe that the particular site we are always making reference to has actually given a great deal of value in being able to change the reality in many different ways.

I would ask the government to recognize that, at the end of the day, when we come to the House of Commons, we are trying to improve the conditions of our communities. If done appropriately—and that also includes consultations and working with the different stakeholders—we will make a more significant difference, in a positive way, in the communities we represent.

I represent a wonderful constituency. I am very proud of all regions of my constituency. There are some areas that have different types of challenges and different issues from other areas. In the areas around Main Street and Selkirk Avenue, for example, there is a lot more drug addiction and drug abuse. There is perhaps a higher degree of exploitation. We need to be thinking outside the box on how we might assist our communities, in whatever ways we can help develop and ultimately promote. I am not suggesting there has to be an injection site located there. However, if the argument were made from the different stakeholders, as it was done in Vancouver, then it would be wrong of me not to acknowledge the potential that would ultimately benefit the broader community. I for one want to make a difference.

Government Orders

When the government brought forward this legislation, within an hour or an hour and a half of the legislation first being introduced what did the government do? It issued a very crass and misleading fundraising letter that went out to its supporters, stating that Liberals and New Democrats want addicts to shoot up heroin in the backyards in communities across the country. There is absolutely no merit to that press release. However, I can understand from that release what the real agenda of the Conservative Party is. What we need to see more of from our government is a caring attitude, some compassion, and a real desire to make a difference in the different types of communities we all represent.

• (1925)

The issues that face our communities vary, not only within regions of our country but even within municipalities. I would ask the government to look at what it can be doing to play a more significant role in making a positive difference in those communities.

If we look at Bill C-2, it is about injection sites and the Supreme Court ruling and how the government has responded to the ruling. I was provided some fairly extensive notes in regard to the ruling. As opposed to reading that into the record, suffice to say that the Supreme Court ordered that the minister grant an exemption to InSite under section 56 of the CDSA. However, this would not affect the minister's power to withdraw the exemption should the operation at InSite change such that the exemption would no longer be appropriate.

There is a fairly long, convoluted argument as to why it ended up in our court system and why the government responded as it did.

We have found the government wanting in the area of demonstrating compassion and recognizing a very important community.

What I would like to emphasize is that this did not just occur overnight. The injection site we have today actually came into being through an immense amount of consultation and co-operation with a wide variety of stakeholders and individuals who had a vested interest in advancing what has been a very successful project.

The government, and in particular the minister responsible, has never been out to the safe injection site we are referring to. How does the minister responsible for legislation that is going to have such a profound impact on injection sites, if in fact there are going to be any additional injection sites, not check out the one injection site we have? Unless the minister has visited the site in Vancouver recently, I believe that is an accurate statement. I would ask the government to correct it if it is not accurate.

What is it we are suggesting? When we talk about the important role Ottawa plays in our communities, part of that is the work done with stakeholders. What have we had in regard to this injection site in Vancouver? We have had the municipal government, the provincial government, and the national government all working together to try to bring into existence what was initially a pilot project.

Many different stakeholders that had an interest were brought in, including law enforcement officers, health care professionals, social workers, and other advocacy groups that understood that there was a

need to try to make a difference. All came together with the idea, and it was launched.

In the years that followed, InSite received accolades from many of the same stakeholders who helped make it a reality. The evidence is there.

If the government would only spend some time and check out the site and look at the evidence, I believe we would have a government that would see a lot more value in demonstrating more compassion.

• (1930)

Mr. Ray Boughen (Palliser, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the first speaker this evening talked about a site located in Montreal, and the latest speaker talked about a site located in Vancouver. Are there two sites? How many national sites are there?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question, but it again demonstrates the understanding of the issue within the Conservative caucus. From what I understand, there is one site.

If the Minister of Health had taken the time to go to that one site in Vancouver, I suspect that she would have had her eyes opened to the reality of the many benefits. Members talk about the needles and the things involved in injections. I would just as soon have that sort of thing, or witnessing people injecting heroin, a deadly drug that no one in this chamber support, at the site as opposed to in the back lanes and schoolyards in our communities. These are the types of things that were happening and still are happening throughout communities across our country.

It was at such a high concentration that it was deemed necessary in Vancouver to provide this service to improve the quality of life in the community.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his speech.

It seems obvious that the government introduced this bill in an underhanded attempt to make it more difficult to open a safe injection site. That is a major problem, because it is standing in the way of local initiatives that may prove to be quite successful, like the one in Vancouver. Among other things, these initiatives can help address a public health issue and even save the lives of those who do drugs like cocaine and heroin. Unfortunately, the government would rather drive thousands of Canadians across the country further underground.

I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on the motivations behind the government's approach.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the reality is that we do not have a large number. I am not personally aware of any further requests for supervised injection sites.

The reason I take great offence to the bill is that it makes the assumption that no consultation is being done. The government is not basing its decision on facts or information and the many success stories we have had from the one injection site. The political motivation seems to be to raise money for the Conservative party and to give the impression that they can be tough on crime and individuals who fall on the other side of drug abuse.

Government Orders

I like to think of the Liberal Party as one that truly cares, does not mind extending a helping hand, approaches things with an open mind, and makes decisions based on facts and information. We listen to what our officers of the law, our health care workers, our social workers, and others are saying. If we do that, we will make it a better life for many residents.

● (1935)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would just like to make a brief but important comment. It is curious that none of my Conservative colleagues decided to rise to debate Bill C-2. Is it because they realized their position is indefensible?

I wonder why they decided to remain silent. From time to time they read a question written on a piece of paper, but none of them have risen to bring any substance to the debate. I hope one of my colleagues on the other side of the House will be able to answer this question. However, I have my doubts about that, because they do not have many arguments to use to defend their position.

That being said, the issue of public safety must go much further. We must ask ourselves some questions here. What is a government for? What is the purpose of the Parliament we are part of right now? Its primary purpose is to serve Canadians. Its purpose is to help vulnerable populations who, unfortunately, have not been as lucky as we have been. What is a government for? Its purpose is to help people who, unfortunately, have fallen into the vicious cycle of drugs at some point in their life.

It is not up to us to judge how or why a person ended up in a situation like this. That is not Parliament's role. The government members should be ashamed for judging people, because we are not here to regulate what they are doing. We are here to help them and to pass laws in order to assist the most vulnerable members of our society.

We can try to explain their plight and to blame it on a number of things, but the fact is that this situation exists in our communities. This situation must be resolved. It is through initiatives like InSite that the most vulnerable members of our society are able to overcome their addictions. The InSite initiative will make our communities safer. That is clear.

Many members have been in this House longer than I have. I would have hoped for much better from them and from the government. Why did we become members of Parliament? It is because deep down we thought that we could reach out to people in dreadful situations, help them and do something to improve their lives.

I am sorry. Far be it from me to try to teach my colleagues a lesson, but I believe that the onus is on this government to differentiate between the common good, its ideology, and its personal opinions. Every member of Parliament has his or her own personal opinions. That is a fact. Take abortion, for example. Everyone knows this, and there is no need to belabour the point. The same is true when it comes to drug use. Differences of opinion are normal. That is what makes us human beings. Everybody here expresses their opinions, relates their experiences, and engages in debate in this Parliament. Here, in this Parliament, in this House of

Commons, we are representatives of the public. I remind members that the House of Commons is the chamber of the common people, the chamber of the Canadian public. We are not here to peddle our political agendas, personal opinions, or ideology. We are here to represent Canadians. Our values and personal opinions are not more important than the common good, the well-being of vulnerable Canadians, the welfare of our communities.

It is all well and good for the government to stand up and try and defend the indefensible. However, everybody is clear on one point: supervised injection sites work. They help make our children, women and families safer. They also help people to escape terrible situations.

● (1940)

Why does this government refuse to shoulder its fundamental responsibility? Indeed, is it not the government's primary purpose to ensure the safety of Canadians, and to assist Canadians in extremely dangerous situations? I cannot emphasize just how disappointed I am, today, to have to give this speech in an attempt to make the government understand that Canadians' safety is more important than political ideology.

The Conservatives would have us believe that supervised injection sites, recognized worldwide as being beneficial to public safety, and for driving down mortality rates, are not a good initiative. This is about saving lives, Canadians' lives. If only a single life were to be saved because of the existence of a supervised injection site, then the initiative would be a good one. Were we to help just a single Canadian to pull themselves up, it would be a good initiative.

The government cannot come to this House and pedal its right wing discourse. We are talking about the lives of human beings. We are talking about people who may die, and we want to help them. It is beyond belief that this government cannot understand the simple fact that Canadians need its help. The Conservatives do not care one iota. They are right here, and they are not even bothering to get up out of their seats, or to argue their point of view. I would like to see a government member get up and explain why saving Canadians' lives is neither the government's fundamental duty, nor an important consideration for the member himself.

These sites lower crime rates. They are known to save lives, stem the tide of crime and make our streets and communities safer.

Moreover, what strikes me as passing strange is that the minister has already issued an exemption. He has done this once before. Why? For the purpose of impact studies to determine whether the sites worked. The findings of the studies were unambiguous: supervised injection sites drive down crime and mortality rates, and make our streets safer. Why then is the government standing in the way of a second exemption?

I will say it again. The inherent role of Parliament is to help the most vulnerable. People who used InSite were twice as likely to enrol in a detox program and seek help than those who were left out in the street.

I know that the government does not really like the Supreme Court's decisions and that it does not always comply with them. The Supreme Court was clear:

Government Orders

In accordance with the Charter, the Minister must consider whether denying an exemption would cause deprivations of life and security of the person that are not in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice.

I talked about fundamental justice at the beginning of my speech. Members of Parliament have the vital role of ensuring that people get help. In 2008, Health Canada published a report indicating that, since 2006, InSite had intervened in 306 overdoses and that there had not been any deaths. Canadians' lives were saved. I cannot believe that a Conservative member can stand here today and say that this kind of site has no purpose. The government cannot argue that this is not in the interest of Canadians.

A comparison of the situation six weeks before and 12 weeks after InSite opened indicated that the number of people injecting drugs in public had decreased. All municipalities agree that this kind of site reduces crime in their communities. Even the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction has shown that supervised injection sites reach out to the most vulnerable groups, are accepted by communities, help improve the health of drug users and reduce drug use among frequent users. According to the Health Canada report, people who used InSite services were twice as likely to seek help and enrol in a detox program.

In conclusion, I would like to say that this is about saving Canadians' lives. The government cannot say that it is not in Parliament's interest to pass legislation that will save lives.

• (1945)

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her excellent, heartfelt speech on this issue.

Does she agree with me that this is a hidden, sneaky, disguised attempt by the government to prevent other safe injection sites like the one in Vancouver from opening in other Canadian communities? That is my impression.

Does my colleague get the same impression after reading Bill C-2?

Ms. Ève Pécelet: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

To ask the question is to answer it, and I think I was clear in my speech. Political ideology should not trump the well-being of the public. All of the experts and all of the studies have shown that this kind of supervised injection site saves lives and makes our streets and communities safer.

That makes us wonder about the government's intentions. The experts, the studies, the reports and even the Supreme Court all say that this kind of site is safe and saves lives, so what is the government's intention?

Why does it want to sabotage this kind of organization? What is its intention? Not a single government member has risen today to tell us.

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am sure we will wrap things up in the House before summer. I would really like to thank my colleague from La Pointe-de-l'Île for her speech.

Thanks to the perspective she brought to this issue, I noticed some similarities with the government's decision to remove long guns

from the gun registry. For years, the Conservative government basically granted an amnesty to gun owners who did not register their weapons. It completely undermined the gun registry, which is practically a way of breaking the law.

Listening to my colleague, I realized that the same kind of thing is happening with the bill before us. It was introduced to prevent new sites from opening and to close the existing site in Vancouver even though the court ordered the minister to keep it open.

I would like my colleague to share her views on this approach to getting around rulings and the courts.

Ms. Ève Pécelet: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

This is an unfortunate way of doing things, since the *New England Journal of Medicine*, *The Lancet*, the *British Medical Journal* and even the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction agree that this type of site is beneficial.

Is that not what the Conservatives want: to reduce crime, decrease drug use and make our streets safer? I think that is part of their basic discourse. The fact that the Conservatives are introducing a bill that goes against the very basis of their ideology shows that rational thought is not part of their discourse.

They bring forward legislation only if they can use it to win votes and do some fundraising. They are not at all interested in the inherent role of Parliament, which is to help our communities and make them safer, while complying with the Supreme Court's clear decisions. In this case, even the Supreme Court stated that this kind of site was in the best interest of Canadians.

To my colleague who asked the question, I would say that the answer is obvious. Unfortunately for the Conservatives, the Supreme Court does not share their completely irrational ideology; yet, once again, the Conservatives want to introduce a bill that does not comply with the Supreme Court's decision.

• (1950)

[*English*]

Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to join in the debate. At the outset, I just want to make a couple of comments for context.

I understand this issue quite well, given that I am not only a member here, but previously sat on a city council and, for that matter, sat 13 years at Queen's Park. I know there is a difference between passing something at the federal level, where it can be very lofty and desirable in what it says, and when it gets all the way to city council where people actually have to implement it, things can then look very different.

Government Orders

The subject we are dealing with tonight is, for a city councillor, one of the toughest because it is one of those situations where it is not just right or wrong. Right versus wrong is easy. Most of our moms taught us the difference between right and wrong. The challenge is when it is right versus right, but only one can be supreme. In this case, at the city council levels across our country, that is where the issue of halfway houses, detox centres, like the one Mayor Ford is in, and InSite would be one of those challenges.

However, when I said “right versus right”, if we asked people if they could just say no and that would be the end of having any chance of having an InSite operation on their street, would they say it? Most people would. They would say, yes, that they would rather not have that on their street. Why? Mostly they think about their families, the kids and their security, which is foremost on any parent's mind. However, it is not that simple until we figure out a way to have a human race that does not involve people who break the law and humans who are not constructed in such a way that they can become addicted to things like alcohol and other substances, and all the mayhem and damage that is done. If the Conservatives really want to talk about things that are doing damage in this society, let us start talking about what alcohol does to people.

However, for those people, those parents who, if we gave them a chance, would say that they did not want any of those things on their streets, that it should be put somewhere else, there is another set of parents and another set of human beings who have love and compassion for their family members or friends, only they are the victims of the addiction. They are equally worthy of our concern as lawmakers. It is at the city council where the rubber hits the road, because those people are the ones who have to make the decision of “where this goes”. It is not easy.

When people's homes are the biggest investment in their life, it is the old castle, their domain that is for themselves and their family, it is their little place and they want to keep it as secure and safe as they can for their family. When one of those family members is in need of these services, whether a halfway house, a detox centre or a safe injection site, the other side of it is that those individuals are as worthy and as deserving of the protection of lawmakers as well as the support of lawmakers, given the importance we put on health care and ensuring it is universal. For those of us who see this much more as a health issue than as a crime issue, it becomes that much more difficult, because we cannot just say no.

• (1955)

The reason I am raising that is because what the government is attempting to do, in the NDP's view, is micromanage the requirements to the degree where, when I looked at the bill, it looked to me like a zoning application at city council. Those are the questions it asks: What does public health say? What do the police say? What do the zoning experts say? What does the local councillor say? Let us have a public meeting and talk to the families who live in the area, as well as the families who are positively impacted by the service that exists.

We know that this issue should not even be in this bill. All that was required was an extension of the exemption. I am from Ontario, not B.C., but to the best of my knowledge, notwithstanding some day-to-day issues, for the most part, this was working and was

saving lives. It was making the community safer and better for everybody. All that was required was, “Yes, we will go for another extension. That is a good project, doing some good work, let's continue.” That is when ideology got in the way, where the government wants to stand behind a bumper sticker slogan. The answer to the Conservatives is just say no. Just say no to the application, do not allow InSite, and just say no to drugs.

Tell people who have a challenge with alcohol just say no. Is there nobody in this place who has a problem? I know some place not that far down the road where a very high-profile person had a problem. That problem does not make the individual a bad person but a person who needs help. In the community that person is in, guess what, there is a detox centre, and that high-profile individual is getting the compassion and supported required. That is exactly what is happening in Vancouver, except that it is not as acceptable as having a little drinkypoo at the end of the day, or a little happy hour kind of thing, or a having a beer watching the game. No, it is not that.

This is tough stuff. This is hard-core addiction, with all that goes with it. Anyone who has ever been to Vancouver and seen the challenges of those communities would understand why it is important that Vancouver has a federal partner that actually wants to help. City council members are doing the heavy lifting. They are the ones having to go into those communities and make the argument that this is good for people and that they all have to kind of share the load in terms of the broader community and the services they have to have. They are the ones that have to put their seats on the line. Trust me, when people are on city council, they do not get to go to the airport and fly hundreds of kilometres away from their constituents and the problem. As soon as city councillors walk out the front door, they are then meeting with their constituents and it stays like that all day until they get home. Then they get up the next day and do the same thing.

Those are the people who have had to go to public meetings and tell moms and dads who are fearful for their kids why this was still a good thing for Vancouver to do. We should be saluting Vancouver's city council for having the courage to take these kinds of steps. Instead, here we are in the House of Commons with a federal government that is doing everything it can to stop the process, to stop the ability of these lives to be saved. I was going to, and maybe I will get a chance in questions and comments, read some of the quotes from the Supreme Court of Canada and what it said about the importance of ensuring that these kinds of safe sites exist for our fellow citizens.

New Democrats stand resolutely opposed to this bill. The bill is wrong-headed, it is wrong in detail, it is wrong in its direction, and it just plain wrong. Canadians deserve better. When there is an NDP government in 2015, they will get that better government.

Government Orders

● (2000)

Mr. Jamie Nicholls (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on a day like this, when we are debating this issue in the House and another decision was made in British Columbia today for British Columbians, we see the hypocrisy of the government. It is speaking out of both sides of its mouth. Out of one side of its mouth it is saying it wants to consult with Canadians to judge the locations of these centres and, out of the other side, it is saying it does not really want to listen to Canadians in consultation for something like northern gateway.

Could the member perhaps elucidate for the House and Canadians the record of the government in terms of public consultations and due diligence in listening to Canadians?

Mr. David Christopherson: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for this important question, and it gives me a chance to use up some of my other notes. It is important to see who is onside with the way we see it, and not the way the government sees it. Well, a little outfit called the Canadian Medical Association happens to believe this is important enough for it comment on, and I quote:

Supervised injection programs are an important harm reduction strategy. Harm reduction is a central pillar in a comprehensive public health approach to disease prevention and health promotion.

The Canadian Nurses Association has said much the same thing.

My colleague asked what is happening in B.C. right now. Clearly, the government did not listen to British Columbians and all the various groups within that province who are opposed to the decision the Conservatives made today, and this is no different.

When the government does not want to hear something, it does not matter who says it, where it is coming from, what the credibility is. The Conservatives either tune it right out or worse yet, they attack it. In this case, it is clear that the only people who are opposed to this are hard-core, ideological right wingers. Every other Canadian with a heart and compassion wants these injection sites for Canadians to make our communities safer.

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his speech. I always enjoy them. I particularly liked the part about the ideological bent, but I want to go to the charter side of things. When this year is done and we have all these year-end reviews about what happened in the news, I think two words will come to mind: charter challenge.

Here we find another bill that runs up against the charter under section 7, in the pursuit of life, liberty, and security of the person, which is a fundamental justice. It is a fundamental right for people to preserve their health in a situation where they find themselves wanting to get help. This is about harm reduction.

What bothers me is that it would not be so bad if the argument from the government was that there were problems with this particular site in the way it administers the plan and so forth. The minister has the discretion to get rid of it. However, the argument is fundamentally, “not in my home town”, “not in my backyard”. For some reason, the Conservatives have used this as a defence. In addition to that, what is even more insulting, is that they use it to raise money to win the next election.

I would ask my colleague, have we gotten to the point where all the evidence pointing to harm reduction has been so lost that the goal is only to win the next campaign and to fund raise?

Mr. David Christopherson: Mr. Speaker, I certainly agree with my colleague.

In fact, just within the last few days, I was standing in exactly the same place making an issue about the fact that the current government passes laws that it knows will not survive a charter challenge, even though it has a requirement to check that ahead of time. The Conservatives know it will not happen, but they do not care. They are worried about the politics of it.

I mean, we get it, we are all in politics, but when one is in government, one does have some responsibility to get above that, especially when we are talking about human rights and charter rights.

For a government to care so little and show so little respect for the Canadian people that it would just pass laws that work politically, knowing they will not survive a charter challenge, is despicable. There is no other word for a government that would do that, which is exactly what the Conservatives are doing here.

The Conservatives know that this is going to go off to the courts. They know that it will not survive a challenge given what the court has already said, but they do not care. What they care about is what my hon. colleague has said: passing a law they can use to raise funds to get votes to get re-elected rather than help the Canadian people. They are not doing that, but when 2015 comes and we get a new NDP government, we will.

● (2005)

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Pilon (Laval—Les Îles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to debate Bill C-2, An Act to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act.

With every passing day, drugs are becoming an increasingly pressing problem in our big cities, which are less and less humane places. The bill before us today forces us to face what has become, under this Conservative government, an undeniable fact. This bill has an intensely ideological flavour, and completely disregards both fact and reality. This is nothing new in the wonderland inhabited by the Conservatives, who are increasingly out of touch with the needs of Canadians.

Bill C-2 is nothing but a poorly veiled attempt to put an end to supervised injection sites. It became obvious some time ago that this government does not shy away from introducing legislation that flies in the face of recent decisions made by the highest court in the country, the Supreme Court of Canada, which the government seems to consider a threat to its ideology.

Government Orders

In fact, in 2011, the Supreme Court ruled that InSite provided essential services and had to remain open under the exemption set out in section 56 of the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act. The court also ruled that the charter authorized users to access InSite services, and that the provision of similar services should also be authorized under the same exemption.

In addition, a number of studies published in the renowned *New England Journal of Medicine*, and the *British Medical Journal*, describe the benefits of the InSite supervised injection site. These are experts in the field, which is why the Conservatives surely will not listen to them.

Over the past three years, it has become apparent that the Conservatives do not take kindly to opinionated scientists, particularly when the opinions of those scientists do not suit them or go against their ideology.

The purpose of a government is not to muzzle scientists or members of the House of Commons and, yet, this has occurred a record number of times in Canadian history under the Conservative government. The government's responsibility is to take stock of the facts and to make the best decisions for Canadians.

With Bill C-2, the government is once again falling into the embarrassing trap of grandstanding and ignoring facts that clearly prove that supervised injection facilities like InSite have a wide range of benefits for the general public.

Indeed, just a few hours after Bill C-2 was introduced, the Conservatives made a big show of announcing their "Keep heroin out of our backyards" campaign, which was designed to rally grassroots support and to, once again, fuel the public's unfounded fears about safety.

Let us take a few moments to think about this seriously. Are the Conservatives so keen on magical thinking that they believe that, if InSite closed, heroin use would automatically disappear in just a few hours? I hope that their cognitive reasoning is a little more advanced than that, but I have my doubts.

The reality is that, after the closure of supervised injection facilities, heroin use would not disappear but would once again be widespread in neighbourhoods and could, at that point, become a real danger for the general public. That is exactly the opposite of what the Conservatives are claiming.

Let us forget the Conservatives' ideological inflexibility that results in exactly the opposite of what they claim, and talk about the real facts about InSite and the positive benefits of supervised injection facilities.

The InSite project was set up as part of a public health initiative by the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority and a number of other community partners following a 12-fold increase in the number of overdose-related deaths in Vancouver between 1987 and 1993. Over that seven-year period, the Vancouver area also saw a disturbing increase in the rate of blood-borne diseases, such as hepatitis A, B and C and HIV/AIDS, among injection drug users.

In 2003, InSite secured an exemption under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act for activities with medical and scientific

applications, in order to provide services and conduct research into the effectiveness of supervised injection facilities.

In 2007, the Onsite Detox Centre was added at the same location. In 2008, InSite's exemption expired.

● (2010)

The Minister of Health denied InSite's application to renew this exemption, a portent of the introduction of Bill C-2, which is before us today.

The Minister of Health's decision triggered a series of court cases, following which the British Columbia Supreme Court found that InSite should be given a further exemption. The Conservative government appealed that decision, but lost. The British Columbia Court of Appeal also found that InSite should remain open.

Finally, in 2011, The Supreme Court of Canada ruled that the minister's decision to close InSite violated its clients' charter rights, was arbitrary, and was contrary to the purpose of the act, particularly with respect to public health and safety.

The NDP feels that government decisions should be made with Canadians' best interests in mind and be based on fact rather than on an ideological stance. Evidence has shown that safe injection sites effectively reduce the risk of contracting and spreading blood-borne diseases and reduce deaths from overdoses. Evidence has also shown that they do not adversely affect public safety. In some cases, they actually promote it by reducing injection drug use in public and violence, as well as reducing the waste associated with drug use. These sites strike a balance between public health and public safety goals, while connecting the users of these sites with the health services and addiction treatment they need to escape the hell of drug use.

In this case, the facts are clear and unequivocal. Between 1987 and 1993, before InSite was established, the number of overdose deaths in Vancouver increased from 16 to 200 deaths per year. Since InSite opened in 2003, the rate of overdose deaths in east Vancouver has fallen by 35%.

I have some other facts for our Conservative friends who believe that InSite is dangerous and poses a threat to the public.

Over one year, 2,171 InSite users were referred to addiction counselling or other support services. Those who use InSite services at least once a week are 1.7 times more likely to enrol in a detox program than those who visit infrequently. There has been a significant drop in the number of discarded needles, injection-related waste materials, and people injecting themselves with drugs on the street. One year after InSite opened, 80% of respondents living or working in Vancouver's downtown east side supported InSite.

A number of studies have examined the possible negative impact of InSite, but not one single study produced any evidence of harm to the community.

Government Orders

The facts are clear. An initiative like InSite is a step in the right direction in terms of public health and public safety. In contrast to what the Conservatives claim, such an initiative gets drugs off our streets and moves them to supervised sites where people are attended to and strongly encouraged to explore the possibilities for drug treatment and social reintegration.

That is why Bill C-2—which is based on wishful thinking rather than facts, as is often the case on the other side of this House—is simply unacceptable.

• (2015)

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his excellent speech.

I would like him to continue along the lines of what he was saying. Can he explain the potential benefits of a safe injection site for communities? Why do a number of studies show that such sites are beneficial for communities? In Canada, the only place with a site like this is east Vancouver. Could he elaborate on these data and studies?

Mr. François Pilon: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Sherbrooke for his excellent question.

As we have seen, there are now fewer drugs on Vancouver streets thanks to this facility. We could not expect them to disappear completely, obviously.

There is a park across from my home where I sometimes see young people at 2 a.m. or 3 a.m. They are clearly not there to play ball. If they had access to an injection site, they would use that facility, if only when it is cold or raining outside. Then the next morning, when my grandchildren come for a visit, I would not need to go to the park with them to make sure everything is all right. They could go by themselves, without me worrying that they may be hurt by a syringe.

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague from Laval—Les Îles on his speech. I would like to ask him a very specific question.

Obviously, this is a very sensitive issue. It is also a public health issue, one that is handled appropriately, in a manner approved by the Canadian Medical Association and other response groups. However, it appears that the Conservatives are using this issue as a campaign tool, a way to boost their fundraising. They are polarizing this whole question, which seems to me a very dangerous tack, simply to use it as a fundraising tool now that the gun registry cannot serve that purpose.

What does my colleague think of using such an important and sensitive issue for political reasons and to get funding for the next election, when a level-headed, more scientific approach would be more appropriate?

Mr. François Pilon: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question.

I do not know whether or not this is parliamentary language, but I think it is disgusting to use an issue like this to try to raise money. This completely poisons the debate. They are trying to make the public afraid of something that would be of benefit to them. I think it

is absolutely disgusting that the Conservatives are acting this way with the public and they are trying to raise money for their election campaign based on lies.

Mrs. Djaouida Sellah (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his excellent work on this issue.

We know that this is a public health and safety issue. Unfortunately, since being elected, we have noticed that the government does not work for all Canadians. I get the impression that it works for its electoral base. I think it is disappointing that they are using this type of issue that affects all Canadians. We have seen this before with other unconstitutional procedures. However, here we have more evidence of the Conservatives going against the Supreme Court decision on injection sites.

Does my colleague not find this approach undemocratic?

• (2020)

Mr. François Pilon: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her excellent question.

Indeed, I find this undemocratic. I do not know why the Conservatives introduce bills knowing that they are unconstitutional, that they go against the charter and that they will be challenged in court. Canadians yet again will end up paying for the legal fees. I do not think this is a very good approach for a party that claims to be close to the public.

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to rise this evening to speak to this rather sensitive bill. I happen to be very familiar with it as I have heard a great deal about it and have spoken about it with members from all parties. The issue is near and dear to me. I am referring to Bill C-2, also known as Bill C-65 before prorogation. No one will be surprised to hear that we will oppose the bill at second reading.

We already debated the issue back in January. Since then, nothing has happened. For reasons unknown to me, the government did not introduce the bill earlier. It certainly seems to be an urgent matter today, however. We are now in June, faced with a time allocation motion to ensure its speedy passage. It seems to have taken six months for the government to realize the urgency of the situation; after five hours of debate, it has decided to set things in motion.

The bill has been gathering dust on the desk of the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons for months now; he did not seem the least bit interested in putting the bill on the agenda. I am nevertheless happy that the government has finally decided to get moving. Of course, the fact that it had to do so on Bill C-2 is a real shame. The government could have been made to see the light and amend the bill in order to change its content.

That is not the case, and the bill we are debating today is yet another direct affront to the Supreme Court, as a number of experts have said. We are all aware of the strained relationship the government has with the Supreme Court these days. Once again, the government has no problem defying the Supreme Court, which ruled on this issue in September 2011.

Government Orders

Bill C-2 could very likely violate the Supreme Court's ruling. The government itself asked the Supreme Court to rule on the case in British Columbia.

The government had asked the Supreme Court to review the B.C. court's ruling, since the government was not happy with it. It was not happy with the Supreme Court's ruling either, but that is the highest court. The government therefore decided to introduce a bill that would directly challenge the Supreme Court of Canada's 2011 ruling. That is pretty brazen for the government to move forward like this. As I said, we oppose this bill.

I want to thank the member for Vancouver East, who has been working on this issue for many years. This situation has been dragging on for years. If memory serves me right, it was in 2008 or even earlier that the federal government's health minister at the time refused to grant an exemption to InSite, the supervised injection site in east Vancouver. The reasons the federal government refused to grant an exemption were probably ideological. It seemed to be against the idea of a supervised injection site.

Today, the Conservatives have asked questions, but they have unfortunately not made any speeches. We have only gotten bits and pieces of information from the other side about their position on the issue. Based on what I have heard in the debate today, they seem to be ideologically opposed to the idea of safe injection sites. There is only one in Canada right now, but steps are under way to open others. In fact, some groups in Quebec City, Montreal and Toronto are working to open such sites.

● (2025)

Many groups have noted the benefits of this type of site. Many studies done in Vancouver have shown the same results. More than 30 peer-reviewed studies— it is important to note this—published in journals such as the *New England Journal of Medicine*, *The Lancet* and the *British Medical Journal* have described the benefits of InSite. Organizations that work on solving the problem of drug use in our communities have noted the beneficial impact of InSite, in east Vancouver. They are trying to replicate Vancouver's positive experience.

An hon. member: It is a model.

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault: Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a model that is beneficial to the public and local communities. In fact, it has the near total support of the east Vancouver community. Many surveys have shown public support for the safe injection site in east Vancouver.

Many studies have explicitly shown the benefits of InSite for public health and safety. Some of my colleagues have explained in more detail how this site is good for public health and safety. People grappling with drug addictions are in very difficult situations, but if they had access to a safe injection site like the one in east Vancouver, they would be much safer. However, it is worth noting here that the ultimate goal is to get all illegal drugs off our streets.

It is safer for these people to have access to supervised injection sites, like the one in Vancouver, that make resources available to help them get off drugs. That is the goal of safe injection sites. They do more than just tell people to come and get a fix before asking them to leave. They look after them and try to help them get off drugs.

The main point I want to make today is that safe injection sites are more than just a safe haven where addicts get a fix and then leave without having access to resources. These sites make resources available to addicts who want to get off drugs.

Unfortunately, the government used that issue as a campaign tool to raise money from its supporters. I remember that, just hours after the government introduced Bill C-65—the first version of this Bill C-2—in the House, we received a fundraising email asking for political donations.

We therefore have to ask ourselves the following question: is that how a good legislator works? The role of the legislator in the House of Commons and in Parliament is to review and improve laws. Is it appropriate for a government or a legislator to use an issue and change laws for political purposes? The government's top priority should be ensuring that Canadians are safe. However, the Conservatives' priority is asking for political donations and introducing partisan bills. That is not how a competent legislator should work.

● (2030)

Mr. Mathieu Ravignat (Pontiac, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it appears that I will be the one asking a question. I cannot say for certain, but you seem disappointed. Nevertheless I have a very important question to ask my colleague who delivered a great speech on this issue.

He talked about doing things for political purposes. We need to be very careful about partisanship and money from political parties that play a part in the drafting of bills. As everyone well knows, demonizing one group of people may gain support from another group that will provide funding. That is unfortunate and this is not the way to be a responsible politician and representative of the people.

I wonder whether the member would comment on this trend that we are seeing on the part of the Conservative party.

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault: Mr. Speaker, Bill C-2 is in fact not an isolated case. It is consistent with a trend that we have observed since the Conservatives have been in office. The Liberals were no better. However, I have a rather short memory when it comes to everything the Liberals did.

This is an unfortunate trend because the lawmakers who draft and amend laws must assume their responsibilities and work for the common good of all Canadians, not simply impose their own ideology within their political group.

It is no secret that in our parliamentary system, the government, the executive branch, sits in the House alongside the legislative branch. Unfortunately, the executive branch will sometimes use certain bills and issues for electoral purposes to advance its political agenda, since the legislative and the executive go hand in hand.

Government Orders

Of course we cannot dissociate the Conservative party from the Government of Canada. They are one and the same. The government of the day introduces bills to advance its own ideology. It solicits funds a few hours after tabling a bill in the House of Commons. In my view this is unacceptable behaviour on the part of a legislator.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for Sherbrooke for his clear and articulate speech on a subject that is of public interest and that involves the safety as well as the health of the public.

The New Democrats have stressed that this is a health issue. The opening of a supervised injection site in Vancouver has not only saved lives but has led to an increase in the number of people enrolled in drug treatment programs. These very positive and concerted efforts are well documented here at home and abroad.

I would like my colleague to comment on the public safety aspect of this issue. A supervised injection site reduces the number of needles used in back alleys and parks and discarded behind trees or fences. The fact that this Conservative piece of legislation would prevent any new supervised injection sites from opening will increase the risk of our children finding needles, which are sometimes blood stained and could potentially transmit diseases.

Should the government members not be concerned about these realities?

• (2035)

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. I know that he cares very much about public safety. I also know that he has young children and that he would not want them to walk around a park where they could find dangerous used needles.

Thanks to the success of these supervised injection sites, used needles are kept out of our communities. Nevertheless, the Conservative campaign is “Keep heroin out of our backyards”, and they just did exactly the opposite with the bill preventing the opening of supervised injection sites, which keep various dangers out of our communities.

This is a missed opportunity by the Conservative government. It could have strengthened public safety, and I thought that was paramount to the government. However, it turns out that this does not seem to be its priority. The Conservatives do exactly the opposite of what they claim they will do.

I am disappointed with Bill C-2 and I will vote against it at second reading.

Ms. Laurin Liu (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, tonight I am pleased to be speaking to Bill C-2, An Act to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act.

This bill addresses safe injection sites. I will be opposing this bill at second reading for many reasons, which have already been outlined by my hon. colleagues tonight.

The main reason I am opposing it is because safe injection sites have had many documented, positive effects on communities and on people who are dealing with addictions to certain substances. We have seen that in Vancouver, where there is already a safe injection site known as InSite. We have also seen that other parts of the

country are interested in opening other safe injection sites and in doing something else to help those dealing with addiction and to protect our children and our communities.

I am opposing this bill because it goes against the Supreme Court ruling concerning these sites. I would like to provide a bit of background.

We need to go back to 2011, when the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that InSite, in Vancouver, was providing essential services and should remain open under the exemption provided in section 56 of the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act. The court ruled that the charter authorized users to have access to InSite's services and that similar services should be authorized under an exemption.

I imagine that many Canadians who are watching the debate at home are wondering what a safe injection site is, how it works and what it looks like, so I will talk about how the safe injection site in Vancouver, InSite, works.

It is highly regulated. There are many medical professionals on site who can provide medical assistance, if necessary. To access InSite's services, users must meet certain requirements. They must be at least 16, sign a user agreement and comply with a code of conduct. Of course, they cannot be accompanied by children.

InSite is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. seven days a week. The facility provides services every day of the week. Users bring their own drugs to InSite, and staff members provide clean injection supplies. This is important when it comes to prevention, because people who use intravenous drugs often use syringes that are used, and therefore unsterilized.

Often, when people do not have a place to inject their drug, they will leave the blood-stained or contaminated supplies in public areas, such as parks where children play, as my colleague mentioned earlier. It is very important for these supplies to be available at supervised injection sites so that users have access to them and so that we can prevent the spread of disease.

Nurses and paramedics who supervise the centre provide emergency medical assistance if necessary. Once users have injected their drugs, their condition is assessed by the staff and they are sent to a post-injection room or treated by a nurse in the treatment room for illnesses associated with the injection.

• (2040)

InSite also does some important prevention work by helping people recover from their drug addiction. InSite employees provide information on health care and advice, and they refer patients to health care and social services.

Government Orders

InSite also houses the OnSite centre. OnSite provides detox and rehabilitation services. OnSite is managed by the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority and the PHS Community Services Society, with the support of local law enforcement agencies, provincial and municipal governments, provincial and federal government representatives, health care providers, and members of the community. People are united behind this initiative, and it has the support of community members who are already seeing the benefits.

I would like to share some figures to show that supervised injection sites have positive effects. Between 1973 and 1987, the number of overdose-related deaths in Vancouver went from 16 to 200 per year. That is a high number. However, the rate of overdose deaths in east Vancouver has dropped by 35% since InSite opened.

The reason why it is important to ensure that InSite remains open and to study this model in order to apply it elsewhere is that it saves lives. It contributes to prevention and rehabilitation rather than punishing people with addictions. These people are vulnerable and do have a lot of problems, but they also have a right to safety and life.

As an aside, I will speak to the Conservative government's bill on prostitution, because it is a crosscutting and current issue. I am drawing a parallel with Bill C-2 because this is another way for the Conservatives to show their contempt for Supreme Court rulings. They endanger the lives of vulnerable individuals and of women working in the prostitution business.

The Conservative government's bill on prostitution can put lives at risk. It punishes the clients of sex workers, which puts their lives at risk. This bill was introduced in the House of Commons after a Supreme Court decision announced in December struck down a number of key provisions in Canada's prostitution laws.

A number of people and members in the House have said that this new bill introduced by the Conservative government was also unlikely to pass the test of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms imposed by the Supreme Court. In this case, the Conservative government does not respect the right of vulnerable individuals to safety and to life. I am therefore proud to rise in the House to oppose the bill on prostitution as well.

● (2045)

I will use the short time I have left to sum up my position on Bill C-2. The InSite model has a part to play in public health and community safety. Members need to oppose this bill in order to protect vulnerable InSite users' right to safety.

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoulu, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for her fact-based speech. She showed caring and common sense in describing the tragic conditions that exist in our communities, especially in east Vancouver.

I would simply like to point out that no one from the government side has been rising or taking part in the debate on this bill, even though one would expect them to be deeply committed to it, given the fundraising campaign they launched right after the bill was introduced.

In fact, Conservative members are refusing to claim their share of the debate and join in that effort with everyone in the House. As a

result, we have to state the facts, describe the situation, and point out how little respect the government is showing for Canadians.

Could my colleague comment on the Conservative government's attitude and its refusal to take part in and be present for the debate for the sake of all Canadians?

Ms. Laurin Liu: My colleague is right, Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives have indeed been playing petty politics with Bill C-2.

They had the chance to send out pamphlets in their ridings before the bill was called. They were able to organize a fundraiser called "Keep heroin out of our backyards".

It is plain to see the Conservatives are fearmongering. They are using scare tactics in order to raise more funds.

The irony in all this is that the government's Bill C-2 will make it nearly impossible to open safe injection sites, which will push heroin back out into the streets.

This is the irony with the Conservative campaign. If Bill C-2 passes, it will put lives in danger and greatly compromise community safety.

● (2050)

[English]

Hon. Gary Goodyear (Minister of State (Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario), CPC): Mr. Speaker, I respect the hon. member opposite, but she is mistaken on the points of the bill.

The bill would bring more safety by allowing parents in a community where an injection site is thinking of setting up to enter the decision-making process. It would allow those folks who want to do that to provide scientific evidence around the actual need for that injection site, which would be hard to do in my riding of Cambridge-North Dumfries. The NDP wants to set up an injection site there, but I doubt the people in Cambridge would want that.

The fact is that the bill would allow science to enter the decision-making process. It would also allow parents to enter the decision-making process. What exactly is wrong with allowing Canadians who live in the community to decide what their needs are?

Government Orders

[*Translation*]

Ms. Laurin Liu: Actually, Mr. Speaker, Bill C-2 is an attempt to put safe injection sites out of business. The Conservative member is being disingenuous. I have here a list of criteria that new applicants will need to meet. The purpose of the bill is to dissuade people from opening new safe injection sites. The rules are much too strict. In fact, departmental officials have told us that if an applicant mistakenly forgets to include something, the application could be automatically denied without further review. Even if the applicant has all of the documents needed for the application and the community's full support—which the member opposite mentioned—the department will still have the option of denying it.

InSite had garnered the support of most of the people in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise in the House today, at about 9:00 p.m., to work for the people of Drummond. The Conservatives had opportunities to speak this evening, but they decided not to rise. They are in the process of beating their record for the number of time allocation motions. This is the 74th time allocation motion that has been imposed, which is unbelievable. The Conservatives are also beating their record for staying seated and not working for the people of their ridings.

Bill C-2, An Act to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, will no doubt end up before the Supreme Court after it is passed because this bill will probably be unconstitutional. The Conservatives are becoming champions of thumbing their noses at the Supreme Court and its rulings. Their attitude is truly disappointing. It is arrogant of them not to respect the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Constitution, of which we are very proud. That is why the NDP will oppose the bill at second reading.

This bill is a thinly veiled attempt to shut down safe injection sites. The Conservatives do not have the courage to say what they want to do. They are addressing this issue in an underhanded way, as they do with others. This bill once again represents an ideological Conservative approach. The Conservatives are opposed to safe injection sites, which is too bad, because these sites have been proven to be successful. Since the Vancouver site opened, the figures have been speaking for themselves and have been quite convincing.

Between 1987 and 1993, the number of deaths by overdose in Vancouver rose from 16 to 200 a year. The Supreme Court of Canada said that this situation was very serious. In Vancouver East, however, since InSite opened, the rate of drug overdose deaths has fallen by 35%. That shows that this approach works well. Over a one-year period, 2,171 users of InSite's services were referred to addiction counselling or other support services. That is proof that these sites are beneficial to the public. The mandate of these sites is not to encourage people to use drugs, but rather to supervise them in order to keep them healthy and safe. These people meet nurses and social workers who are willing to support them. When they are ready to ask for help, they can find it on site. It is important to have these types of sites because they can support these people.

Those who use InSite at least once a week have been shown to be 1.7 times more likely to enrol in detox programs than those who visit infrequently. Therefore, it is possible to see the beneficial impact of this site. The more the users visit this site, the more they care about

their health and safety, because they do not use hard drugs for fun. These people are vulnerable and sick, and they need help.

• (2055)

That is why these sick people must be supported while they are using drugs and must be able to quickly access help when they are ready to get off drugs.

The number of discarded needles and injection paraphernalia and the number of people injecting drugs in the street dropped dramatically one year after InSite opened. There was a significant drop in the number of needles and injection paraphernalia in the streets around parks and public places one year after InSite opened, and that is very important.

This allows us to make areas safer for the general public, youth and communities who live near more vulnerable people. That is why it is important to have an approach based on science and not on ideology. These facts are pointing us towards the science.

Let us continue in the same vein and say that this bill is unfortunately based on the Conservatives anti-drug ideology. This is another attempt to rally the Conservative base, as demonstrated by the famous "Keep heroin out of our backyards" campaign, which was purely ideological and simplistic.

No one wants heroin in their backyard. Using that slogan is to give in to simplistic rhetoric. Anyone can use it to raise money, but that is not how we are going to educate and serve the people we must serve. That is not how we are going to look after the health and safety of Canadians. It is not by engaging in such simplistic inflammatory campaigns that we should be doing politics.

We must be much more serious than that and run campaign to promote better health. This should be a health issue and not a public safety issue. This bill should be based on facts and deal with public health benefits.

The problem is that this bill will make it almost impossible to open safe injection sites. Unfortunately, it will promote the opposite, that is the return of heroine to our neighbourhoods.

Bill C-2 flies in the face of the Supreme Court's 2011 ruling calling on the minister to consider granting exemptions for supervised injection sites in order to strike a balance between public safety and public health. The decision called on the minister to examine all of the evidence in light of the benefits of supervised injection sites rather than draw up a long list of principles like the one we have here.

Lastly, any new legislation regarding supervised injection sites must honour the spirit of the Supreme Court ruling, which this bill does not do. The NDP believes that harm reduction programs, including supervised injection sites, should be granted exemptions based on evidence that they will improve community health and save human lives. That is what the Supreme Court asked for in its ruling.

Government Orders

Unfortunately, once again, the Conservatives have introduced a bill that will be challenged because it does not abide by either the spirit or the letter of the Supreme Court ruling. This bill is, without a shadow of a doubt, unconstitutional. It does not respect the charter and will not protect the health and safety of our fellow citizens. That is the main thing we have to think of when we make a decision.

• (2100)

[*English*]

Hon. Gary Goodyear (Minister of State (Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario), CPC): Mr. Speaker, indeed, it is a very long title. I tried to get it shortened to FedDev, but they do not do that here.

I appreciate the member's contribution to the debate this evening. On a side note, if the member wants to talk about what politicking is all about, I can assure him it is not about using taxpayers' money, illegally, to send out mailings.

In terms of creating scare tactics for Canadians, it was not the government that made this statement: "Medicalized heroin maintenance has been used very successfully in places like Europe." In fact, it was the member's own colleague from Vancouver East who made that statement.

My question is this. Where do we go from here, besides randomly allowing injection sites to happen in any community, which is what the NDP wants, without the consultation of parents and communities, which is what we are asking for?

What the NDP wants is unfettered access to injection sites in any community, without participation of the community. Is the next step that the NDP will ask the federal government, through taxpayers' dollars, to provide medicalized heroin as well?

As we all know, the heroin people take to these clinics is from pushers. It is not safe. Is that next on the agenda?

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Choquette: Mr. Speaker, I will be respectful in answering my colleague. It will be difficult because he said a lot of hurtful things. He is well aware that many of the things he said were in bad faith. I cannot even say the words. I will be polite because I am addressing you, Mr. Speaker. I will not get personal in this debate.

It is important not to let bad faith take over this debate. Nobody wants to encourage drug use or alcohol or tobacco abuse. We can all agree on that. We have to start with prevention, but we also have to give people opportunities to be safe and healthy.

InSite has proven that it can achieve health and safety goals not only for users, but also for the community as a whole. That is why we support the site. I will not get into other issues like my colleague did, because things could go off the rails.

• (2105)

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a minister of state for economic development should be a little more serious.

We know full well that parents prefer that addicts in need of help end up at supervised injection sites instead of on the streets. That

way, they will not vandalize houses and attack their children. They are supervised by medical staff, which is excellent. The minister might want to take this more seriously.

I thank the hon. member for Drummond for his speech and for raising these many concerns. It will help the people of Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles understand the debate on this important bill. We currently do not have supervised injection sites in Quebec, but it is something that the health services are looking into. Indeed, it is preferable for people in need to be at a supervised and specialized site that can respond to their needs.

The Supreme Court explained that, in accordance with the charter, the minister must consider whether denying an exemption would cause deprivations of life and security of the person.

Can my colleague explain that?

Mr. François Choquette: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her excellent work and her very good question.

In Quebec, we have depoliticized the debate. We studied the bill with scientists, people in the community and people from the health care system in order to achieve consensus. We should not be politicizing this kind of a bill the way the Conservatives are. We should instead be building consensus, depoliticizing the debate and allowing scientists and experts to develop a good approach so that the bill pleases everyone.

Unfortunately, again, we are working against each other and this bill will be declared unconstitutional pursuant to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Again, unfortunately, this is another failure of the Conservatives.

[*English*]

Mr. Mathieu Ravignat (Pontiac, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues for applauding my riding and, I am sure, applauding the people in my riding. I certainly hope it was not for me. There are 90,000-plus electors in my riding who all deserve to be applauded, in part because they have to deal with this misguided government.

I would like to speak to this particular bill because it is a great example of how, when we add politics into the mix on something as fundamental as this issue, we get it wrong.

I would like to start my comments by saying something that is perhaps more philosophical than it is political. The bill is fundamentally about compassion. This is what it brings up. If there are people in this room who think one can get rid of addiction, let us talk about the 40,000 years of human history that prove them wrong. The reality is that the substances that exist today that cause addiction are not natural. They are not something that one can plant, that one can eat from the garden, or that can be cultivated. Even those things that are cultivated and can be created into a substance of addiction have been genetically modified. When we talk about heroin and these incredibly destructive drugs, we are talking about things that have been manipulated unnaturally.

Government Orders

No human being chooses on a whim to wake up one day and say, "I'm going to become an addict; I'm going to become a dropout; I'm going to become dependent; I'm going to lose who I am." No young child wakes up in the morning thinking that the future is going to be like that. I am a parent, and I can only imagine having a child in that situation.

Let us start with the things that matter. The fundamental reality about humanity is that the thing that is the most difficult for us is human relationships. We can all figure out how to eat. We can all figure out how to have a house and how to warm ourselves. These things we can figure out. The hardest thing is to figure out how to have good human relationships. There is no one in this room who can tell me that the relationships that addicts have had in the past have not contributed to their situation, that none of this has to do with mental illness, that none of this has to do with abuse, that none of this has to do with hardship and suffering.

When we suffer, the answer is not suffering, it is not discipline, and it is not the heavy hand of government. The solution is love. The solution is compassion, not less of it, but more of it. That is what should motivate the creation of our legislation on something so fundamental as addiction.

The solution is not to make sick people sicker. The solution is to provide a comfortable, secure environment for them to deal with their problem. Addiction is like any other disease. It is not to be marginalized. It is not to be demonized. It is to be understood and dealt with rationally, using the correct solutions to the problem.

• (2110)

Sometimes I wonder if maybe as legislators we should all remind ourselves that we were once in love. When we are in love, and I am sure most of my colleagues have been, and not just puppy love but deeply in love, our entire view of the world changes, but we begin to forget it. We take things for granted. However, if we remind ourselves of those days, we realize that we view the world in a completely different way, in a better way, and we make the right decisions. I know I am getting psychological and maybe a bit idealistic. The point is that I believe that there are solutions to problems between people. I believe that if we use the history of humanity, all those incredible words written on honesty, compassion, and love, we can bring people back together, we can solve their problems, and we can heal any situation.

Let us get into the public security issue to get a bit more concrete. The reality is that injection sites are safe. That is the reality. They are not only safe for addicts, they are safe for the populations around them. They make neighbourhoods safer and cleaner and there is less crime in those neighbourhoods. Statistically, that is true. We know it. Unfortunately, the Conservatives ignore it. That does not surprise me, because they have put duct tape on the proverbial mouths of our scientists. They have refused to take evidence-based approaches to making legislation. We can only think about the recent legislation and the complete disregard for Supreme Court rulings, and that is the case for this bill as well.

However, the worst thing about this bill is the electoral aspect of it. It is completely irresponsible to demonize one sector of the population to fill the coffers of a political party, and that is what is going on with this bill. Fear is fear. Every human being has fear.

What makes the sum of someone is how he or she responds to that fear. In my opinion, what makes the quality of a political party like ours is not to be governed by fear but to be governed by hope. The fear in this bad piece of legislation is fear of the addict. Instead of holding out their hand in help, instead of understanding the situation, they demonize them. By demonizing them, they think they are going to make electoral allies, people who will give them donations.

It is true. A lot of my fellow citizens do not want a safe injection site in their neighbourhoods. They are wrong. They do not understand the details and the statistics with regard to how injection sites make their neighbourhoods safer and how they reduce cases of AIDS and cases of communicable diseases. The responsibility of elected officials is to explain. It is pedagogy. It is not fear.

• (2115)

I have faith in the Canadian people and in their compassion. I know very well that there are people in my riding who, once it was explained to them how an injection site could improve the lives of their fellow Canadians, would say, "Okay, that is all right."

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-sor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as far as the technical aspects of how this all came about, it was because of the opinion of the Supreme Court that this infringes on section 7 of the charter, which is about life, liberty, and the pursuit of one's personal security. In all of that there lies the deprivation of rights. People are deprived in the sense that they want to pursue and receive treatment in a safe way from this program that was set up in 2003 through the exemption in the act.

What possible defence will Conservatives have if and when this receives another charter challenge and they go back to court and do this again, because in this particular case, as my hon. colleague can comment on, there does not seem to be a proper defence other than the one defence, which is "not in my backyard"?

• (2120)

Mr. Mathieu Ravignat: That is an excellent question, Mr. Speaker, and I thank my Liberal colleague for it. It is true that the government has consistently defied Supreme Court rulings. Thank God there are judges who think independently of the government and come up with rulings that actually make sense and are evidence based.

The reality is that we can legislate electorally as much as we want, but the rubber hits the road when dealing with judges. They can look at the facts and tell what has a positive impact. Canadians have a tremendous amount of trust in judges. The Supreme Court certainly has more legitimacy than the government, and for good reason.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jonathan Genest-Jourdain (Manicouagan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I particularly appreciated my colleague's speech. It was very enlightening, and it will serve as inspiration for my own speech, which will be taking shape shortly.

During his speech, he mentioned that the Conservatives put forward a measure in order to replenish their coffers, implying that there was some sort of financial transaction.

Would my colleague like to expand on that so that I can draw from it later?

Government Orders

Mr. Mathieu Ravnagat: Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives have done the exact same thing with a number of different issues, including crime and victim protection.

They identify a group of people and then stir up fear within another group of people as a reason for giving money to the Conservative Party. They do it all the time.

Unfortunately, they are choosing to marginalize groups; it sometimes frightens me that they do it with minority groups. For example, when they talk about immigration, it is all about those wicked immigrants. This plays on emotions that are unacceptable in a modern civilization such as ours, where all Canadians are equal and all Canadians deserve respect.

[*English*]

Mr. Jamie Nicholls (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to address some of the comments the member for Cambridge has been making during this debate.

We should not live in glass houses. The member for Cambridge should know that the Waterloo region has the highest level of alcohol abuse in Ontario, and he should have some compassion for people in his riding who are having problems with substance abuse.

There was a task force of 26 individuals that included police, street workers, social workers, and government. It came up with a set of 99 recommendations to deal with this problem. Recommendation number 45 deals with the stigma and discrimination associated with substance use and the importance of people realizing that addiction is a health issue, not a moral issue, and can be addressed with treatment. That was from the task force in the member for Cambridge's own area. He should listen to his own constituents. Does my hon. colleague not agree with me?

Mr. Mathieu Ravnagat: Mr. Speaker, I fundamentally agree with those comments. I would also like to add that on this side of the House, our glass is pretty thick. Good luck breaking this glass house.

I am in the Pontiac. Do members think the Pontiac has a high rate of addiction problems? No. Yet I am standing here speaking about this issue, which is fundamentally important.

One would think that those members from ridings where addiction is a fundamental issue, particularly urban ridings, but not only urban ridings, because there is also addiction in rural ridings, and members who care about, for example, veterans, because many veterans, unfortunately, are dealing with addiction problems, should be standing in this House and speaking to the bill to ensure that we do the right thing.

• (2125)

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise in this House to speak on this important bill, Bill C-2, an act to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act.

I will begin by commenting on the sad state of affairs of our democracy. I was here last night, when I spoke to a similarly empty House, following numerous speakers from the NDP on legislation that has everything to do with the well-being of Canadians, the best use of our tax dollars, and the creation of the best possible public policy. At one speaking opportunity after another, it was members of

the NDP who stood up and represented Canadians on these critical issues. Once again, here we are tonight.

We heard the rhetoric from the government that it cares deeply about the legislation it is putting forward. We heard the rhetoric that it cares about public safety, Canadians, and all sorts of things, yet when there is the opportunity for the Conservatives to defend their own legislation, we hear nothing but silence. There may be some heckling from time to time and maybe the odd question, but at every single opportunity they have to speak up and defend their legislation, as we have seen today and yesterday, they have chosen to sit down.

I think this is problematic for any Canadian, and certainly for those tuned in to CPAC. They will see the New Democrats working hard and representing their constituents and Canadians, but they will wonder what the government members are doing at this time.

On an issue like this one, I think it matters even more that the Conservatives are saying nothing. The bill we are discussing here today has everything to do with the most vulnerable people in our country. These are people who have fallen through the cracks of society, who are ill and struggling with addiction. Many of these people live in abject poverty and are homeless. Some live with the trauma of abuse. Certainly in my part of the country, many are still suffering from the impact of residential schools and the horrific sexual and physical abuse they experienced, which has led them to a life of addiction, self-harm, and struggle.

When these people, their families, or their communities tune in to find out what their parliamentarians are doing to try to help them or to help people who so often want to help themselves, all they hear is silence on one more piece of indefensible legislation that is not founded on evidence, on science, or on public health policy that makes sense. It has everything to do with a narrow, ignorant, ideological agenda.

This is not the first time we have seen a bill that has everything to do with ideology and nothing to do with evidence come to this House. Sadly, we see it every day, but I am deeply disturbed when it comes to this legislation. As my colleague alluded to, this piece of legislation is being used to divide Canadians. These people who need help, people whose lives we cannot play with, are being taken advantage of so that the government can score political points. It is unconscionable.

In my own political experience, sadly, I have numerous examples to point to as to how the Conservative government uses this kind of agenda in constituencies like mine.

• (2130)

One example is the way in which the government tries to score points at the expense of trans people and tries to foil the efforts of so many Canadians—including, I am very proud to say, our NDP—who are fighting for trans rights.

Government Orders

Why am I saying this? It is because I remember the calls we started getting in our campaign office a couple of days before the last election. People were concerned and distraught and upset that they were getting voice blasts telling them that their NDP candidate—me, in this case—was supportive of grown men going into girls' washrooms. One of the people who called us was the father of an eight-year-old girl who answered the phone and heard this message.

This message did not talk about what kind of policy this was about, or about parliamentary debate or legislation. It went to the lowest common denominator of electoral politics, something that the Conservative government has learned from its Republican cousins in the States. It knew exactly what it wanted to do. It wanted to drive a wedge into families, into communities, into where I come from, by saying basically that I was in support of human rights, including trans rights, and by saying how horrifying this was. The Conservatives did this by hiding the facts, by using cryptic language, and then by not fessing up until the last moment that it was actually connected to a very concerted Conservative campaign.

This is yet one more example of an ideological agenda being put forward by the government to score political points.

Another example is how the government targets first nations people. Instead of coming to the table and working in partnership with first nations people, whether it is on education, on health care, on ensuring that treaty rights are being implemented, or on economic development, sadly, the government has been too quick to put first nations down and to actually put obstacles in their way when they are trying to make a difference.

I remember that in one of the communities in my constituency, again leading into the previous election, an urban centre received mail-outs referring to the lack of accountability among first nations leaders. The mail-outs included rhetoric around corruption and associated corruption to first nations leaders and chiefs.

It is pretty rich when we hear that from a government that we know has done everything to suit its own friends, whether in the Senate or through various nefarious appointments or through various commitments it has made. We know that what was very much part of that agenda was the way in which it sought to divide Canadians, in this case non-aboriginal people versus aboriginal people, and build a kind of animosity toward people who are often on the margins of our society.

Bill C-2 is no exception. It falls exactly into that same pattern, and in this case, as I said, it plays with the lives of some of the most vulnerable people and communities across our country. It plays with the lives of people in our own families. In some cases it would be people who have gone through this House who have been touched by addiction, people who know what it means and how important help is.

The government has not listened to health care professionals or read the over 30 peer-reviewed studies that have been published in journals. It does not recognize the facts, such as the fact that the rate of overdose deaths in east Vancouver has dropped by 35% since InSite opened or the fact that the reduction of HIV and AIDS rates has been significant as a result of InSite in Vancouver. Instead of looking at these facts and applying evidence and the principle of

care, the Conservative government is seeking to score political points.

We have heard from my colleagues about how this bill contravenes the Supreme Court decision and how it could certainly be challenged. We have heard about how the government does not have a leg to stand on with this legislation.

● (2135)

I want to finish by saying how proud I am to be part of the NDP. The NDP stands with Canadians who want to see us make a difference in our communities, who want to see care for the most vulnerable in our communities, who want to see a government take leadership. Canadians deserve far better than a government that is merely playing with the lives of people who need help and doing it all merely to score political points.

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is important for people listening to this debate tonight to remember what we are debating. The bill is called the respect for communities act. Many of the comments that have been made by opposition colleagues have not focused on what the bill intends to do.

The bill asks for the community in which a proposed site is being considered to have a say in that decision. One of the criteria in the bill is that the groups seeking to develop a centre like this have to provide scientific evidence that it is warranted.

My bigger concern is why my colleagues would not agree that the community itself—the law enforcement people, the community groups, the school groups in that community—should not have a say in whether or not one of these facilities is parked in their backyard. Is that not a reasonable assumption, or does the member think that Ottawa knows best and that Ottawa should decide where these sites should be, regardless of what the community would prefer?

Ms. Niki Ashton: Mr. Speaker, the member across has a lot to contribute, and I welcome him to take a whole speaking spot to explain to Canadians what he thinks the bill is about. I am sad to say that window dressing of that kind is not what the bill is about.

We know from the rhetoric we have heard from the government that the bill has everything to do with preventing the opening of InSite harm reduction centres and denying opportunities to Canadians who need help to combat their addiction from getting that help.

Canadians can see through this and are increasingly seeing through the government's agenda. They will continue to see through it, as they will on Bill C-2.

Mr. Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay—Superior North, GP): Mr. Speaker, I was moved by the eloquent words of the MP for Churchill. She is right in everything she said. The only thing I would like to add and ask her to comment on, if she chooses to, is that the Conservatives not only have no empathy for poor addicted people and are not only not solving the problem, but in large part they have also expanded the problem and have helped to cause it.

Under the current government, gaps in income are growing. Under the current government, poverty is growing. Child poverty is growing. As a result, we have poor parenting, which often leads to addictive behaviours. It is sad and it is shameful.

Government Orders

I wonder if the eloquent member for Churchill would like to comment.

Ms. Niki Ashton: Mr. Speaker, there are many parallels across northern Canada when it comes to the cycle of addiction that people face and the lack of services and places to go where they can get help.

There is talk about a poverty agenda, but the government is increasing poverty and further marginalizing communities that need help. If the government really wanted to make a difference in helping Canadians, where are the investments that need to take place in housing? Where are the investments that need to take place in child care or in training or in education? We do not see those kinds of investments. All we hear is the kind of thing we are listening to here tonight, fabricated stories about how the government is somehow going to stop heroin from coming into our backyards.

It surprises me how little the government members think that Canadians care. Canadians do care, and they can see beyond this thinly veiled attempt to score political points. I look forward to talking to more and more Canadians in my communities about the government's agenda.

● (2140)

Ms. Mylène Freeman (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand and speak to Bill C-2. It is an example of a trend in the government. I will explain myself throughout my speech.

I am concerned about the way in which we go about making laws in this country. This legislation is an example of the Conservative government's leadership when it comes to drafting legislation and bringing it to the House. How the government acts in public really flies in the face of the Canada that I grew up in and the Canada I am proud to be a part of. Now when I stand in the House I feel very sad for our legislative process.

To begin, I want to talk a bit about what the bill is really about. It is not really about respecting communities, again a trend in some of the bills that we see, for example, safe communities and so on. This legislation is not at all about communities. It is about marginalizing those who are already marginalized. It is about putting further violence in the lives of those who already live with so much violence. It is about putting in danger those who are already in danger.

Essentially, this entire legislation is about InSite. For those who may not be familiar with InSite, it is a place in the Vancouver area where those who are addicted to drugs can go for safe injection. We all understand what addiction is, at least those of us on this side of the House, and that there are ways to make it safer for individuals to break a habit so they can escape the cycle of drug abuse. If they cannot break the cycle, and that can be the case for some, at least they would not be put in a more vulnerable position.

Following an increase in the number of overdose deaths in Vancouver between 1987 and 1993, Vancouver Coastal Health and community partners set up InSite. Since then there has been a huge decrease in diseases such as Hep A, B, C, and HIV/AIDS.

InSite was originally exempt under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act. In 2008, the exemption under Section 56 in the

Controlled Drugs and Substances Act expired. That has caused us to be in the situation we are in now. The minister of health at that time denied its renewal and that resulted in subsequent court cases. It was brought up to the Supreme Court of Canada.

In 2011, the Supreme Court ruled that the minister's decision to close InSite, to not renew the exemption under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, was a violation of the charter rights of those who were part of the program. The minister's decision was "... arbitrary, undermining the very purposes of the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, which include public health and safety".

That is an overview of why we are here. We are here now because the Conservatives are not in agreement ideologically with the Supreme Court's ruling. This legislation would impose extremely stringent conditions on places like InSite and would really dissuade any other communities that have the need for such programs from participating in them.

In a sense this legislation is only about InSite. In a sense the bill exemplifies a trend in the Conservative government.

● (2145)

The Conservatives have such profound disrespect for any Supreme Court ruling that comes forward and that goes against their ideology. They have a complete disrespect for the judicial branch in this country and the fact that when a decision is made by the Supreme Court, if they do not like it, then too bad. They are not the defenders of rights and freedoms in this country, the courts are. That is why we have a separate judicial process. Unfortunately, the Conservatives keep finding ways of going around any of those decisions that are made by bringing forward legislation that flies in the face of it, sort of goes around it so that it fits their ideology.

For instance, the court in this case based its decision on section 7 of the charter, "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of a person and the right not be deprived thereof, except in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice."

This is extremely common. We are seeing the Conservatives disagree with fundamentally, ideologically, in Supreme Court rulings things that have to do with people's security, people's health, people's right to life. That is what is so scary about this trend. The Supreme Court did rule that InSite and other supervised injection sites must be granted a section 56 exemption when they decrease the risk of death and disease and there is little or no evidence that they have a negative impact on the community. InSite does not have a negative impact on the community, quite the opposite, it has a very positive impact on the community. The Conservatives now have to go through this bill to try to create stringent conditions for InSite.

This is blatant disrespect and disregard for the InSite ruling. It completely flies in the face of it. This is in the context of a government that has challenged the Supreme Court over and over again through these backward ways of bringing in legislation to the House that flies in the face of a ruling.

Government Orders

For instance, we are thinking of a very close case in my opinion, the same type of situation. Bill C-36 was recently put down. It really flies in the face of the Bedford decision, which was very clear that given the dangerous conditions of sex work, those who are engaged in it need to be able to take the steps to protect themselves. Now we have a bill that is so disempowering. It is not an exaggeration to say that lives would be put at risk due to this legislation.

We also have Bill C-24, which is the immigration bill that creates dual citizenship. Dual citizens are treated as second-class citizens who potentially would be deported and put in danger in countries they may never have even known.

This is also in the context of several crime bills that have been returned due to their unconstitutionality. We see over and over that the Conservatives are marginalizing at-risk Canadians and further marginalizing already marginalized groups.

The many justice bills of the Conservatives, as I mentioned, follow the same model. They ostracize, isolate, and divide people. Instead of trying to address the root issue, the Conservatives tackle symptoms without even looking for the source of the problem. They throw people in jail without helping them reintegrate into society, and that does not solve the problem.

Let us not forget the unelected and unaccountable Senate blocking my colleague's bill on gender identity, creating rights for trans Canadians who are so marginalized and are put in situations of violence. I do not think I have time to get into the difference between an unelected, unaccountable Senate going against the elected thoughts of the House, and the judicial process, which is to protect the rights of Canadians despite the democratic processes that happen in this House.

The Senate works against that process, but over and over, the government is choosing ideology over facts. In these cases, every time the government is going to outrageous lengths, really, to subvert the courts, and these bills. I am not exaggerating, I know am out of time but I really want to get this out. These bills are putting people in danger—

● (2150)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Order, please. Before we go to questions and comments, I see the hon. government House leader may be rising on a point of order.

* * *

DRUG-FREE PRISONS ACT

BILL C-12—NOTICE OF TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to advise that an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Orders 78(1) and 78(2), with respect to the second reading stage of Bill C-12, an act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act.

Under the provisions of Standing Order 78(3), I give notice that a minister of the crown will propose at the next sitting a motion to allot a specific number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of proceedings at the said stage of the bill.

JUSTICE FOR ANIMALS IN SERVICE ACT (QUANTO'S LAW)

BILL C-35—NOTICE OF TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to advise that an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Orders 78(1) and 78(2), with respect to the second reading stage of Bill C-35, an act to amend the Criminal Code (law enforcement animals, military animals and service animals).

Under the provisions of Standing Order 78(3), I give notice that a minister of the crown will propose at the next sitting a motion to allot a specific number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of proceedings at the said stage of the bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): I am sure the House appreciates the notice from the hon. government House leader.

* * *

RESPECT FOR COMMUNITIES ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-2, an act to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the motion that this question be now put.

Mr. Dan Albas (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am certainly glad we are debating issues. I think people will be happy to see that we are seized with such issues.

My question is simple. There are many things that are under federal regulation. One is cell towers. We now require consultation with communities to make sure that if a cell tower goes in that the community is apprised and that consultation is made properly.

Does the member not agree that having an InSite-like location should also merit public consultation, the same as we do right now with cell towers? Is there not a need to consult with people about that issue?

Ms. Mylène Freeman (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am not from British Columbia so I will not engage in that. However, I want to point out that over and over again the government has not been consulting the constituencies it should be consulting when it has bills that affect those communities significantly.

Government Orders

I will bring up UNDRIP to be specific. We are signed on to the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which calls for us to meaningfully consult with first nations communities on anything that has to do with their territory, sovereignty, language, culture, et cetera, yet every single time we have seen a bill come forward that amends the Indian Act or affects these communities in some other way, we have seen the Conservative government go to extreme lengths to avoid any kind of meaningful consultation, other than to receive an email stating that it supports them. We have seen this over and over again. It is truly sad to see the member stand up on cell towers. It is an issue that is important to my constituents as well, but it is just such hypocrisy.

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as has been said here tonight by many people, and we talk about a potential charter challenge once more stemming from this type of legislation, it seems to run against logic in this case. It is not like this is something that we can see coming in a challenge and we look at our legislation that protects the fundamental rights contained within our charter. In this case, it is section 7 and the exemption that is laid out in section 56 and the continuation of it.

My question to my colleague is this. With the rules that are now in place following the recent Supreme Court decision, does she feel that the rules and guidelines, which the government brags about, are particularly onerous in that they set the bar too high for any future potential injection site in this country?

• (2155)

Ms. Mylène Freeman: Mr. Speaker, this bill puts far too much onus on the communities to prove the benefits of these sites when the court ruling was clear that the onus is on the government to prove that they are dangerous to the community. What is unfortunate is the government's ideological way of seeing the world. The number of overdose deaths has dropped by 35% in Vancouver since InSite opened. That is such a significant statistic. It goes against the ideology of the government, so clearly it will go to great lengths to subvert the courts on this.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Djaouida Sellah (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened closely to my colleague's speech, which was very eloquent and relevant. We know that 70% of intravenous drug users who use InSite are less likely to share needles, and reducing needle sharing has been listed as an international best practice to reduce HIV/AIDS, hepatitis B and hepatitis C. However, since we began debating this bill, we have noticed that our colleagues on the government benches have adopted the ostrich approach, meaning they simply stick their heads in the oil sands instead of thinking about the health and safety of Canadians.

Should they not be more realistic and come back down to earth?

[*English*]

Ms. Mylène Freeman: Mr. Speaker, we are talking about a government that is trying to appoint judges who are not qualified to the Supreme Court. I forgot to mention that throughout my speech.

It has been proven that InSite has brought down the risk of contracting and spreading blood-borne diseases, like HIV/AIDS, like

Hep C. These are all facts. It does not seem like the Conservatives care about facts. It does not mean anything to them.

The Conservatives are not governing for every Canadian; they are governing by ideology. The Conservatives are trying to score political points. While they are doing that, they are putting lives of people in danger. That is why I cannot support the bill.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as we can see, we are dealing with an extremely emotional subject tonight, and it is unfortunately too often misunderstood. I know that our colleagues across the way view safe injection sites as a threat or as a way to encourage drug use, but that is not the case.

In fact, all the experiences in Canada and abroad show that safe injection sites are a means of decreasing the number of deaths, disease transmission in communities, health care costs and drug use in public places. In fact, we have a very compelling example here in Canada. InSite has proven itself and is now accepted by the neighbourhood residents and those who work in the area.

Actually, 80% of the people who live and work in the area around InSite support the project. I do not know what the numbers were when the project was first proposed, but now that they coexist with InSite, 80% of the people—a large majority—approve InSite and consider it an asset to their community. InSite is no exception: we see the same numbers when we look at what is being done in Europe.

People who live in the neighbourhoods affected and who see the results are overwhelmingly in favour of this type of site. Nevertheless, tonight we are debating a bill whose objective is obvious and is essentially meant to prevent sites like InSite from operating or from being created, for purely ideological reasons. We hear all the time that these are ideological reasons, but they are also demagogic ones. They have nothing to do with what we can truly accomplish with such initiatives.

As I have said in the past when I spoke to this issue, I have a hard time understanding what the Conservatives want. Do they want more people sick, more cases of hepatitis and AIDS in our communities? Do they want more crime? What is it that they want and why do they want it?

In my riding of Laurier—Sainte-Marie we want fewer sick people, less crime and fewer problems. Of course there are problems with drug use in Laurier—Sainte-Marie. It is an urban riding in downtown Montreal. In this area we often see problems with drug use and it is where people with these types of problems congregate. However, there are all kinds of solutions that we could be looking to. I am talking about the work done by CACTUS Montréal, L'Anonyme, the CSSS and the EMRII team. These are all worthwhile initiatives and there is one thing missing that could complement the services they offer: a supervised injection site. A number of groups are interested in opening one in downtown Montreal and even in the greater Montreal area.

Government Orders

People want to do this because they want to prevent deaths, crime and disease. They want to make our communities safer. In fact, that is exactly what the Supreme Court had to say. Let me go over some facts. InSite's exemption expired in 2008. It had an exemption because the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act prohibits the drugs that people are injecting at this centre.

● (2200)

However, section 56 grants an exemption for medical, preventive, control and monitoring purposes, so that drug users do not have to give themselves an injection in what are often appalling conditions.

When InSite's exemption expired, the health minister declined the renewal request. As could be expected, the matter ended up in court. First, the B.C. Supreme Court ruled that InSite should be granted a new exemption.

Unsatisfied with this ruling, as we might expect, the Conservative government brought the matter to the B.C. Court of Appeal, which also ruled that InSite should remain open. The government still would not let the matter rest, and the case eventually came before the Supreme Court of Canada. The Supreme Court ruled that the minister's decision to turn down the exemption renewal, thus essentially forcing InSite to close its doors, violated the charter rights of its clients.

Here is what the Supreme Court had to say about the minister's decision:

It is arbitrary, undermining the very purposes of the CDSA, which include public health and safety.

The court also noted that:

The infringement at stake is serious; it threatens the health, indeed the lives, of the claimants and others like them. The grave consequences that might result from a lapse in the current constitutional exemption for InSite cannot be ignored.

That seems clear to me. No one can claim that is a partisan ruling, even though the Conservatives now seem to think that the Supreme Court is a partisan organization because it has the nerve to defend the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and oppose the government's unconstitutional decisions.

The Supreme Court found that the government had the duty to allow InSite and other supervised injection sites to provide these services that can save lives.

However, the Supreme Court did not just limit the analysis of the situation to clients of InSite. It also addressed the issue of public safety, as well it should. We know that this is an issue that concerns many people. In fact, public safety is often used as a reason to refuse to set up these sites.

Just like the experts, the court raised the point that it is yet to be proven that there is a negative impact on public safety. The court is clear: if a site can cause harm to a community, then it can be banned. We must maintain a balance. However, given the benefits that stem from these sites, one would really have to demonstrate that there would indeed be harm. There is no evidence to that effect. In fact, it is quite the opposite; there are public safety benefits.

Since my time is almost up, I will close by saying that I walked through Laurier—Sainte-Marie with representatives from various organizations. I picked up syringes in backyards and parks. Seeing

syringes is bad enough, but children and adults could get hurt. Preventing this activity from happening in a public place is a question of public safety. It is no surprise that 80% of people who live near InSite and similar sites in Europe think that this is a good thing that improved their quality of life.

● (2205)

[*English*]

Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, tonight, as I have been listening to all the speeches, I have heard two themes. The first theme is that the members opposite are saying there is no consultation. They referred to Bill C-36, which of course had over 30,000 consultations online, plus consultation with numerous groups from all aspects. Then tonight, on this particular bill, where we are talking about safe injection sites, the opposition parties do not agree that the communities, the municipalities, or the police forces should be consulted if a safe injection site were to grow up in the community around where they live.

The open consultation in the bill more than suggests that the communities should be consulted before an InSite should be set up in a certain community. Therefore, I would ask the member opposite what it is: consult with the community or not consult with the community? That is what this bill is all about. It is consultation.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Hélène Laverdière: Mr. Speaker, I cannot help myself: I find it a tad rich when I hear Conservatives talk about consulting Canadians when every time I travel around my riding—or elsewhere in Canada for that matter—to conduct consultations, particularly on issues for which I am the critic, Canadians tell me that this government does not talk to anybody, does not listen to anybody, is completely out of touch, and does not care what Canadians think.

This is so barefaced. Of course consultations are necessary. Nobody ever said that they were not. However, they set the bar so high—in terms of the quantity of consultations and the documentation required—that the whole thing becomes completely impracticable. Worse still, even if the entire community is 100% in favour of InSite centres, the minister still has the arbitrary authority to decide that an exemption will not be granted.

This is not a bill about consultation. This whole exercise is so brazen. The ultimate objective of the bill is to render it utterly impossible to set up centres such as InSite. Even if somebody managed to overcome all the obstacles put in their path, the minister could still arbitrarily decide that it is a no go.

Government Orders

• (2210)

[*English*]

**Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-
sor, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, just to follow up on the comments from my Conservative colleague, the Canadian Nurses Association is concerned about the meaning of broad community support when it comes to this bill. Obviously it has spoken extensively in favour, as it represents front-line practitioners. The Canadian Medical Association supports evidence-based harm reduction tools. The evidence is quite clear for many of these people. Again, I only bring up these groups because of the fact that they are front-line practitioners and they certainly know what it is they talk about.

Richard Elliott, executive director of the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network, talks about this as well. These groups are not just national in scope, but they certainly are local when it comes to the jobs they are charged with and the passion they bring.

My question for my hon. colleague goes back to the charter challenge, which is likely going to happen in this particular case. It is astonishing how the opinion put out by the Supreme Court earlier as to the infractions under section 7 of the charter have so blatantly not been addressed. What upcoming struggles does the government face in doing this?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Hélène Laverdière: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his excellent question, which brings me to a point I wanted to raise in my speech, had I had more time.

Using this bill to circumvent the Supreme Court decision is so clumsy and bald-faced that one could be forgiven for concluding that the Conservatives were deliberately trying to go back to court to once again be told “no”. Put simply, the bill in no way responds to the Supreme Court ruling.

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today in the House to speak to Bill C-2, which has been known under different names in the past. This is not the first time that we have heard speeches on this issue, but they are informative in many ways.

First, I must say that I am disappointed. When they talk about the northern gateway pipeline, for example, the Minister of Natural Resources and Conservative members say that we must rely on science and studies.

Actually, this bill is a very telling example of this. The InSite safe injection site is supported by the scientific and medical community as a whole. All of the studies have shown that this site has had a very positive impact on the community and on people who want to escape the hell of drug use. It is the most effective approach. In fact, it is even more effective than the hard line, a position that has been favoured by the various levels of government since Confederation. The facts are there and they have been mentioned many times by the members who spoke on this issue.

However, the government ignores these facts and takes a position that many speakers and experts who have studied this issue described as being dogmatic and ideological.

The InSite experiment, which is a success, has played out not only in Canada, but also in Europe and the United States. This experiment clearly shows that the best way to help people in distress who are trapped in a vicious cycle of drug use and addiction is to provide opportunities for them to get the support they need.

There is another paradox here. In the abortion rights debate, I am pro-choice. I have noticed that, in the speeches I have been hearing for a while, the members who consider themselves to be pro-life on the abortion issue—or what I would call anti-choice—are the same ones who oppose this bill or who support the bill but are against supervised injection sites.

The thing is, these sites save lives. Studies have made that clear. InSite itself has been a determining factor in reducing overdoses by about 35%. Many lives have been saved immediately following drug use. I am not even talking about lives saved by rehabilitation, by helping people get back on track and conquer their addiction.

The question the Conservatives keep asking is not about community consent. They ask us questions because there are not a lot of arguments on their side to justify this bill and all of their barriers to setting up supervised injection sites. The Conservatives' question would be much more relevant and appropriate if they had not already launched a campaign to convince communities that they do not want heroin in their backyards and to sow panic and fear.

This bill creates so many bureaucratic obstacles to setting up supervised injection sites that can help communities that any organization wanting to help its community in this way will find the process very discouraging from the start. The Conservatives talk about consultations, but what they really want to do is base their campaign on emotional arguments instead of facts, statistics, and the opinions of specialists and medical experts.

I will list the bureaucratic barriers this bill would create for the establishment of safe injection sites. Applicants must meet the following criteria in order for their application for an exemption to be considered: scientific evidence demonstrating a medical benefit; a letter from the provincial or territorial minister responsible for public health and safety, municipal councils, local chiefs of police and senior public health officials.

Government Orders

● (2215)

As well, they will have to provide information about infectious diseases and overdoses related to the use of illicit substances; a description of the drug treatment services available at that point; a description of the potential impact of the site on public safety; a description of all the procedures and measures, including measures that will be taken to minimize the diversion of controlled substances; relevant information, including trends, on loitering in a public place that may be related to drugs, drug trafficking and crime in the vicinity of the site at the time of the application; and a report of the consultations held with a broad range of community groups from the municipality, including copies of all written submissions received and a description of the steps that will be taken to address any relevant concerns.

Any group wishing to set up a safe injection site similar to InSite to help the community and those caught up in the spiral of drug use will have to provide all that information, and more.

Does this approach comply with the Supreme Court ruling and the instructions given in its 2011 ruling? Certainly not. That is why we are wondering whether the Conservatives are attempting once again to provoke another Supreme Court refusal. This will eventually pay off because their base likes confrontations with the Supreme Court.

The Conservatives believe that elected members make the laws, prepare legislation and should vote on it, and that the Supreme Court should not interfere. However, the court's role is to ensure that the rights and freedoms of Canadians are upheld, and it uses the charter to that end.

Since Bill C-2, which is supposedly a response to the Supreme Court ruling, is more like an attempt to skirt the spirit of the decision, this leads us to believe that it is a Conservative dogmatic and ideological process that seeks to please their electoral base and fund their election campaign, since the Conservatives have used this issue before to raise money.

The gun registry is no longer an issue. From an election perspective, that was their cash cow. Now, they need to find other issues. They dreamt up this issue so they could go out and raise funds from their base.

That is deplorable because it is an extremely sensitive and important issue for our communities. Our main critic on this matter is the member for Vancouver East and she is aware of this. I had the opportunity to work for an organization with offices in British Columbia, in the Gastown district, which is very close to Vancouver East.

I had the opportunity to go for a walk in the neighbourhood, which is not where InSite is located, but is in the community it serves. I can say that this initiative is doing a lot of good. This has been proven by the people who studied how the clinic operates and its results, and I also saw the good it is doing in the community because there is support.

Drug addicts who want to get rid of their addiction do not feel abandoned or ignored. They do not feel that people just walk by without paying attention to them. They see people reaching out to them. There is immediate help for those who are still addicted and

help for those who want to find a way out. It is the best way to connect with them.

For social and street workers who wish to help those who are at the end of their rope, it is much more difficult to go into the streets randomly than to provide information at a supervised site that is managed in the most medically competent way possible. It is much easier to do the work, and that is the reason why the whole medical and social work community is in favour of such initiatives.

Therefore, I have a hard time figuring out why the Conservatives persist in putting up more barriers to the use of this risk and harm reduction method. Unfortunately, I can see nothing but electoral, political and ideological reasons, and I am really sorry to see that.

● (2220)

Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the last two speeches with interest.

I have the following question for my colleague. The hon. member who delivered the previous speech and a number of NDP members this evening described InSite as a perfect and splendid model. How does my hon. colleague really see the situation?

Yes, there is this centre. However, we all know where the product that is distributed there, heroine, comes from. For the most part, it comes from Afghanistan, a country at war in part because of this illegal trafficking. The centre is also surrounded by a neighbourhood where prostitution is rampant, where crime is off the charts and where theft and drug and alcohol addiction are beyond the norm and sometimes extremely so compared to almost any other urban centre in Canada.

What does my hon. colleague truly think of that area and this situation? Is it really the perfect model?

● (2225)

Mr. Guy Caron: Mr. Speaker, I understand what my colleague is getting at. I talked about how I visited this neighbourhood and indeed, it is a poor neighbourhood where people need support and where some need a helping hand. The InSite centre is there to help them. What is the alternative? Should we close our eyes to these problems? Should we take a hard line and send them all to prison? I do not really understand the reasoning of the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration in that regard.

The issues of prostitution and the extremely low standard of living in that sector, because poverty and unemployment are permanent fixtures there, will not be solved by closing InSite. These problems were there long before. There are reasons that escape the Conservatives as to why poverty is prevalent in some neighbourhoods and why some people are drawn to drugs and the illusion of escaping daily reality. Those people descend into the hell of drug use and are caught in a spiral that takes them where they are now, where they need a helping hand.

Government Orders

InSite gives these people a supervised environment in which they can be reached much more easily than when they are on the street, where they are left to their own devices and feel vulnerable and isolated. In answer to the minister's question, I would like to know whether he thinks that a laissez-faire attitude should be the norm and that closing InSite will solve the problems that he raised.

[*English*]

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, my apologies to the minister. I think the question was posed to him, but it seems I am not giving him a chance to answer. I would like to address what he had to say, which was about striving to reach a perfect model. What he was alluding to was the fact that we can eliminate all incidents of drug abuse, and in fact, we need to focus on reducing the harm for drug users.

The study carried out by Dr. Julio Montaner found a 35% reduction in overdose deaths after this program opened in 2003. Vancouver Police support InSite and broad community consultation, with the support of the provincial government and local governments. The Canadian Nurses Association and the Canadian Medical Association are national organizations, I know. Still, local practitioners are telling us, by way of evidence, that harm reduction is taking place.

Perfection is not what we are looking for. We just need to strive for perfection.

Obviously, the rules that are being slapped on this lead us to believe that they have no interest in opening up more sites across this country that are based on reducing harm. True or false?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Caron: Mr. Speaker, to that, I say bravo. This is exactly the approach we must take.

In fact, the member provided a very accurate description of the approach used by safe injection sites. It is a matter of harm reduction. We have to deal with a hard line approach. According to this approach, the plight of these people is their own fault. It is their own fault if they are hooked on drugs, and they should be left to their own devices.

Sites like these will not only help to save lives by reducing the number of overdoses, but they will also help to reduce the rate of HIV and hepatitis infection. In that sense, I think that InSite and other sites in Europe and the United States have clearly shown that this approach is much more positive for the community than an approach where authorities simply ignore the facts while hoping for the best, and drug users have to make it on their own.

[*English*]

Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to rise this evening in this quiet chamber where only New Democrats seem to want to talk about how to make a better future for Canada and Canadians.

I am talking tonight about the misguided Bill C-2, an act to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act. We are at second reading in the legislative process, but it is certainly early enough to say an unqualified no to this proposed piece of legislation.

It comes to us, into this chamber, in response to the 2011 Supreme Court decision that concluded that the Minister of Health's refusal to grant an extension to InSite's exemption under that act was:

...arbitrary, undermining the very purposes of the [Controlled Drugs and Substances Act], which include public health and safety.

Here we have Bill C-2. It is typical legislation from the government in a number of respects. First and foremost, it reflects a government unable to deal with, and unwilling to acknowledge, the complexities of real life. Consequently, it is a government unfit to govern.

It is a government that provides ample evidence of this to us every day, as with Bill C-36, the government's response to the Supreme Court's Bedford ruling, and the monkeying about with judicial appointments in response to the Supreme Court's Nadon ruling. This is a government that does not take advice from, but responds with infantile defiance to, that body in our system of government that is the guardian of basic rights and freedoms for Canadians.

However, there are constraints on its conduct, thankfully. In this particular circumstance, the Supreme Court was clear on the constraints the government had to work within. It was section 7 of the charter in this case. To quote the court on this decision specifically:

...the Minister must exercise discretion within the constraints imposed by the law and the Charter, aiming to strike the appropriate balance between achieving public health and public safety. In accordance with the Charter, the Minister must consider whether denying an exemption would cause deprivations of life and security of the person that are not in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice.

There we have it. No clearer an articulation can be imagined, I do not think.

Now, in defiance of that clear statement, we have a bill that will require InSite to reapply for an exemption, but under the new proposed prejudicial criteria, criteria that make no effort to hide the anti-safe injection site animus.

Under this bill:

The Minister may only grant an exemption for a medical purpose under subsection (2) to allow certain activities to take place at a supervised consumption site in exceptional circumstances and after having considered the following principles:

- (a) illicit substances may have serious health effects;
- (b) adulterated controlled substances may pose health risks;
- (c) the risks of overdose are inherent to the use of certain illicit substances;

and so on and so on.

However, nowhere do we find, along with those principles, anything that even remotely resembles the findings of the Supreme Court in its decision, in which they said:

InSite has been proven to save lives with no discernible negative impact on the public safety and health objectives of Canada.

How does this bill make any effort on the mountain of evidence that has accumulated in support of injection sites, and InSite in particular, as mechanisms for finding a balance between public health and public safety?

Government Orders

The Supreme Court, in its decision, turned its mind to all the facts, to the studies that demonstrate the beneficial impacts of InSite and other like sites around the world. The evidence in favour of safe injection sites is overwhelming. Thirty peer-reviewed studies in deeply respected medical journals, the names of which we all know in this House, are dealing with InSite itself. The studies are supported by findings confirmed by research on the other 70 safe injection sites around the world.

What the studies show, and what the Supreme Court had before it for consideration, was the following: between 1987 and 1993, which is pre-InSite, the rate of overdose deaths in Vancouver increased from 16 to 200 per year. Since InSite opened, the rate of overdose deaths in East Vancouver has dropped by 35%.

● (2230)

One study showed that over a one-year period, there were 273 overdoses, but not a single life was lost. Over a one-year period, 2,171 referrals were made to InSite users to addiction counselling or other support services.

Finally, studies found that those who used InSite services at least once a week were 1.7 times more likely to enrol in a detox program than those who visited infrequently.

There are more studies, but let me point to one more important finding. There was a significant drop in the number of discarded syringes, injection-related litter, and people injecting on the streets one year after InSite opened.

I raise this issue not just because I know it is a particularly compelling finding for parents like me, but also because it stands in complete contradiction to the Conservatives' anti-InSite sloganeering, "Keep heroin out of our backyards". They call on Canadians to support the bill in order to keep "heroin out of our backyards" as though, by abolishing the safe injection site, they will also abolish heroin, as though it will just disappear somehow, as though it was not there before InSite, as though it would not return if we abolish InSite.

This is ideology in the most pejorative sense of the word, a belief that is held tight, not just in ignorance of the facts but in fact in contravention of all outstanding evidence, evidence that is before the Conservatives in plain site that one cannot miss, that the Supreme Court examined in the process of arriving at its decision. Even beyond that, it is the belief that is fundamentally illogical and irrational. This, being prepared to govern a country this way, is why the Conservatives are unfit to govern.

Governing is not some blue sky project where reality changes just because we wish it is different, where heroin disappears because we close safe injection sites, where addictions go away because we do not have harm reduction programs, or climate change does not happen because we silence scientists, empty the libraries and discard the research. It is not as though the charter disappears because the Conservatives can force legislation in contravention of it through this place.

This should properly be the role of government, not to be receiving applications as though we lived in a country without section 7 charter rights, as though the issue of harm reduction was not otherwise a matter of active government concern.

For these reasons, I stand against Bill C-2.

● (2235)

Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, has the NDP given up entirely on combatting the presence of illegal drugs?

Our forces spent 12 years in Afghanistan, fighting the Taliban, a terrorist group that was partly funded by an illegal drug trade. Yes, there has been progress made in Colombia, even in many parts of Afghanistan, against this trade. It does not have to be that way. It does not always have to be there. It would not be inevitable that illegal drugs like heroin result in addiction around the world on the scale they do. If human beings, with Canada central to the effort, would only come together we could do something about it.

Why does the member opposite want to give heroin free to people in downtown Vancouver? Why does he think it is acceptable to have prostitution, crime, poverty, all of the phenomena that the members on that side have admitted are there on this scale, with a drug addiction problem at the centre? Could we not do better? Could we not do better for the people of East Hastings, the way we do for almost every other community in our country?

Mr. Matthew Kellway: Mr. Speaker, I do not know if the minister checked the order paper this evening, but he seems to be addressing a different bill entirely. As well, the problem with his remarks is compounded by the fact that he does not understand what actually happens at the InSite safe injection facility.

What we are talking about, in fact, is doing better by Canadians. As I said, addiction does not disappear because we do not have a safe injection site. These drugs exist and people, unfortunately, become addicted to them.

As the Supreme Court stated in its ruling, "Insite has been proven to save lives with no discernable negative impact on the public safety and health objectives of Canada."

It continues, and this is important:

The effect of denying the services of Insite to the population it serves and the correlative increase in the risk of death and disease to injection drug users is grossly disproportionate to any benefit that Canada might derive from presenting a uniform stance on the possession of narcotics.

This site is about saving lives and reducing harm. Shame on the minister if he does not understand that is what we are here in the House to do.

● (2240)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. It being 10:41 p.m., pursuant to order made earlier today it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill now before the House.

The question is on the motion that this question be now put. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Government Orders

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to order made on Tuesday, May 27 the division stands deferred until Wednesday, June 18, at the expiry of the time provided for oral questions.

* * *

DRUG-FREE PRISONS ACT

The House resumed from November 25, 2013, consideration of the motion that Bill C-12, An Act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Ryan Cleary (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for the great riding of Sherbrooke. It is not as great as the great riding of St. John's South—Mount Pearl, but it is a close second.

I stand in support of Bill C-12, An Act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, also known as the drug-free prisons act. However, that title is incredibly misleading as the bill before us will not lead to drug-free federal prisons, I am sorry to say.

There is not a chance of drug-free prisons without two things: resources and rehabilitation. However, the word “rehabilitation” is not in the Conservative dictionary. It is not in the Conservative budget. It is not in the Conservative mindset. Good luck to the interpreters trying to explain the concept of rehabilitation through the Conservative earpieces. The interpreters will earn their money this evening. The bill would do nothing, if anything, to achieve drug-free prison status.

Bill C-12 would do is add a provision to the Corrections and Conditional Release Act whereby the Parole Board may use a positive urine test for drugs or refusal to take a urine test in making its decisions on parole eligibility. In other words, if one is a prison inmate and tests positive to a urine test for drugs, or refuses to take that urine test, the inmate may not get out on parole.

Now the rub with the bill before us is that the Parole Board of Canada already considers prison drug tests when making its decisions on the eligibility of offenders for parole. Therefore, there is nothing new in the bill. It would just give clear legal authority to an existing practice that the New Democratic Party of Canada supports. So the title, “drug-free prisons act”, is misleading, as I said earlier. There is nothing new here.

Now, oddly enough, when I was preparing for this speech and reading up on the drug-free prisons act, my thoughts kept turning to seals, for example, harp seals in the north Atlantic. I can see from the look on the members faces that they are puzzled. How can I make the leap from the drug-free prisons act to seals? I will explain.

Back in early March, I gave a speech right in this very spot in support of Bill C-555, an act respecting the marine mammal regulations. The bill would increase the distance that an unofficial

observer, a seal hunt protester, for example, must keep from sealers going about their business of killing seals. Right now, it is against the law for an unofficial observer to come within a half nautical mile of the hunt. Bill C-555 would increase that buffer zone from a half mile to a full mile. Here is the thing: the half mile that is there now is not enforced, so increasing the distance to a full nautical mile is lip service. It means absolutely nothing.

What I said in my speech was that Bill C-555 was a sham, a charade, an illusion, a nuisance bill to make it appear that the Conservative government was defending the seal hunt, to make it appear that the government was the champion of the seal hunt, when it so clearly was not. Under the Conservative government, we have seen the biggest collapse of seal markets in history.

Now, back to the drug-free prisons act. What is the correlation? What is the connection? It is that the drug-free prisons act is also a charade. This is déjà vu. Bill C-12 would have minimal impact on drugs in prison. The title is absolutely misleading.

The Conservative government is using legislation to create an opportunity to pander to its base, without presenting a real solution to the issue of drugs and gangs in our prisons. The Conservatives will tell their base that they passed the drug-free prisons act. Great—Conservative job done. Only the job is not done. It is more Conservative sham, charade, illusion and sleight of hand, just like the seal bill.

● (2245)

In fact, the government is making prisons less safe by cutting funding to prison programs such as substance abuse. The government is making prisons less safe by increasing the use of double-bunking that leads to overcrowding, which then leads to more violence. It is well known that a high percentage of inmates in our prisons who abuse drugs also suffer from mental illness. At the same time, the budget of Correctional Service of Canada for core funding such as substance abuse has been cut. Make sense out of that.

Government Orders

The Conservative government has closed treatment centres for inmates dealing with serious mental illness, but we would have a drug-free prisons act. Problem solved; it is all good. It is a charade. A flashy title does not solve the problem. Prisons should be renamed crime schools, crime schools that are endorsed by a Conservative government that fails to address double-bunking and gangs, a Conservative government that fails to support rehabilitation and drug abuse or mental illness. The Conservative crime school in my riding is known as Her Majesty's Penitentiary on the shores of Quidi Vidi Lake in east end St. John's. Newfoundland and Labrador is the only province in Canada without a federal prison. Her Majesty's Penitentiary is a provincial institution that takes in federal inmates.

The Conservatives have long promised to help build a new penitentiary, but we are not holding our breath. If we did, we would be long dead. Her Majesty's Penitentiary boasts a block that was built in 1849, 100 years before Confederation, before Canada joined Newfoundland and Labrador, a prison that is 165 years of age. Imprisoning inmates there has been compared to taking people from the 21st century and putting them back into the 19th century.

The latest story on Her Majesty's Penitentiary is from earlier today, just today. According to a CBC story, three inmates of Her Majesty's Penitentiary were charged after assaulting another inmate over the weekend with a broom handle. The victim was treated in hospital and released, thankfully. The story quotes the head of the union representing correctional officers as saying that the weekend assault was the fifth violent incident at that facility since last summer, and some of these incidents have included riots and hostage taking.

The leader of the union representing correctional officers at Her Majesty's Penitentiary says that it has become a more violent place, with prisoners involved with drug and gang activity inside prison walls. I repeat, drug and gang activity inside prison walls. Would the drug-free prisons act change that? There is not a chance, not at Her Majesty's Penitentiary and not at federal prisons around this country. Conservatives are not addressing drug addictions in prisons or mental illness, or gangs, or overcrowding, or double-bunking, or self-harm—suicides, in other words. Conservative legislation, such on as mandatory minimums, is leading to an increase in prison populations at the same time that prisons are closing, or prisons that should be replaced are not being replaced.

I like the advice of the federal Correctional Investigator. The advice is this. Prisoners should be assessed at intake into a prison so that addiction problems are identified and there can be better access to rehabilitation programs. What a novel concept: treating problems as they are assessed. According to the 2011-12 report of the Office of the Correctional Investigator, almost two-thirds of offenders were under the influence of a drug when they committed the offences that led to their imprisonment. Four out of five offenders arrive at a federal institution with a past history of substance abuse. In the meantime, Correctional Service of Canada devotes between 2% and 2.7% of its total operating budget on core correctional programs like substance abuse. Is that enough? No, it is not nearly enough. While New Democrats support the drug-free prisons act, is that enough? No, it is not enough.

If the Conservatives say different, and they will, it is just another charade, a sham, an illusion. It is the Conservative way.

●(2250)

Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, many people in my riding of Kingston and the Islands would like to see drug-free prisons or at least prisons with less drug use, because they work in the prisons.

The Prime Minister has said that what we do not measure we cannot manage. Is there any provision in this legislation to provide funds to measure the effect of the bill, to measure a baseline for drug use and the change in drug use in prisons? Is there any provision in the bill to measure its effect?

Mr. Ryan Cleary: Mr. Speaker, there is no money in the bill to measure the extent of the problem or to assess the extent of the problem. There is also no money in the bill to treat the problem.

Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, perhaps it is the late hour, but I thought I heard the member opposite say that he supported the bill. I do not know if that is correct or not. I would like the member to clarify that.

I heard a lot of criticism of the drug-free prisons bill. Would the member not agree that this is the first time this issue is being talked about and attacked and dealt with by doing something about the problem of drugs flowing freely in many prisons across this country?

Could the member please answer those two questions?

Mr. Ryan Cleary: Mr. Speaker, I have struggled with this a bit. Certain bills have come before the House that I have agreed with, like the seal bill that I mentioned in my speech, like the offshore liability bill that was brought forward in the House a few months ago, and like the drug-free prisons bill. I do agree with them, but they do not go nearly far enough.

This particular legislation would not do anything to address the problem with drugs in our prisons. It would certainly not make them drug free, as the misleading title of the bill indicates.

The bills do not go nearly far enough.

●(2255)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for St. John's South—Mount Pearl for his speech today. He did a great job summarizing the position of those of us on this side of the House concerning Bill C-12.

At the beginning of his speech, he said that the title of Bill C-12 is incredibly misleading. It mentions “drug free prisons”, but that is not at all what this bill is about. The Parole Board of Canada already has this discretionary power. The bill changes absolutely nothing.

Government Orders

There are three federal prisons in my riding. Correctional officers have been concerned since the Conservatives came to power. Double bunking is becoming increasingly common in our prisons, and that is a safety issue for workers, who are watching these federal prisons become schools for crime.

What does my colleague think about the Conservative attitude? The Conservatives pretend to be tackling a problem but then they forget about rehabilitation and do not bother to implement programs that our correctional system so desperately needs.

[*English*]

Mr. Ryan Cleary: Mr. Speaker, as I said in my speech, what the bill amounts to is the Conservative government pandering to its base. If drug tests are already being used to determine eligibility for parole, this would make it official. It is really absolutely nothing new. The member makes a great point.

The real problems that I pointed out in my speech, like addictions and mental illness, are not being addressed. Program funding is actually being cut. Until we see prisoners being rehabilitated, we are going to see a revolving door in penitentiaries right across this country.

The problems have to be addressed. This legislation would not address those problems.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we have changed topics, but this is a sensitive issue as well. I am pleased to speak to Bill C-12, An Act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, on behalf of the people of Sherbrooke. The short title of the bill is the Drug-Free Prisons Act. I am sure the members noticed how my tone changed as I read out the short title.

If only that were truly the case and this bill contained meaningful measures to tackle the issue of drugs in prisons. However, upon reading the bill, it is clear that the only part of the bill that talks about drug-free prisons is the title. Like my colleague from St. John's South—Mount Pearl said, it is just a flashy title that panders to a certain group of people that love the bill's title. In reality, this bill will do nothing to eliminate drugs in prisons.

I will explain in more detail why I say that there is no real substance behind that title.

We will support the bill at second reading. It is an interesting measure, even though it simply confirms that the Parole Board can take into account the fact that the offender tested positive in a urinalysis or refused to provide a urine sample for a drug test when deciding whether someone is eligible for parole. This is already a long-standing practice for parole assessments. The bill serves only to make it official by enshrining it in law.

I want to take a moment to say hello to everyone who works for Correctional Service of Canada in Sherbrooke. I had the chance to visit their wonderful King Street office about a year and half ago. I believe they manage all the parole cases in the Sherbrooke and Eastern Townships areas.

Passionate people work hard every day to ensure that our communities are safe and that people released from the federal correctional system are well equipped to resume their lives as honest,

law-abiding citizens. These people help former federal inmates. I would like to acknowledge them today and congratulate them for the work they do and will continue to do every day.

In one sense, Bill C-12 goes in the right direction even though it does not do a lot. To really address the drug problems in federal prisons, many things should have been done, including investing in the resources required for the rehabilitation of inmates. All this bill does is enshrine in law what is already being done in practice.

• (2300)

The NDP has always supported measures to make our prisons safer, whereas the Conservative government continues to ignore the recommendations of correctional staff and the Correctional Investigator of Canada, which would reduce violence, gang activity and drug use in our prisons.

Several measures were proposed and were discussed by experts and the people who work in this area every day. However, they were not included in the bill. Why? The Conservatives will have to tell us. I hope that one of my government colleagues will rise in the next few minutes to defend Bill C-12. As we know, the Conservatives have missed 145 speaking slots. That is their choice. They asked to extend sitting hours to midnight, but they do not seem interested in the debates in the House, except when they ask some questions now and again. Otherwise, parliamentary debates do not seem to be a priority for the government or for the members of the second opposition party.

I am pleased to participate in the debate, but I am sad that it is a one-sided one. The NDP is the only party participating. It is too bad that they claim to want to work, but all they do is listen. I hope that they will ask some questions. There seems to be a sudden interest from members on the other side of the House, so it will be interesting to debate the bill.

This bill addresses drug use in prison. The government is using this bill to kowtow to the wishes of its voter base, without proposing any real solutions to the drug and gang problems in prisons.

I said something similar in my speech on Bill C-2: the government is using Parliament for partisan purposes. This bill is called the Drug-Free Prisons Act, but it does nothing to eradicate drugs in prison, because all the bill does is confirm a practice already established by the Parole Board of Canada. It is easy for the Conservatives to write an email saying that they will eradicate drugs in prison and that people should support them by sending money. That is how the Conservatives work. That is what they did with Bill C-2 and that is what they are doing with Bill C-12. It is funny that they have not yet sent out an email. I subscribe to my adversaries' email lists to see what they have to say.

Government Orders

They sent out an email just a few hours after Bill C-2 came out. However, I do not remember seeing anything on Bill C-12. Perhaps the Conservatives will correct me and say that they use these emails for political purposes to raise funds. I hope that they will confirm that later on. It appears as though they are using the bills before Parliament to raise funds.

Unfortunately, as I mentioned in another speech, the legislator should not act in such a politically motivated way. The legislator should act responsibly instead of just reacting by way of a bill to the news of the day published in the newspapers. The legislator should conduct comprehensive studies before tackling such complex problems.

As I already said, several provisions could have been included in the bill, but they were not. It is a window dressing bill. On the other hand, let us hope that the work done in committee will allow us to improve the bill by adding some beneficial measures to it. It will be up to the members of the committee to do that. I am not a member of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, but I am sure that the Conservatives will act in good faith in order to improve the bill and try to turn it into something that will really eradicate drugs in prisons. It is certainly not the case with the present version of the bill, and I am not just making that up tonight.

• (2305)

Various experts in the field have said so. They recognize that, in the end, the title is nice, but the practice was in fact already in place. The bill just confirms it by making it a little clearer and more precise than in the current law.

It will be a pleasure for me to debate the issue with my colleagues across the way.

[*English*]

Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was interested in what the member opposite had to say because what I am hearing tonight over and over again from opposition is that there is no money behind the initiative to eradicate drugs from prisons. I was just wondering if the member realized that in actual fact the government has invested \$122 million over five years to increase drug interdiction efforts. Those efforts include drug detector dogs, security intelligence, and perimeter security within the prisons.

As well, is the member opposite aware that the Safe Streets and Communities Act introduced two-year mandatory minimum penalties for trafficking drugs in the penitentiary or on penitentiary grounds? That is something that is definitely a deterrent to those in the prisons.

Also, I wonder if the member is aware that prevention and treatment initiatives within the prisons are provided under the government too. Generally CSC spends between 2% and 5% of its total operating budget on core correctional programs, including substance abuse programs. I am wondering if the member opposite is aware of this.

• (2310)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault: Mr. Speaker, I would really like to thank my colleague for her excellent question.

I am indeed aware of the \$122 million that the Conservatives have spent since 2008 to acquire tools and technologies to prevent drugs from entering prisons. Unfortunately, none of that has reduced drug use in prisons. Yes, the government has spent \$122 million since 2008, but to no avail.

A 2012 study by the Department of Public Safety confirms that having drug-free prisons is not a realistic goal. Among the solutions it mentioned was the safer communities bill of two years ago. That is all well and good, but according to our numbers, there has been no reduction in drug use or trafficking in federal prisons. Unfortunately, these measures are not working.

I am looking forward to seeing numbers that might improve thanks to real measures that will help people struggling with drug addiction. I am eager to see other numbers, but it seems unlikely that this bill will change anything in prisons.

Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened to my colleague's speech. I listened very carefully, in fact. It would be inaccurate to suggest otherwise.

I would like to ask him if, instead of Bill C-12, it would have been more useful to provide Correctional Service of Canada with resources to measure how effective existing programs are at fighting drug use in our prisons.

[*English*]

It is something that was suggested, I believe, by the Correctional Investigator, something that is not sufficiently in place presently. I wonder if my colleague would care to comment.

I think that approach would have been more useful than the measures in the current bill. As my colleague mentioned in his speech, drug tests are currently in place now and are used by the system.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his question.

Indeed, a number of measures could have been taken to improve the situation in our prisons. For example, Correctional Service of Canada could develop an intake assessment process to accurately measure the level of drug use by inmates, and then provide adequate programs for offenders in need. That might be a solution.

Without treatment for drug use or education and reintegration programs that will help them when they are released, offenders unfortunately risk going back to a life of crime and, ultimately, preying on new victims.

The experts floated some interesting ideas. Unfortunately, none were retained in this bill. We hope that the work done in committee will result in improvements, and amendments, to the legislation. The onus will be on the committee to do this work a little further along in the process of consideration of this bill. Our party nevertheless intends to support the bill, with the hope that it will be made better.

Government Orders

[English]

**Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Wind-
sor, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues for the resounding
applause and the very warm welcome. That was very kind of them.
As the cow said to the farmer every morning, “Thanks for the warm
hand.”

I want to speak to Bill C-12, and I want to talk about this in the
context brought up earlier by my colleague from St. John's South—
Mount Pearl and talk about drugs in prisons.

The structure of the drug-free prisons act dictates that this is, as
the expression goes, on target but wide of the mark. It is on target in
the sense that it could potentially clean up a situation we have when
it comes to people getting out of the system. However, when it
comes to freeing the prisons of drugs, it is wide of the mark.

I believe that in this case, and on this particular bill, it is a little
too narrow in scope to deal with a much broader issue, which is
drugs in prisons, and not just federal prisons but provincial ones as
well. The proliferation of drugs in prisons still exists, as studies have
shown.

This particular bill, as I mentioned, is fairly narrow. I want to
speak to the contents of the bill, but first I want to say that with a title
such as this, it is a little disappointing that we did not have broader
consultation and the broader discussion that would have followed if
we had started talking about illicit drugs penetrating our prison
system across this country, in particular in the federal prisons.

The summary of Bill C-12 states:

This enactment amends the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act* to require
the Parole Board of Canada (or a provincial parole board, if applicable) to cancel
parole granted to an offender if, before the offender's release, the offender tests
positive in a urinalysis, or fails or refuses to provide a urine sample, and the Board
considers that the criteria for granting parole are no longer met. It also amends that
Act to clarify that any conditions set by a releasing authority on an offender's parole,
statutory release or unescorted temporary absence may include conditions regarding
the offender's use of drugs or alcohol, including in cases when that use has been
identified as a risk factor in the offender's criminal behaviour. It is about transitioning
from within prison to outside and checking to see if that person is abusing particular
drugs when in the system.

The title of the bill, as I mentioned earlier, is the unfortunate part,
because we could have had the opportunity to partake in a much
broader discussion to hopefully achieve some grander solutions
brought forward by people who have been involved in the prison
system: former prisoners, counsellors, therapists, prison guards of
course, wardens, and officials with Correctional Service of Canada.
The title of the bill focuses very prescriptively on one part and one
area, which I will talk about through the clauses in just a few
moments.

In his 2011-12 annual report, the Correctional Investigator made
the following observation with respect to the prevalence of drugs
within our federal prisons. Here is what he had to say:

A "zerotolerance" stance to drugs in prison, while perhaps serving as an effective
deterrent posted at the entry point of a penitentiary, simply does not accord with the
facts of crime and addiction in Canada or elsewhere in the world.

Bill C-12 targets individual offenders by imposing requirements
for the provision of urinalysis tests subsequent to having obtained
parole, statutory release, or unescorted temporary absences. The
legislation does not make any reference to or address the problem of

offenders with drug and alcohol addiction problems or in any
manner address the access to and prevalence of drugs within the
federal institutions, which I mentioned earlier.

Currently under the act, where staff or authorities have grounds to
suspect a violation by an offender with respect to drug use on parole,
work release, temporary absence, or statutory release, they can order
a urinalysis test. These tests are conducted to ensure that the
conditions upon which release was granted are respected and
adhered to.

● (2315)

Within institutions such tests can be ordered on a random and
collective basis, unless individuals are, again, suspected on reason-
able grounds of the use of illegal substances.

Bill C-12 does little to contribute to what the Office of the
Correctional Investigator called for in his most recent annual report.
He said, “I note that a comprehensive and integrated drug strategy
should include a balance of measures—prevention, treatment, harm
reduction and interdiction.”

There we find the crux of the issue, the harm reduction that we
talked about in the last debate regarding injection sites. We go back
to this aspect again because harm reduction is a policy that we
should adhere to simply for that reason: the health of individuals
who find themselves addicted to drugs and who in many cases are
unable to find the help to wean themselves from a particular abuse.

The prison system does not address this issue through legislation.
It addresses it through several reports, but it turns out that we are not
addressing it correctly through legislation, which is the outcome we
would like to achieve.

Bill C-12 has taken an exclusively punitive course of action,
targeting individuals and offenders who have been granted parole
and those who have been granted statutory release or unescorted
temporary absences. They are transitioning out from the prison. The
tests take place, and if the results are positive, then of course we have
an issue.

The requirement is that prior to release, the offender who has been
approved for release, in the case of parole, must provide that urine
sample. There is nothing in the legislation related to what appears to
be the wider systemic problem. We have problems across many
provinces in many of these prisons, as demonstrated by some of the
examples cited earlier by my colleague from St. John's South—
Mount Pearl regarding the prison in St. John's.

Government Orders

Bill C-12 is a measure that at best can be said to address the symptoms of a serious correctional service problem without contributing anything of substance to resolving that problem, the overall problem that I talked about. We may be in agreement as to the specific transition of a person who has been released from prison, let us say in the case of parole. The testing involved in that is certainly worth discussing, which is why I personally would favour sending this bill to committee to find out about that. However, to call this part of a larger discussion about drugs in prison is really deceiving, because we are not addressing how to clean up prisons and get people off drugs through measures such as treatment or harm reduction in addition to these greater policing efforts.

The legislation will target those who have been granted parole or statutory release. According to the 2011-12 annual report, the Correctional Investigator says that almost two-thirds of the current prison population of approximately 15,000 federal offenders, meaning an estimated 10,000 offenders, were under the influence of alcohol or other intoxicants when they committed the offence that led to their incarceration. That is from the very beginning of committing the crime, so we can see that for many of these offenders, the base of the problem started before entering prison.

What is more disturbing is that a very high percentage of the offender population that abuses drugs is also concurrently struggling with mental illness. That is another factor for people seeking treatment that we have to address within our prison system. Again I return to the term "harm reduction", a term that we pay less attention to these days. Again I refer to the model of harm reduction from 2003, the safe injection site in Vancouver that was mentioned in a prior debate.

The issue of drug prevalence and use within federal institutions is a complex problem. The Correctional Investigator has acknowledged that "the problem of intoxicants and contraband substances in prison is difficult to measure and monitor." That too deserves a conversation. It deserves debate and witness testimony. Probably only the tangents and margins would be addressed in witness testimony, but this aspect really requires a broader conversation. Unfortunately, the bill is far too restrictive and prescriptive in what it wants to do.

• (2320)

In August 2008, the Minister of Public Safety announced a five-year, \$120-million investment in Correctional Service of Canada's anti-drug strategy. The investment contained the following four components: expansion of drug-detector dog teams, hiring of new security intelligence officers, new detection equipment, and more stringent search standards. The results of these measures, according to the Correctional Investigator, appear mixed and somewhat distorted.

For example, while there has been an increase in the amount of drugs seized, the scope of the problem is difficult to determine. With respect to the results of the random urine tests administered, there has been, on the basis of these results, a decline within institutions. However, it goes on to say that:

after correcting for the removal of prescription drugs, the rate of positive random urinalysis has remained relatively unchanged over the past decade despite increased interdiction efforts.

Don Head, Commissioner of Correctional Service of Canada, confirmed this conclusion in testimony before the public safety committee in December 1, 2011.

Correctional Service of Canada's current anti-drug strategy, according to the Correctional Investigator, lacks three key elements.

First is an integrated link between interdiction and prevention, treatment, and harm reduction. Second is a comprehensive public reporting mechanism. Third is a well-defined evaluation, review, and performance plan to measure the effectiveness of these investments to be made, ways to curtail to drug use within prisons. Technology plays a large role in that, but what needs to play a much larger role, of course, would be the aspect of prevention, treatment, and harm reduction.

What might have been of value prior to Bill C-12 is that these elements would have been addressed by CSC to determine the efficacy of the programs currently in place and on which Bill C-12 is trying to build. Again, it only builds on a very small part of some of the recommendations that were put forward in many reports.

Given the reality of the prison population with respect to a history of substance abuse prior to entering correction facilities, the scale of which is massive, according to the Commissioner of Corrections, and given the fact that the CSC's substance abuse programming has been declining, the reality is that many of those eligible for parole, temporary release, or statutory release may well be ill-equipped to achieve a substance-free test result, the result being little or no treatment and a definite longer period of incarceration.

Without treatment and harm reduction, this could present a problem when it comes to the administration of Bill C-12 and what Bill C-12 hopes to do. This is something to discuss in committee, and I certainly look forward to that.

With respect to the provisions of the bill, and these are the specific provisions of the bill, let us take a look at clause 2. It is a new provision, restriction requiring the provision of a urinalysis, which would be imposed prior to release but after an offender has been granted parole.

Even though the PBC has satisfied itself that an offender meets all the criteria it has imposed and required, the offender would have to meet an additional requirement outside the normal parole process.

Also, the stipulation would affect all those seeking parole regardless of any cause. No offender being granted parole need be informed of any justification, nor can any offender granted parole refuse.

It appears cynical, true, but by imposing this requirement after parole has been granted, the government appears to have changed sections 56 and 57 of the act, which require officials to provide to the offender the basis upon which that demand for a test is based.

Interestingly, less than 23% of full paroles sought are granted. *Corrections and Conditional Release Statistical Overview 2012* cites that as a statistic. Again, that is 23% of full paroles sought are granted.

Clause 3 would amend section 124. It is a new paragraph after 124 (3). If the PBC is informed on matters contained in Clause 2 with respect to a positive urine test or refusal of the offender to provide a urine sample, the board is empowered to refuse to grant parole on that basis.

Not only is it the positive test, but it is also the right to refuse that test.

● (2325)

Clause 4 would amend subsection 133(3) of the act, which currently states:

The releasing authority may impose any conditions on the parole, statutory release or unescorted temporary absence of an offender that it considers reasonable and necessary in order to protect society and to facilitate the successful reintegration into society of the offender.

The subsection would be amended to the following:

The releasing authority may impose any conditions on the parole, statutory release or unescorted temporary absence of an offender that it considers reasonable and necessary in order to protect society and to facilitate the offender's successful reintegration into society. For greater certainty, the conditions may include any condition regarding the offender's use of drugs or alcohol, including in cases when that use has been identified as a risk factor in the offender's criminal behaviour.

It would appear on a literal reading that the addition contained in clause 4 is redundant to the existing section. It would add rhetorical flourish to the powers already granted to releasing authorities to any condition deemed necessary. There seems to be redundancy here in this bill, which is one of the other things that we need to discuss.

We have seen this on many occasions in bills in the past, where the government is out there and in an attempt to look and act tough on crime, it puts forward penalty measures from the authorities in legislation that really already existed. It is trying to impose what is seemingly a new way of getting tough on crime but, in fact, already existed in many cases.

Clause 5 would amend subsection 156(1) of the act by adding to the existing section, mandating that the Governor in Council or cabinet make regulations applicable to this part requiring regulations, including:

...defining terms that are to be defined in the regulations for the purposes of this Part...

Let us talk about the key stakeholders. The Office of the Correctional Investigator has been highly skeptical about this kind of initiative, which would rest on punitive initiatives without setting those efforts within the context of increased treatment efforts.

If there is one thing that I would like to bring up in this debate, and I know that it has been brought up before, it is the issue of treatment and harm reduction within an environment where the proliferation of drugs is rampant. Yes, we agree that there should be technical measures and technological aspects of looking at prisons and guarding them so that the entrance of drugs into these institutions is cut down. There is no doubt about that.

Government Orders

However, let us be honest with ourselves. There is a reason why they are going in. That is because of the addictions of the inmates. People who are addicted are in there for the wrong reasons. They are in there for committing crimes, and they continue to commit crimes in this case. At the same time, every element of crime requires a treatment and requires harm reduction when necessary in order to curb that type of behaviour in the future.

This is not a way of saying, in many cases, that we want to go easy on criminals. We do not want that. However, if we want to solve the problem of the crime itself, we have to address the whole issue and not just a part of it. If we want to pretend to be tough on crime and only that, then we are missing the point. The point is that people who are victims of crime do need treatment and justice. The people who commit these crimes do need to be punished but, at the same time, treatment must be available to curb this behaviour in the future.

All modern democracies, and any democracy that puts itself centre stage of the right things to do in justice and justice legislation, will tell us that it must go hand in hand with treatment and harm reduction. What this bill would not do is address that in a more holistic way. That is what I would call, as other people have called it, an opportunity missed.

At the same time, for the merits of this particular bill and the transition from a prisoner to outside through, for example, paroles or temporary absences, we should address testing them for drugs upon release.

● (2330)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Djaouida Sellah (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened closely to my Liberal colleague's remarks.

We all know full well that this bill has a misleading title, and that it will do nothing, in reality, to truly eradicate drugs from our federal prisons. Moreover, Correctional Service of Canada said that this was a pipe dream, and that what the Conservatives are seeking to do is unrealistic. I know that when the Liberals were in power, not much was achieved either.

Now, I would like to ask my colleague a sincere question, since we in the NDP believe in a correctional system that provides effective rehabilitation programs, continuing education and drug treatment programs, as well as support for programs that promote the reintegration of inmates and ultimately help make our communities safer.

Does my colleague agree with the NDP's point of view when it comes to public safety, reducing recidivism rates and preventing new crimes from being committed?

● (2335)

[*English*]

Mr. Scott Simms: Mr. Speaker, not just the hon. member's party, but I think many parties in this country would agree. I would not single out any party, but the ideology is such that we have to have both coming together, there is no doubt, but I think what we are doing here is living up to a standard that has been set in many jurisdictions.

Government Orders

As a matter of fact, in her question she talked about the treatment facilities and how we need to do this and need to go hand in hand with all these institutions. Of several jurisdictions in the United States that pursued tougher penalties, many of them would now agree that tougher penalties were one thing, but because they put less importance on the treatment, it did not serve in their favour.

Many of the most right-wing ideologues even agree with that as well. I do not mean that as a disparaging remark against my colleagues across the way; I meant other right-wing ideologues.

The point is that the evidence is clearly there among all the practitioners. People who deal with prisoners on a daily basis and deal with drug addictions agree on what she pointed out about the treatment that needs to take place, not only on the outside but on the inside of these institutions and before they even get to prisons, because they are a high number. There are 15,000 inmates, and 10,000 of them, according to a report here, may have been exposed to that type of drug use.

Mr. Frank Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor for his enlightening remarks.

We have learned over the last number of years that the government likes to characterize anyone who does not agree with its crime legislation as being soft on crime while it is tough on crime.

We have learned from our American friends and our British friends that in fact the dichotomy is not tough or soft on crime; it is smart or dumb on crime. Right now the Conservatives are being dumb on crime. The remarks and the suggestions by the opposition and the third party Liberals are being smart on crime.

I am wondering if my friend might talk to us a bit about why they are being dumb, in this legislation, as opposed to being smart, having had the opportunity to be so.

Mr. Scott Simms: Mr. Speaker, I am always reticent to diminish the intellectual capacity of others but, nonetheless, this gives me a golden opportunity to do just that.

What the Conservatives are doing, in the case of much of the legislation they put forward, is, instead of chasing the solution, they are chasing a headline. Whenever it comes to legislation, instead of starting a conversation, the sole attempt is to start an argument. That is unfortunate because they see the end in sight without testing the way to get there, in other words, to find the people who are experts.

That is another component I did not mention enough in my speech. I am glad the member for Guelph was smart enough to realize I needed to make that point.

The point is that the evidence is there and the government chooses to ignore it because there is so much evidence compiled that is not contained within legislation. Time and time again, evidence-based solutions within legislation have suffered greatly over the past little while.

There is nothing wrong with reading the data that is put in front of us. There is nothing wrong with interpreting it. We pay millions of dollars for people to interpret the data that we receive in order to make this into decent legislation, yet the government chooses not to do that in many cases.

● (2340)

Mr. Ryan Cleary (St. John's South—Mount Pearl, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member mentioned Her Majesty's Penitentiary, the provincial prison in Newfoundland and Labrador. Newfoundland and Labrador does not have a federal prison. It has a provincial medium security prison. It is 165 years old. It needs to be replaced. There are problems when it comes to drug abuse, riots and mental illness. The rehabilitation that is needed at Her Majesty's Penitentiary is not happening.

What will this so-called drug-free prisons act, although it will not make prisons drug free, do to alleviate problems at prisons such as Her Majesty's Penitentiary and federal prisons across the country?

Mr. Scott Simms: Mr. Speaker, we could probably spend a whole day discussing the problems with that penitentiary, a provincial one, lacking a federal one in Newfoundland and Labrador, which in itself is a contentious issue that I will not get into it.

We missed that golden opportunity to talk about how this would be dealt with over the next little while. We find ourselves in a situation where we have had a fairly good debate here. We have talked about how the statistics show a proliferation of drugs in the prison system across the country and how we can curtail that.

I only cited one report, which was the correctional report. It states that the idea of treatment has been sorely overlooked, to the point where we all need to get on board. This is just in this legislature. Imagine the evidence that could be brought forward if we had public hearings based upon the amount of drugs in the system and profiled the people currently in prison who are addicted.

It is one thing to talk about the entrance of illicit drugs into the system but, again, they are there because the demand remains fairly high.

We can punish them and give them an extra add-on to their sentence, but that will not stop this. What will stop this is the right treatment, which is happening in jurisdictions such as in the southern United States.

[Translation]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened to what my colleague had to say a moment ago regarding the InSite project.

When reading Bill C-12—which seeks to address the drug problem in our prisons—I cannot help but compare it to Bill C-2, which was the subject of discussion just a few short hours ago.

I would like to ask my honourable colleague from the third party what he thinks about the war that the Conservatives are currently waging against all things drug-related. Does he think that their approach is working, or that they are way off track at this point?

[English]

Mr. Scott Simms: Mr. Speaker, first, I want to thank my colleagues for the sudden interest in what I was talking about. It is very kind of them.

Government Orders

I want to talk about the member's question, which pertains to the war on drugs. There is a way to do it and a dumb way to do it, which is to ignore the treatment part of it and just go after the traffickers and the people who buy the drugs. Yes, the penalties have to be stiff to act as a deterrent, and there is nothing wrong with that, but the treatment part of it is completely ignored.

The member brought up Bill C-2 earlier. Evidence proves that what happens at an injection site actually works. It is improving the situation. It is not perfect, but it certainly is working. The reduction of 35% in drug abuse in that area shows that treatment for harm reduction has positive effects, yet it seems we overlook this because we want to go after that headline to be tough on crime, which is unfortunate.

• (2345)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleagues, the House leader of the official opposition and the Minister of Foreign Affairs. I am very appreciative of the fact that we are discussing Bill C-12 today. I appreciate how enthusiastic the members are about my speech, at 11:45 p.m.

To begin, I would like to say that I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Vaudreuil-Soulanges. I am sure that his speech will be excellent.

The Deputy Speaker: Order. From now on the speeches will be 10 minutes, and the question and comment period will be five minutes.

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre: Mr. Speaker, I hope that the hon. member for Vaudreuil-Soulanges will understand and that he will be able to give his excellent speech after mine, whenever he sees fit.

It is truly an honour for me, as the official opposition's deputy public safety critic, to speak to Bill C-12, and there are many reasons for that.

To begin, I would like to mention that members on this side of the House will be supporting Bill C-12 at second reading. I think it will be interesting to see what happens in committee. I am looking forward to inviting various witnesses to come and discuss the different provisions included in Bill C-12.

We can summarize this bill quite easily. It is designed to add a provision to the Corrections and Conditional Release Act confirming that, when deciding whether someone is eligible for parole, the Parole Board may take into account the fact that the offender tested positive in a urinalysis or refused to provide a urine sample for a drug test. The Parole Board already uses this practice, which we support.

The board already takes into account the results of drug screening tests when it holds hearings and determines the inmates' eligibility for parole. That is why I think a title like "drug-free prisons act" is a little too much. Indeed, nothing in Bill C-12 will make prisons drug-free because the provisions for that are simply not there.

Correctional Service of Canada has serious problems. In my riding, Alfred-Pellan, there were until very recently three federal correctional facilities on the property of Saint-Vincent-de-Paul.

There was Leclerc Institution—which was closed as a result of what I thought was a very unfair decision by the Conservative government—and we still have Montée Saint-François Institution and the Federal Training Centre.

Since my election, I often visit the correctional facilities in my riding in order to understand the reality of the correctional system, as well as what the staff has to go through every day in that system. I can tell you that their work is not easy.

I invite my colleagues in the House to visit the federal correctional facilities in or near their ridings to see and understand the reality of our correctional workers.

Right now, there is a lot going on. They are very worried about the decisions made by the Conservatives regarding the correctional system. I will mention a few. First, double-bunking in our prisons is a glaring problem. It is difficult for correctional officers to do their job properly. Many do not have the means to their job properly. It is harder for them to ensure activities within our institutions are properly carried, and this is very unfortunate. Their health and safety are compromised because of these decisions. We see more and more double-bunking, and even triple-bunking, which is very unfortunate. Correctional staff also condemn this situation.

They also condemn another measure that goes directly against Bill C-12, namely the cuts to Correctional Service Canada. Over the past two years, the budget has been reduced by 10%. This affects many programs within Correctional Service of Canada. That is also being condemned by the Union of Canadian Correctional Officers, because the officers see the inmates' reality daily in these facilities. They see the deteriorating quality of life, and they see that these individuals will be reintegrated into society without having the necessary tools to avoid reoffending. This shows the importance of our programs.

Many programs deal with the detoxification of inmates. Let us not forget that two thirds of people who commit a crime are under the influence of alcohol or drugs. It is estimated that four out of five inmates in our prisons have substance abuse problems. This is a very serious problem that needs to be addressed.

I heard Conservative members ask questions about the \$122 million investment in technology to detect drugs inside our prisons.

• (2350)

Unfortunately, this investment did not work. It is very sad. It is also sad to see the other side tell us there should be zero drugs in our prisons. In a perfect world, it would be great if we did not have any drugs in prisons, and if everyone was clean.

Government Orders

However, it is impossible and I am not the only saying that. Correctional officer Howard Sapers also says it. So does the John Howard Society. Moreover, the Union of Canadian Correctional Officers, which works really hard, also tells us it is impossible and we must implement measures to tackle this issue.

I reiterate my support to the hard-working personnel in prisons. We on this side can say that we support them every day in their work. Like them, we want to propose real solutions, so that inmates do not return to society without having had access to rehabilitation and anti-drug programs.

In our prisons, addiction is also related to mental health, unfortunately. It is sad to say, but we have to face reality. The government has not only made cuts to addictions programs, but also to programs that address mental health problems. Both are closely linked. We must pay attention to that. In recent months, the case of Ashley Smith has resurfaced and shown that people working in our prisons are not equipped to deal with serious problems such as mental health problems.

I hope we can have a productive discussion in committee about the best solution for dealing with addiction problems full force. My colleague from Sherbrooke mentioned this in his speech when we began talking about this. It is a question of doing intake assessments, as correctional investigator Howard Sapers is calling for, and ensuring that inmates have access to all the necessary programs for overcoming their drug or alcohol problems.

Keeping our communities safe is important to all members in the House, as is reducing recidivism rates as much as possible and giving people the tools they need to reintegrate into society. Let us not bury our heads in the sand and suggest that we can round all these people up somewhere, lock the door and throw away the key. They will eventually be released. If we want them to become good citizens and if we want fewer victims in Canada, we must give people the right tools.

The numbers back me up. When people have the tools they need and reintegration works, recidivism rates drop. We need to ensure that rehabilitation is done properly, and we need to come up with some real solutions. We are sick and tired of hearing that mandatory minimums will miraculously turn everything around. Mandatory minimum sentences have nothing to do with the issue at hand.

In closing, I would like to say that we intend to support the bill. I hope we will have the opportunity to discuss it further and make some real changes to it to tackle the issue of drug use in our prisons. I would be happy to keep discussing the issue if anyone has any questions.

● (2355)

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the member a question about something that is of interest to me.

It is odd because there is a provincial prison in my riding and it is the Orsainville prison that is in the news these days. When I was a young girl, my parents and our neighbours called it “the sieve”. Unfortunately, not much has changed.

We know that a lot of drug traffickers are sent to prison. They end up in prison. When it comes to drugs, there is no prison system that almost totally prevents contact with the outside world. A lot of drugs find their way into prison.

Can my colleague talk more about the fact that the Conservatives are increasing prison time, depriving individuals of their rights and increasing minimum sentences when we know that this does not address any of the problems?

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles goes to the heart of the problem. The Conservatives would have us believe they are tough on crime, but their war on drugs is not working at all.

In recent weeks, my colleague witnessed the unrest that followed the events at Orsainville. This is another illustration of the Conservatives' laissez-faire attitude. They should have acted a long time ago on the issue of flying zones above provincial institutions. This is unfortunate.

As for federal prisons, several correctional officers told me that since the new provisions were passed, our prisons are increasingly overcrowded, double-bunking is frequent, and budgets and personnel have been cut. This is turning our prisons into schools for crime.

It is unacceptable. It complicates the rehabilitation of inmates, at a time when we seek to make our communities safer.

[*English*]

Mr. Jamie Nicholls (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to share with my colleague and Conservative members the comments of Michael Parkinson, the community engagement coordinator for the Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council. I mentioned in an earlier debate the task force that it came up with.

Parkinson starts by saying that, “The United Nations estimates that substance abuse costs society about \$700 billion globally every year.” He goes on to say that, “...incarceration...can't fully deal with the issue of substance related crime.” He elaborates by saying that as a government, “It costs a minimum of \$80,000 to incarcerate someone in Canada.” He goes on to ask, “...are they likely to get any treatment for the addiction? Not likely.” He goes on to say that, “...there are no prison systems internationally that have eradicated drugs internally.”

This task force looked at the actual prison systems.

He then comments about the criminals, “And then they're popped back out into society and the root cause of the criminal behaviour has yet to be addressed.”

I would like the Conservatives on this side, many of whom represent the Waterloo region, to listen and collaborate with the stakeholders in their regions who are telling them their approach is wrong.

We are going to support this legislation at second reading but we believe that the scope of it is very narrow. It is trying to address a wicked problem with insufficient solutions.

• (2400)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre: Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Vaudreuil—Soulanges made a very relevant comment, especially since once you read Bill C-12 you can see that it has nothing to do with its title, which would have us believe that it is making our prisons drug free. No prisoner or would-be criminal is going to refrain from using drugs for fear of losing their freedom. That is not how it works.

The government is sticking its head in the sand and is giving us this dog and pony show with something that already exists.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[*English*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am here tonight regarding a question I asked on June 3. On that day, I asked about traffic jams in Toronto and the fact that the C.D. Howe Institute says that they cost the economy \$11 billion a year. I asked why the government is investing so little in sustainable transportation infrastructure right now, in fact in infrastructure in general right now.

The minister answered in an over-simplified way, if I could just be kind and gentle. He said simply, “Because you are wrong.” That was all he said. Really. We can see from the video of those proceedings how entertaining the answer was to Conservative MPs. Therefore, the first thing I would like to say is that I hope the government takes the opportunity during these adjournment proceedings to explain how the minister could even answer a question in front of Canadians that way.

Let me talk now about infrastructure. Infrastructure spending is being held back. We know that, without even looking at the numbers, from the experience of Canadian municipalities that are looking to access federal money to work on infrastructure projects that are ready to go. My community of Kingston and the Islands has infrastructure projects that are ready to go. That is because of program delays and low levels of funding from the new Building Canada plan in the first few years, funding that has been pushed back to make sure that there is a balanced budget for the Conservative Party's 2015 election campaign.

David Dodge, former governor of the Bank of Canada, says that now is the time to invest in infrastructure, because in many parts of Canada, such as Ontario, there is plentiful labour, extra industrial capacity, and most importantly, right now interest rates are very low.

Let us look at how much it costs Canada to borrow money. According to the Bank of Canada, the long-term interest rate for Canadian government bonds in June 1984 was 14%. That was the yield on the bonds. In 1994, it went down to 9%. In 2004, it went down to 5%. This year, Canada sold 50-year bonds for a 2.86%

Adjournment Proceedings

yield. That is under 3%. Canada can borrow money for 50 years and pay an interest rate under 3%. What does that mean?

In my original question of the minister, I said that the C.D. Howe Institute said that the economic cost of traffic congestion was \$11 billion a year. Let us just take \$1 billion a year, one-tenth of that. If we could borrow at an interest rate of 2.86%, we could service the interest payments on \$35 billion of infrastructure investment. That is two times the new Building Canada fund, which is only \$14 billion.

To conclude, just one-tenth of the annual cost of traffic congestion in Toronto could cover the interest payments needed to pay for two of this government's new Building Canada plans. That is how unambitious the government is.

Mr. Bob Dechert (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend mentioned traffic congestion in Toronto. I am from the Toronto area and I certainly understand the problem. It is probably the number one problem facing the community. Every day we all spend far too much time sitting in traffic. One of the things it does is create a lot of air pollution. There is a contribution to climate change, of course, and I would like to tell my friend what our government is doing about climate change.

Internationally, Canada is a constructive participant in the United Nations negotiations toward a fair and effective post-2020 climate change agreement. Canada is also playing a leadership role on a number of collaborative international climate change initiatives outside of the United Nations. For instance, our government is working with international partners through our chairmanship of the Arctic Council and the Climate and Clean Air Coalition to address short-lived climate pollutants, such as black carbon and methane.

Domestically, our government is implementing a sector-by-sector regulatory approach to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while maintaining economic competitiveness. We have started with the electricity and transportation sectors, two of the largest emitting sectors of the Canadian economy.

In the electricity generating sector, Canada already has one of the cleanest systems in the world, with 77% of our electricity supply emitting no greenhouse gases. In 2012, we took steps to make it even cleaner. Our government introduced tough new regulatory performance standards for coal-fired electricity generation that make Canada the first major coal user to ban construction of traditional coal-fired electricity generation units. These regulations will help contribute to reductions of 46% in this sector over 2005 levels by 2030.

Adjournment Proceedings

In the transportation sector, our government collaborated with the United States to develop standards for regulating greenhouse gases produced by passenger automobiles and light trucks. We have done the same for heavy-duty vehicles. As a result of the Government of Canada's actions, it is projected that by 2025, light-duty vehicles will consume up to 50% less fuel and produce about 50% less greenhouse gas emissions than 2008 model year vehicles. For heavy-duty vehicles, greenhouse gas emissions from 2018 model year vehicles will be reduced by up to 23% compared to vehicles manufactured prior to that regulatory period.

Our approach is generating results. It is estimated that as a result of the combined actions of all levels of governments, businesses, and consumers, Canada's greenhouse gas emissions in 2020 will be 734 megatonnes. That is 128 megatonnes lower than where emissions would have been in 2020 if no action had been taken since 2005.

Our government is working to ensure that we achieve results for Canadians and the environment. Our approach will result in real emission reductions, while maintaining Canada's economic competitiveness and supporting job creation opportunities for Canadians.

● (2405)

Mr. Ted Hsu: Mr. Speaker, I do not think the world community would agree that Canada is taking leadership on the problem of climate change. It is a problem that requires countries around the world to co-operate.

I would also say that the so-called sector-by-sector approach still has not really been implemented. We are still waiting for what the oil and gas sector is going to do. We have been waiting for many years. In fact, we are way past the time at which the government said it would have these rules in place. As my hon. colleague from the Conservative Party has stated himself, and I want to thank him for being here at this late hour to answer these questions, he and millions of other people are very well accustomed to sitting in traffic in the greater Toronto Area, wasting energy, time, and money.

That is why I think it is time for the federal government to help out all of the areas in the country where better investments are needed in sustainable transportation infrastructure. We have the money to pay for it, especially now when money is so cheap and interest rates are so low. As I said before, one-tenth of the economic cost of traffic congestion in Toronto could service the debt on twice the amount of the government's new Building Canada plan.

Mr. Bob Dechert: Mr. Speaker, as my hon. friend will know, our government has put more money into transportation infrastructure across Canada, especially in the GTA, than any government in Canadian history, and quite a bit more than the former Liberal government that his party was part of. In fact, in the GTA, the government has put over \$500 million into GO Transit, which moves millions of people every day in the GTA. We put \$83 million into the Mississauga Bus Rapid Transit Project, which is under construction and about to be completed. We put \$660 million into the Toronto Transit Commission in building new subways. We put money into the flow transit system in York region.

We are getting the job done for Canadians: taking cars off the roads and reducing greenhouse emissions and pollutants in our air.

● (2410)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Vancouver Quadra not being present to raise during the adjournment proceedings the matter for which notice has been given, the notice is deemed withdrawn.

[*Translation*]

Pursuant to an order made on Tuesday, May 27, 2014, the motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until later this day, at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 12:10 a.m.)

CONTENTS

Tuesday, June 17, 2014

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS			
James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement and the Northeastern Quebec Agreement		Mr. Sandhu	6964
Mr. Strahl	6953	Ms. May	6964
Government Response to Petitions		Ms. Sitsabaiesan	6964
Mr. Lukiwski	6953	Mrs. Hughes	6965
Digital Privacy Act		Mr. Carmichael	6966
Mr. Duncan (for the Minister of Industry)	6953	Ms. Nash	6966
Bill S-4. First reading	6953	Mr. McGuinty	6967
(Motion agreed to and bill read the first time)	6953	Mr. Cullen	6968
Petitions		Mr. Caron	6971
Pan-Canadian Concussion Strategy		Mr. Strahl	6971
Ms. Duncan (Etobicoke North)	6954	Mr. Thibeault	6972
Canada Post		Mr. Thibeault	6973
Mr. Eyking	6954	Mr. Strahl	6974
Public Monuments		Mr. Lamoureux	6974
Mr. Eyking	6954	Mr. Caron	6974
Canadian Broadcasting Corporation		Mr. Zimmer	6976
Ms. May	6954	Mr. Lamoureux	6976
The Environment		Mr. Rankin	6977
Ms. May	6954	Mrs. Hughes	6978
Animal Welfare		Mr. Caron	6979
Ms. Nash	6954	Ms. Ashton	6979
Falun Gong		Mr. Rankin	6980
Mr. Rajotte	6954	Mr. Lamoureux	6980
Canada Post		Mr. Allen (Welland)	6981
Mr. Cullen	6954	Mr. Lamoureux	6983
Questions on the Order Paper		Ms. May	6984
Mr. Lukiwski	6954	Mr. Giguère	6984
		Mr. Lamoureux	6985
		STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS	
		Ahuntsic Community Organization	
		Mrs. Mourani	6986
		High School Graduations	
		Mr. O'Toole	6986
		Sports on CBC/Radio-Canada	
		Mr. Dubé	6986
		Community Service	
		Mr. Goldring	6986
		Jack MacAndrew	
		Mr. Easter	6986
		Women of Distinction Awards	
		Ms. Young (Vancouver South)	6987
		Youth of the Month Award	
		Mr. Kellway	6987
		Calgary International Airport	
		Mr. Shory	6987
		Christopher Stanley	
		Mr. Aspin	6987

Employment	
Mr. Morin (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord)	6988
Jagat Uppal	
Mr. Saxton	6988
Summer in Compton—Stanstead	
Mr. Rousseau	6988
Leader of the Liberal Party of Canada	
Mr. Armstrong	6988
WorldPride Celebration	
Ms. Freeland	6988
Arts and Culture	
Mr. Gill	6989
Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada	
Ms. Latendresse	6989
Royal Canadian Legion	
Mr. Hawn	6989

ORAL QUESTIONS

Justice	
Mr. Mulcair	6989
Mr. Harper	6990
Mr. Mulcair	6990
Mr. Harper	6990
Mr. Mulcair	6990
Mr. Harper	6990
Natural Resources	
Mr. Mulcair	6990
Mr. Harper	6990
Mr. Mulcair	6990
Mr. Harper	6990
Mr. Trudeau	6990
Mr. Harper	6990
Mr. Trudeau	6991
Mr. Harper	6991
Mr. Trudeau	6991
Mr. Harper	6991
Ms. Leslie	6991
Mr. Rickford	6991
Mr. Cullen	6991
Mr. Rickford	6991
Mr. Cullen	6991
Mr. Rickford	6991
Aboriginal Affairs	
Ms. Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	6991
Mr. Valcourt	6992
Ms. Crowder	6992
Mr. Valcourt	6992
Mr. Genest-Jourdain	6992
Mr. Valcourt	6992
Public Works and Government Services	
Ms. Michaud	6992
Ms. Finley	6992

National Defence	
Ms. Michaud	6992
Mr. Nicholson	6992
Mr. Harris (St. John's East)	6992
Mr. Nicholson	6993
Justice	
Mr. Casey	6993
Mr. MacKay	6993
Mr. Dion	6993
Mr. MacKay	6993
Tourism	
Ms. Sgro	6993
Mr. Bernier	6993
Privacy	
Mr. Angus	6993
Mr. MacKay	6993
Ms. Borg	6994
Mr. MacKay	6994
Justice	
Ms. Boivin	6994
Mr. MacKay	6994
Ms. Boivin	6994
Mr. MacKay	6994
Northern Development	
Mr. Leef	6994
Mrs. Aglukkaq	6994
Citizenship and Immigration	
Mr. Cash	6994
Mr. Alexander	6994
Ms. Blanchette-Lamothe	6995
Mr. Alexander	6995
Employment Insurance	
Mrs. Groguhé	6995
Ms. Bergen	6995
Ms. Sims	6995
Ms. Bergen	6995
Infrastructure	
Mr. McGuinty	6995
Mr. Lebel	6995
Ms. Bennett	6996
Mr. Lebel	6996
Housing	
Ms. Brosseau	6996
Ms. Bergen	6996
Asbestos	
Mr. Martin	6996
Mr. Rickford	6996
Taxation	
Mr. Toet	6996
Mr. Oliver	6996
Health	
Mr. Scarpaleggia	6996
Ms. Ambrose	6997

Official Languages	
Mr. Godin	6997
Mrs. Glover	6997

Health	
Mr. Lizon	6997
Ms. Ambrose	6997

Copyright	
Ms. Nash	6997
Mr. Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	6997

Natural Resources	
Mr. Hyer	6997
Mr. Rickford	6997

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Prohibiting Cluster Munitions Act	
Bill C-6. Report Stage	6998
Motions Nos. 1 and 3 negatived	6999
Motion No. 2 negatived	7000
Mr. Baird	7000
Motion for concurrence	7000
Motion agreed to	7001

Respect For Communities Act	
Bill C-2—Time Allocation Motion	
Mr. Van Loan	7001
Ms. Davies (Vancouver East)	7001
Mr. Nicholson	7002
Mr. Lamoureux	7002
Mr. Garrison	7002
Ms. May	7002
Mr. Aubin	7003
Mr. Goodyear	7003
Mr. Nicholls	7003
Mr. Sandhu	7004
Mr. Blanchette	7004
Mr. Giguère	7005
Motion agreed to	7007
Second reading	
Bill C-2. Second reading	7007
Ms. Davies (Vancouver East)	7007
Mr. Bruinooge	7009
Ms. May	7009
Mr. Giguère	7009
Mr. Wilks	7010
Mr. Lamoureux	7011
Ms. Sitsabaiesan	7011
Mr. Zimmer	7012
Ms. Boutin-Sweet	7012
Mr. Goodyear	7013

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Dairy Producers	
Motion	7013
Ms. Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)	7013
Mr. Albrecht	7014
Ms. Freeland	7015

Mr. Caron	7017
Mr. Atamanenko	7018
Mr. Pilon	7020
Ms. Brosseau	7021
Division on motion deferred	7022

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Respect for Communities Act	
Bill C-2. Second reading	7022
Mr. Wallace	7022
Mr. Lamoureux	7022
Mr. Dusseault	7022
Ms. Papillon	7022
Mr. Simms	7023
Mr. Côté	7024
Ms. Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot)	7024
Ms. Papillon	7025
Mr. Pilon	7025
Ms. Nash	7026
Ms. Péclet	7027
Mr. Carmichael	7027
Mr. Lamoureux	7027
Mr. Boughen	7028
Mr. Côté	7028
Ms. Péclet	7029
Mr. Dusseault	7030
Mr. Côté	7030
Mr. Christopherson	7030
Mr. Nicholls	7032
Mr. Simms	7032
Mr. Pilon	7032
Mr. Dusseault	7034
Mr. Caron	7034
Mrs. Sellah	7034
Mr. Dusseault	7034
Mr. Ravignat	7035
Mr. Boulerice	7036
Ms. Liu	7036
Mr. Côté	7037
Mr. Goodyear	7037
Mr. Choquette	7038
Mr. Goodyear	7039
Mrs. Day	7039
Mr. Ravignat	7039
Mr. Simms	7040
Mr. Genest-Jourdain	7040
Mr. Nicholls	7041
Ms. Ashton	7041
Mr. Albrecht	7042
Mr. Hyer	7042
Ms. Freeman	7043
Drug-Free Prisons Act	
Bill C-12—Notice of time allocation motion	
Mr. Van Loan	7044

Justice for Animals in Service Act (Quanto's Law)	
Bill C-35—Notice of time allocation motion	
Mr. Van Loan.....	7044
Respect for Communities Act	
Bill C-2. Second reading.....	7044
Mr. Albas.....	7044
Ms. Freeman.....	7044
Mr. Simms.....	7045
Mrs. Sellah.....	7045
Ms. Laverdière.....	7045
Mrs. Smith.....	7046
Mr. Simms.....	7047
Mr. Caron.....	7047
Mr. Alexander.....	7048
Mr. Simms.....	7049
Mr. Kellway.....	7049
Mr. Alexander.....	7050
Division on motion deferred.....	7051
Drug-Free Prisons Act	
Bill C-12. Second reading.....	7051

Mr. Cleary.....	7051
Mr. Hsu.....	7052
Mrs. Smith.....	7052
Ms. Doré Lefebvre.....	7052
Mr. Dusseault.....	7053
Mrs. Smith.....	7054
Mr. Hsu.....	7054
Mr. Simms.....	7055
Mrs. Sellah.....	7057
Mr. Valerioté.....	7058
Mr. Cleary.....	7058
Ms. Doré Lefebvre.....	7058
Ms. Doré Lefebvre.....	7059
Mrs. Day.....	7060
Mr. Nicholls.....	7060

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

The Environment	
Mr. Hsu.....	7061
Mr. Dechert.....	7061

Published under the authority of the Speaker of
the House of Commons

SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the *Copyright Act*. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a Committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the *Copyright Act*.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its Committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

Also available on the Parliament of Canada Web Site at the following address: <http://www.parl.gc.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité
du Président de la Chambre des communes

PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

Aussi disponible sur le site Web du Parlement du Canada à l'adresse suivante : <http://www.parl.gc.ca>