



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Friday, September 29, 2017**

—

**Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, September 29, 2017

The House met at 10 a.m.

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*Prayer*

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1005)  
[English]

### OCEANS ACT

The House resumed from September 28 consideration of the motion that Bill C-55, An Act to amend the Oceans Act and the Canada Petroleum Resources Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for North Island—Powell River.

I want to thank the government for presenting the proposed legislation to the House for debate.

No one on our planet has officially declared them an enemy but, make no mistake, our oceans are under attack. Canada has pledged to the international community to protect 5% of Canada's marine areas by 2017 and 10% by 2020, with the aim of halting the destruction of habitats and ecosystems to protect our oceans.

To date, Canada has only protected 1.5% of its oceans with marine protected areas, and we are falling behind. China is at 1.6% and Japan at 5.6%. Australia and the United States are much further ahead, with 33.2% and 30.4% protected respectfully. Canada needs to set strong protection standards in line with the International Union for Conservation of Nature, and set legislated protected targets, if it is to meet its international commitments.

While Bill C-55 is unquestionably a step forward, it is a small one, with many glaring weaknesses. Two glaring weakness I would like to address directly are its failure to address the specific threats posed by marine debris and plastics in our oceans, and that it does not acknowledge the need for direct, permanent, and easily accessible funding for marine and coastal debris cleanup.

One of the greatest threats to the health of our oceans is the disposal of plastics into these beautiful bodies of water, be it accidental or purposeful disposal by cargo ships, so-called “ghost gear” lost by fishers, derelict fishing and pleasure craft, human waste

from tourism and recreation, or the careless disposal of single-use consumer plastics. We are rapidly destroying our ocean and coastal ecosystem with plastics.

A study conducted by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation in Great Britain found that plastic production has increased twentyfold since 1964, reaching 311 million tonnes in 2014. It is expected to double again in the next 20 years, and almost quadruple by 2050. If humanity continues down this path, the ocean is expected to contain one tonne of plastic for every three tonnes of fish by 2025, and by 2050 plastics will outweigh fish. Therefore, by 2050, there will be more plastic in our oceans than fish.

While Bill C-55 and the ocean protection plan has some good measures, I find it baffling that there is no mention of either the word “plastic” or “debris” in the proposed legislation. Therefore, to illustrate the threat posed to our oceans and coastline with debris and plastics, I would like to highlight two local cases from Courtenay—Alberni: the Denman Island and Baynes Sound industrial debris epidemic, and the *Hanjin* debris field between Tofino and Ucluelet on the west side of Vancouver Island.

The Denman Island and Baynes Sound debris epidemic is caused by the local shellfish industry activity, although other sources have contributed to this problem.

Baynes Sound is home to 50% of all the shellfish aquaculture produced in British Columbia. In fact, 38% of the herring spawn on the west coast runs through Baynes Sound. Herring is critical. It is critical to our salmon, which is also critical to our orcas. Everything is interconnected when it comes to our sensitive marine ecosystems on the west coast.

Since the onset of DFO-regulated aquaculture, Denman Islanders have cleaned up between four and five tonnes of aquaculture debris each year in their annual cleanup initiative. The shellfish industry is a vital local economic driver, and it has made a serious effort to reduce its waste. However, it is the dedicated volunteers, local residents, who have engaged in these cleanup initiatives on many days and weekends each year, and they receive no official support or funding from the federal government.

The *Hanjin* debris field between Tofino and Ucluelet on the west side of Vancouver Island is well documented in the House. However, it bears mention, given the nature of the bill and the government's continued inaction on marine debris.

*Government Orders*

The *Hanjin* debris field was caused when 35 large shipping containers fell off an international cargo ship last November. It was the locals who came to the rescue as huge metal pieces of cargo spread along our coast. There were large swaths of styrofoam connected to those metal pieces that spread out. However, government inaction has actually increased the cost of cleaning up the spill.

This spill occurred in November. We were in the House raising this concern, calling on the federal government to take action, but it did not support this call to action. It was the government's negligence that allowed this spill to spread, and now it is costing local communities thousands of dollars to clean it up.

I have to applaud Pacific Rim National Park Reserve staff, because they appealed to the bankruptcy court of the shipping company, *Hanjin*, and they received \$76,600 from the estate. That money went back to Ottawa within a month of this incident, yet Ottawa sat on that money until May before it started releasing it to the community to do the job. It is unbelievable to see how inept the government was at getting the money back to the community to do its work. This tripled the cost to the community.

The government itself has contributed nothing to this cleanup effort, which was one of the largest marine debris spills on the west coast. This is the government that takes pride in saying that it has a great ocean protection plan. It claims to be looking out for us and protecting our coast, but we on the ground know what it looks like.

It is volunteer groups like the Pacific Rim chapter of Surfrider that came to the government's rescue. These are great Canadians, who have put aside their own time in the community to protect the environment.

The Denman Island and Baynes Sound debris epidemic and the *Hanjin* debris field were the result of a massive amount of debris and plastic washing ashore along our beautiful coastline. That threatened our ecosystems. This debris was left there until volunteers engaged in tedious and lengthy cleanup efforts at their own expense.

I want to thank local groups like the Pacific Rim chapter of Surfrider. Clayoquot Action raised \$90,000. People went out in barges and helicopters to remove this debris on their own, because they could not wait any longer. Denman Island Marine Stewards, CPOC, the Wild Pacific Trail Society, and Tla-O-Qui-Aht First Nation tribal parks are groups in my riding alone that stepped up to the plate because of government inaction.

Nationally, we see there are groups like the World Wildlife Foundation and West Coast Environmental Law. Ocean Legacy is a group that goes up and down the coast collecting marine debris. It has received nothing from the federal government today, except for \$25,000 for the Japanese tsunami debris. It took eight months for that money to get back to the communities after Ottawa sat on it while debris lined up along our coast.

The Vancouver Aquarium and University of Victoria environmental law centre are also doing great work to raise awareness about the need for federal action on marine debris.

I want to compliment these groups. These are great Canadians, and the government has not had their backs. Instead of empowering them, it has disempowered them by leaving them hanging out to dry.

It has been local governments, like the District of Tofino and District of Ucluelet and the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District, that recently came to save the day after local volunteers collected tonnes of marine debris and trash and put it together in super sacks. The Pacific National Park promised to pick up the debris and remove it, but it ran out of money. The local communities were told that they could not finish the job. It was the local government that stepped up to the plate, because it was not going to betray local communities like the federal government has done so far.

Again, I want to compliment those local leaders for making sure that they have the local people's backs. They are truly committed to keeping our marine and coastal ecosystems clean. They want the government to feel the same way and to be partners in their efforts, directly and permanently, with accessible funding to support their work.

The government keeps talking about its ocean protection plan. I will tell the House what it looks like so far. The government made an announcement on derelict vessels and committed \$6.8 million over five years, roughly about two boats a year, despite the fact that it has identified 600 abandoned and derelict boats. It will take about 300 years to clean up the abandoned and derelict boats with the way that the Liberals are going.

Washington state is a great model. My colleague from Nanaimo—Ladysmith has presented her Bill C-352, which contains a comprehensive coastal-wide strategy to clean up abandoned vessels. The government could adopt this legislation, but it has decided not to.

There is the coastal restoration fund on salmon. The government has not given money to communities like mine, which desperately needs it.

We have seen how the Liberals have handled marine debris. We have seen how they have failed to deliver marine training, as they promised, to indigenous communities. The Liberals are falling well short of delivering on their ocean protection plan to coastal communities.

• (1010)

I want to close my remarks by thanking the government for tabling the bill. We will support Bill C-55 at second reading, but the government needs to set minimum protection standards and targets for zoning for marine protected areas. It renders the designation inconsistent at best and meaningless at worst, if they do not do something to deal with the ramifications of everything and have everything interconnected.

**Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I very much appreciate the comments from my colleague from British Columbia. Given his age and mine, I probably remember having been in the Pacific Rim park before he was born. It is a beautiful area in one of those natural areas in Canada that as Canadians we much admire and visit.

*Government Orders*

One of the things he mentioned was volunteers. That is one of the things we see in our communities, particularly the people cleaning up our ditches on public roads. There are the 4H clubs and community organizations. Those truly are volunteers, and we very much appreciate the things they do.

My question is, how can we recognize those volunteer groups that he has listed for the work they do? How can we continue to support them and recognize them for their great efforts in the Pacific Rim National Park area, like the volunteers I see in my constituency?

•(1015)

**Mr. Gord Johns:** Madam Speaker, I am glad that my hon. colleague from Alberta has been to our beautiful region, and I hope he comes back. I hope when he comes back, he will see that the government has supported these great Canadians he talked about. People are working two and three jobs to afford to live in the Pacific Rim because of the cost of living, yet they put aside their valuable recreation time to get out and clean the beaches, protect the ocean, and do the government's job when it fails them.

We need to at least have their backs. These volunteers went out and collected all this debris, and the government made a promise that it was going to airlift it out and remove it. The government turned around and said it did not have any money for that. We need to empower our volunteers, make sure we follow through with our commitments, and make sure we have funding to support cleanup initiatives, especially when it comes to volunteers.

The amount of excuses that the government piled up instead of doing its job are absolutely embarrassing, as it should be to everyone in the House and the country. For the government to say that some of this garbage was from marine debris cleanup and some from other stuff, is just endless. The ocean protection plan needs to actually do what it is supposed to do, and that is protect our oceans.

**Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for a very informative exposé of what happens in his riding, and the shortcomings of the bill. I had no idea about the amount of plastic and debris that is filling up our oceans. I wonder if he could tell us about the impact on the ecology, the ecosystem, and the various species that live in the ocean. What is the impact of this plastic on them and on our future?

**Mr. Gord Johns:** Madam Speaker, that is a good question. As coastal British Columbians, we rely on a clean ocean for our food security, our economy, our recreation, and our culture. It is our way of life. When marine debris and plastics get into the ecosystem, it is very important that we mitigate it as soon as possible. The government failed to do that in the Hanjin case. In fact, by letting it sit on our beaches for eight months without supporting our communities, that spread throughout our marine ecosystem. The parliamentary secretary to the minister of transport, during the debate, said it was not an immediate threat to the environment, so the government decided to stand back. That is not acceptable to people in our communities.

Right now we know that the krill and the fish are eating plastic, and that plastic is getting into the whole food chain, right up through to our orcas. We are finding high levels of plastic in our orcas, at an alarming rate. It is impacting everything.

We have seen study after study that says a lot of fish are not recognizing that plastic is not food, and they are consuming it. We are finding it in the digestive tracts of all our marine species. This ends up in the food chain. These are the fish we eat. Whether one lives in coastal British Columbia or Brooks, Alberta, or Regina, Saskatchewan, this is an important issue to everyone who consumes fish in our country and in the world.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP):** Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to speak today on an issue that is so important to the people I represent in North Island—Powell River. The history of my riding is defined by its surrounding marine environment. The ocean is important to our culture, economy, and identity. The richness and biodiversity provide enormous potential for both present and future generations. The ocean provides numerous opportunities for commercial, recreational, and aboriginal fisheries; tourism; transportation; education; and biological research.

Today I am happy to be speaking to Bill C-55, an act to amend the Oceans Act and the Canada Petroleum Resources Act. This act deals with marine protected areas, or MPAs for short. Despite supporting this bill, I hope to convey in the latter part of my speech that we, the New Democrats, have serious questions about it.

We need to be proactive in our conservation efforts to protect marine ecosystem functions, species, and habitats for future generations. Many ecosystems are under threat. A healthy and productive ecosystem is key to achieving sustainability and the harvest of living ocean resources.

In 2010, Canada agreed to marine conservation targets established under the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity to conserve 10% of coastal and marine areas, through effective management networks of protected areas and other affected area-based conservation measures, by 2020. The commitment was reconfirmed in 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly's 2030 agenda for sustainable development.

Since signing the UN Convention on Biological Diversity in 1992, Liberal and Conservative governments have dragged their feet. Where are we today? Canada has only protected 1.5% of its oceans within marine protected areas. Canada ranks near the very bottom of protecting our ocean biodiversity, following behind China, at 1.6%, and Japan, at 5.6%. Australia and the United States have come out on top, with 33.2% and 30.4% protected areas respectively.

*Government Orders*

The current process for establishing and managing MPAs under the Oceans Act is long and tedious. My support for this bill is based on the fact that it provides some new legal tools to speed up the creation of marine protected areas. Specifically, it would empower the minister to designate marine protected areas by order and to prohibit certain activities in those areas. This bill would clarify the role the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans in establishing a national network of MPAs.

As a country, we are still falling short of our international commitments to protect our marine biodiversity. I see this as an accountability measure. When Canada fails to meet our targets, the minister can rest assured that the responsibility will fall solely on his shoulders. There is no more time for excuses.

Bill C-55 would increase ministerial powers to terminate private resource interests in MPAs and would create stronger penalties for those found violating the rules. Specifically, it would update and strengthen the powers of enforcement officers. It would update the act's offence provisions, in particular to increase the amount of fines and to provide that ships may be subject to the offence provisions, and it would create new offences for a person or ship that engaged in prohibited activities within a marine protected area.

The issue of enforcement officers is a big concern in my riding. Many indigenous communities I represent have come to me wanting to do more than just watch what happens to the oceans in their traditional territory. They want to help. Repeatedly, these communities have talked to the minister's office about resources to train their people to support the protection and defence of their traditional lands. This is an area where the minister's office must start to move forward. When I think of the multiple spills in the ocean in my riding, for example, the indigenous people were there immediately. With the proper training, they could have supported the tracking of the impact, which we actually have very little information on. Protecting our oceans must include the people who have lived on the land from time immemorial.

As far as the MPA minimum standards go, these are steps in the right direction. However, to have a complete picture, one must look at what MPAs really do. In this context, we are not talking about marine protected areas in a generic context; we are referring specifically to the DFO program under the Oceans Act.

A marine protected area is an area of sea that forms part of the internal waters of Canada, the territorial sea of Canada, or the exclusive economic zone of Canada and has been designated under this section for special protection.

• (1020)

While this lofty definition to increase conservation is wonderful, there is little backing up how it will be done. Let me explain. This bill fails to set minimum protection standards and targets for zoning for marine protected areas, which would render the designation inconsistent at best and meaningless at worst. A lack of minimum protection standards for MPAs would make the rules so inconsistent and permissive that most MPAs would allow commercial fishing. One would even allow oil and gas exploration. I do not know how members feel, but I think oil and gas extraction is not compatible with conservation and should never be permitted inside a protected

area. National parks have standards. Why can our marine areas not have the same?

According to Rudolphe Devillers, professor of geography at Memorial University, scientific studies have shown again and again that stricter protection provides greater biodiversity benefits. Canada needs to set strong protection standards, in line with the International Union for Conservation of Nature, and set legislated protection targets if it is to meet its international commitments.

At present, just over 1% of Canada's oceans are protected, an area just a bit larger than Nova Scotia. Only a tiny portion of our ocean, approximately 0.01%, is highly protected, meaning that no fishing or oil and gas extraction is allowed inside the MPA.

By not setting minimum protection standards, the Liberals are trying to appear progressive by almost meeting targets but have not made the hard choices to protect biodiversity. This is not only the NDP bringing up this important issue. Widespread opposition from environmentalists, from the WWF to CPAWS, has raised the issue. Fifteen university scientists from St. John's to Victoria have written to both the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and the Minister of Environment and Climate Change asking for stiffer conservation measures in Canada's 12 marine conservation areas as well as those being proposed for the future.

According to Linda Nowlan, staff counsel, West Coast Environmental Law:

These proposed amendments are useful short-term additions to the federal Oceans Act and related oil and gas laws, but they could and should go much farther. For the long arm of the law to be truly effective we need...stronger legal powers like minimum protection standards, and requiring ecological integrity as the foremost priority in MPA management. With a vast area in three seas within our boundaries—and the world's longest coastline—Canada must implement a forceful, modern Oceans Act.

Bill C-55 would give the minister far too much latitude to decide what activities were permissible in an MPA. The minister would have the authority to list all the permissible activities that were ongoing activities in a marine protected area. The minister could also repeal the order that designated marine protected areas in the first place just five years later.

Liberal promises on ocean protection and environmental protection are still mostly talk. Canadians do not want to see more Harper targets and exemptions for the oil and gas sector.

*Government Orders*

I do not think we could discuss the protection of the environment without the involvement of coastal first nations. They are important parties in the decisions about how to conserve marine biodiversity and resources in B.C. As B.C.'s first peoples, coastal first nations have a long-standing historical connection to the ocean and its resources. While first nation community conservation areas have the potential to contribute to the MPA network goals, in most cases these areas would not qualify as MPAs, according to the definition. Bill C-55 makes no mention of this specifically. However, I know how important the sustained biodiversity in our coastal communities is, especially the ones I represent. In my riding, many first nation communities are spread across some of the most remote and beautiful places. They live on the ocean and are already doing the important work. An increase in training to support them in protecting the ocean just makes sense.

In my concluding remarks, I would like to ask the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans to take a stand, listen to experts, and amend this act to include minimum standards for marine protection areas. Our planet deserves it.

I also hope that the Liberal government will finally fully implement the Cohen Commission recommendations. In my riding, there are serious concerns being raised about fish farms. This was a promise—

• (1025)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Unfortunately, the member's time is up. Maybe she could finish her thought through questions and comments.

**Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC):** Madam Speaker, could the hon. member speak to concerns among these coastal communities about the impact the minister is going to have with respect to interim protection orders? We are hearing a lot of feedback from residents in Nunavut, for example, and I am sure she is hearing from some of the B.C. coastal communities as well. Could she comment on some of those concerns she has heard?

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Madam Speaker, the concerns going around about all the issues in the ocean continue to grow.

What we have seen from the government are a lot of promises with very little action. The hon. member who spoke before me talked about the amount of plastic in the ocean. I can share with the House that many groups in my riding collect large amounts of plastic and debris from the beach. I think about how many times I have gone out with them and how small those plastics are on the sand. I cannot imagine the impact on the ocean.

We need to be looking at some solid action, which we are still waiting for, from the government.

• (1030)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech. She is so passionate about protecting our oceans.

Sadly, Canada is doing next to nothing to protect our marine areas. With less than 1.5% of our waters protected now, the government says it wants to protect 30% by 2020. That is unthinkable. The Liberals got themselves elected on claims that they would make

fighting climate change a priority, that they would engage in that fight, and that they would not be like the Conservatives. However, Environment and Climate Change Canada itself has said that current GHG emissions will make meeting our GHG reduction targets impossible and that there was not even a plan to reduce emissions.

Here we are then. We cannot reduce GHGs, we are building more pipelines, we have no standards for protecting marine areas, and we still subsidize fossil fuels.

How are we supposed to be visionary leaders if we cannot even implement all these bills? Plus, Bill C-55 is so flawed that it will prevent us from making any progress at all on environmental protection.

[*English*]

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Madam Speaker, the reality is that across my riding, people are very concerned about the impact on the oceans and the impact of climate change. We know that our oceans are an intrinsic part of keeping the planet's temperatures down. We are not serving our oceans. The government is not serving our oceans the way it should.

We want to see actual action. We cannot just say things. What we are hearing from the Liberal government are a lot of meaningful promises with very little meaningful action.

We are asking for the next step. We hope that the committee will listen and take steps to give teeth to this bill so that we actually see the profound action that is required in our country.

**Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I have not heard from the member what she is hearing from the fishermen in her area. She lives in a coastal area, and fishing is very important.

We have heard from the Pacific halibut fishermen. They are very concerned about some of these MPAs closing off some highly productive halibut fishing areas. That would push them into less productive areas, spending more time in the water, with more risk, and burning more fuel, etcetera. It is causing great concern for them.

I would like to hear the member's comments on that.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Madam Speaker, I have definitely heard from many sectors and industries across my riding.

Consultation is very important, but I also know that the people who work in the ocean, who harvest from the ocean, want to make sure that there is protection so that they can see long-term growth. They want to see their businesses last a long time.

Let us make sure there is meaningful consultation. Let us make sure we protect our oceans and the industries that grow from it.

**Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to stand in the House this morning on behalf of the people of Barrie—Innisfil. I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Edmonton Manning.

*Government Orders*

I will admit that the beautiful riding of Barrie—Innisfil does not have any oceanfront or coastline, but it does have a jewel of the central Ontario region, Lake Simcoe. My comments this morning will be more along the lines of transparency, consultation, and the inability, or inability, quite frankly, of the government to conduct meaningful consultation on issues that affect many Canadians.

Bill C-55 would amend the Oceans Act and the Canada Petroleum Resources Act. It would allow the government to effectively act unilaterally without consultation, consultation being a second thought. The government would be acting on its own in creating new marine protected areas, selecting areas to meet its own mandate to increase Canada's marine and coastal areas to 5% this year and 10% by 2020.

I am an MP of the almost landlocked riding of Barrie—Innisfil. It has some beautiful beaches and waters along Kempenfelt Bay and Cook's Bay. However, being the MP where Lake Simcoe is located, the government should be reminded of what positive action for protecting Canada's lands and waters by a federal government really truly looks like. The previous government took bold steps to add more than 220,000 square kilometres to Canadian federal parks and marine protected areas, an increase of more than 58%.

Canada's national parks provide outstanding examples of our country's natural landscapes, generate significant economic activity by attracting visitors from Canada and abroad, and provide Canadians with access to our natural heritage.

Under the former Conservative government, the national conservation plan expanded national parklands by tens of thousands of square kilometres and secured ecologically sensitive private lands. The previous government also understood the importance of Lake Simcoe and Georgian Bay in Ontario.

Average phosphorous load levels for Lake Simcoe in the 1990s were well over 100 tonnes per year. Unprecedented funding commitments from Prime Minister Harper of nearly \$60 million from Ottawa helped to improve environmental monitoring, conserve critical aquatic habitat, and reduce the discharge of phosphorous from point and non-point sources. I will add that tremendous work was done as well by the members for Simcoe North, York—Simcoe, Durham, and others, and, of course, Mr. Patrick Brown, who was a key advocate to the success of those programs with Lake Simcoe.

The action taken by Ottawa shows that annual phosphorous loads have significantly decreased and the health of our lakes, rivers, and wetlands is paramount to our future, but, sadly, not necessarily a priority for the Liberal government. Requests to continue the funding to further reduce phosphorous have fallen on deaf ears.

Along with saving Lake Simcoe, the previous government created marine protected areas in B.C., New Brunswick, and the Beaufort Sea, but it did it with consultation and did not give them any interim protection before those consultations occurred. Years of work by the previous Harper government will be undone by the Liberal government.

Affecting the major recreational assets, generating more than \$200 million annually for the area's tourism and recreational industries was done by working with the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority, other local partners in Barrie—Innisfil, and all the

residents of the region. By partnering with angling, hunting, and conservation groups, we can ensure that our conservation efforts are good for the environment and good for local economies as well.

Unfortunately, Bill C-55 would stop the partnerships, all in the name of Liberal politically mandated targets, targets that would allow the government's Liberal friends to create interim protection, protection that would affect fisheries and recreational and tourist industries.

● (1035)

What is it about the government and consultation, or the lack of consultation? Delaying consultations and decisions for up to five years will only serve the Liberal targets, not commercial or recreational fisheries, industry, or academics. The Liberals do not listen to consultations. They did not listen on several issues, such as electoral reform and pipelines. A situation is happening now within my riding and that of Oshawa where Canada Border Services Agency offices are closing, without any consultation to stakeholders, politicians, and those who would be affected. They are again not consulting on major tax reforms that will affect Canada's small businesses, family businesses, family farms, and family health care in Canada.

Let me remind the minister and the government of comments from industries on Bill C-55. Consider it a form of consultation.

Callum Roberts, a professor at the University of York, said, "you want to build on a process of trust and goodwill, you don't then ignore what your stakeholders say...if in the end all you were going to do was cherry-pick..."

Gerry Kristianson of Sport Fishing Institute of British Columbia said:

My sector wants transparent and evidence-based decision-making...if government decides...on the volume of mail it receives, my recreational fishing constituency...is more than capable of engaging in that kind of activity.

Chris Sporer, the Pacific Halibut Management Association of British Columbia, said, "if fishermen are forced from productive, high catch per unit effort areas to less productive" there will be an increase in fishing time and an increased cost for less fish. He said that the "process needs to take into consideration and evaluate the ecological consequences of displacing fishing efforts..."

I ask the government to forgo its current trend of non-consultation and instead listen and take note of their political agenda. It is not the environmental and economic agenda that makes Canada a leader in protecting marine areas. For that reason, the rest of the Conservative caucus and I will not support what the Liberals are trying to do.



*Government Orders*

There has been a lot of discussion on the issue by those being affected by this the most.

Recently, a Nunavut MLA read a statement in the Nunavut Legislature Assembly. I am not going to say which riding for fear of butchering it, but MLA Johnny Mike, who handles multiple cabinet files within the Nunavut government, slammed the federal government for not consulting. On September 18, he said that the potential impacts of Bill C-55 could be an absolute travesty for his constituency. He said:

...residents we are well aware of the potential in our offshore areas, which is used for economic opportunities today by interests from outside of Nunavut...this proposed bill for marine management and petroleum industry sector management which is being developed seemingly turns its legislative back on the people of Pangnirtung...The federal government never consulted any northerners or my constituents on what concerns they may have about this proposed bill.

He added that the provisions within the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement appeared to conflict with Bill C-55, specifically sections outlining Inuit access to wildlife and conservation area development within the Nunavut settlement area. It made him wonder whether this provision was used as the reasoning for Inuit not being consulted on this bill. He slammed the Liberal government, saying that it had no consideration for Inuit.

My understanding, not sitting on the fisheries committee, is that numerous stakeholders have come before the committee, outlining their concern, not just with this policy but also with the fact that their voices are not being heard.

When it comes to evidence-based science, we hear of a government that speaks about decision-making that is evidence-based and science-based. The reality is that it does not come down to that with the Liberal government. It only agrees with evidence-based and science-based studies if they agree with its ideological position.

• (1040)

**Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I certainly appreciate that my colleague from Barrie—Innisfil was not a member of the former Conservative government. However, I note that government protected only 1% of Canada's oceans in these marine protected areas. Does the member believe that is adequate?

**Mr. John Brassard:** Madam Speaker, the hon. member is quite right. I was not a member of the previous government. However, as I stated in my remarks, some significant investment was made in conservation areas around the country. The fact is that Canada is unique with our shoreline. We have the largest coastal shoreline in the world, so the regional needs of the people in those areas need to be taken into account. Over and over again, we hear that there has been a lack of consultation and of stakeholder engagement in this process.

As I said, not having a coastal area but having an inland lake like Lake Simcoe, significant investments were made in that area and we saw decreases in phosphorus, which raised the health of Lake Simcoe. Therefore, I can speak specifically to the work the previous government did in that area, and it did it with consultations, with stakeholder involvement, and with people investing their time and their energy into ensuring these things were done properly.

• (1045)

**Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I found the member's comments about Nunavut MLA

Johnny Mike interesting. He talked about the lack of consultation and he mentioned Pangnirtung, which is a beautiful area. In the last government, I had the honour and privilege of being there with minister Aglukkaq to open the very first Arctic small craft harbour.

The lack of consultation with Inuit and aboriginal communities seems to be a trend. Does the member see a trend here, whether it is murdered and missing aboriginal women, the lack of consultation with aboriginal communities on this and other issues?

**Mr. John Brassard:** Madam Speaker, I am glad to hear that the hon. member can say the name of the community. I have struggled all morning, as I looked through my notes, to do that.

The member brings up a very important point with respect to consultation. Who knows better than the people who live in these communities as to what their needs are? What we see from the government is a very top-down approach, a government knows best approach, and we do not just see that with this issue. I think we will hear this from my colleagues that the broader part of this concern is the lack of consultation and the ability of the minister to impose these temporary measures, which will perhaps force fishing communities, fishermen, and natural resource opportunities away from these areas.

This lack of consultation is broadly imposed by the government. We see it now with small business and the proposed tax increases on small business. It is a real shame. It is a government that said it would do things differently. I want to reiterate the point I said earlier. When it comes to evidence-based decision-making and science-based decision-making, the government will only agree with those two criteria when it agrees with its position and its ideology. Otherwise, it casts everything aside and does exactly what it wants to do.

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-55, An Act to amend the Oceans Act and the Canada Petroleum Resources Act. At the outset, while I understand that amending the Oceans Act and the Canada Petroleum Resources Act would allow the Liberal government to meet its political target of 5% protection by 2017, by introducing this bill the Liberals have failed to follow through with their commitment to consult Canadians on issues of importance. The government flaunts its ability to consult Canadians, but is not consulting Canadians on the right things. That is what we call mostly "selective consultation". For example, the government does not intend to consult Canadians on the interim marine protected areas, MPAs, it would seek to put in place once the bill has been passed. The word "interim" can be deceiving. Having these MPAs in place for up to five years would make it difficult to reverse the protection in years to come.

*Government Orders*

Another example of the government's inability to consult Canadians is Bill C-47 aimed at enabling Canada to accede to the Arms Trade Treaty, which I rose to speak to yesterday and on which law-abiding hunters, sport shooters, and collectors have not been consulted. When I was advocating for these Canadians yesterday, the members opposite said that my argument was bogus and phony. There are many more examples of the lack of consultation, but the final example I will touch on is the current government's proposed unfair tax changes announced in July of this year in the midst of Canadians' summer holidays. I have heard from numerous constituents on this issue, and the finance minister has refused to extend his measly consultation period, even though Canadians are begging for it.

Now I will get back to the topic of the day, Bill C-55. I would first like to read from the summary of the bill, which I have in my hand. In the summary paragraphs (a), (b), and (c), the bill's objectives read as follows:

- (a) clarify the responsibility of the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans to establish a national network of protected areas;
- (b) empower the Minister to designate marine protected areas by order and prohibit certain activities in those areas;
- (c) provide that, within five years after the day on which the order of the Minister designating a marine protected area comes into force, the Minister is to make a recommendation to the Governor in Council to make regulations to replace that order or is to repeal it.

If passed the bill could completely alienate fishing grounds for other important marine activities for up to five years without adequate consultations with Canadians. Once an area has been placed under interim protection, it would become increasingly difficult to reverse as it would require removing protections that had been in place for up to five years. That by itself is a major problem. When we are talking about problems like that, which could become irreversible, we are talking about what could become a permanent problem that will take more and more efforts to fix. It is a recipe for failure and danger in the longer term.

This bill would put too much power in the hands of solely one person, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. That is an unprecedented granting of power to one person, regardless of who the person is, in which government, and in which area. By eliminating any requirement on the minister to rely on scientific evidence and by speeding up an MPA designation process with no oversight or consultation, we would put Canadians' jobs at risk in our coastal communities.

● (1050)

As I said, we are looking at selective consultation by the government. When it needs to consult, it neither consults nor takes a scientific approach. However, we believe that attention has to be paid to consultation when presenting bills of this calibre. We must make sure that our job is done, and take the time to do so.

Our previous government, through the national conservation plan, NCP, invested \$252 million over 5 years to secure ecologically sensitive lands, support voluntary conservation and restoration action, and strengthen marine and coastal conservation. The Conservative Party is not opposed to creating MPAs by any means. In fact, we have championed conservation and marine protection in the past. All we are asking for is a balance between the protection of

marine habitats and protection of the local economies that depend on commercial and recreational fishing. To that extent, I come back to the many stakeholders with expertise in various areas who have spoken at length about this, asking the government to consult more and to take its time in its approach to this.

MLA Johnny Mike from Nunavut said that he strongly opposes the bill, calling it an "absolute travesty" for his constituency. This is from a local politician who knows best, on the ground, what is going on and reflects his constituency's opinion.

The former MP from Nunavut, the hon. Leona Aglukkaq, is a strong advocate for the people of the north. However, she says that it seems that the government and its representatives have not consulted enough, have not talked to the people, and that the bill's poor consultative process was an insult.

I have other stakeholder opinions here that are along the same track on how the consultative process has been handled. The government rushed this in the second half of its mandate. This will be one of the signatures of the government: pushing a bill through without proper consultation and without a proper evidence-based approach.

Conservatives understand the economic importance of fish and seafood to the Canadian economy. In fact, the previous government focused on building on existing international markets, introducing new ones, and making significant investments in marine research, harbour infrastructure, the sustainability of lobster, and indigenous participation. However, by choosing to fast-track implementation of MPAs in order to meet its self-imposed political targets, the current government is doing a disservice to all Canadians.

On a final note, the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans had studied MPAs. At the conclusion of its study, the committee concluded that understanding MPAs is quite complex. If the committee observed this at the end of its study and after hearing witnesses, it means that we have concerns on this and the approach taken by the government. Therefore, I encourage the government to take a pass on its bill. As my colleague, the member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, said yesterday, take the time and get it right. To the government, to the minister, take the time and get it right.

● (1055)

**Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, NDP):** Madam Speaker, could the member tell us what percentage of Canada's ocean area warrants protection? It is currently only around 1%. By comparison, in the United States and Australia, it is more than 30%.

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:** Madam Speaker, we would like to be at the top in the world. We would like to be at the same level as the best standards and practices.

We have to do it right, and we have to do it with science and great consultation. We cannot do enough on many things, and we probably cannot do enough on this topic. However, we have to take a scientific approach and proceed with proper consultation.

• (1100)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The hon. member will have four minutes for questions and comments after question period.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

### FOLKLORAMA

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, 2017 is the year that Canada is celebrating, and will continue to celebrate, 150 years of Confederation. Our Prime Minister talks about Canada's greatest strength being our diversity. That is something I believe defines us as a nation.

There is no doubt in my mind that one of the greatest celebrations of our diversity is known as Folklorama, which is held on an annual basis in the city of Winnipeg. Every summer we celebrate our diversity through many pavilions that share all sorts of special cuisines, heritage dances, and music. It is such a celebration. This year it was a pleasure to work with a number of pavilions, as I do annually, and to recognize some of the extraordinary Canadians there who have made Folklorama possible.

I want to say congratulations to Folklorama—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The hon. member for Flamborough—Glanbrook.

\* \* \*

### COMMUNITY GATHERINGS IN FLAMBOROUGH— GLANBROOK

**Mr. David Sweet (Flamborough—Glanbrook, CPC):** Madam Speaker, in this the sesquicentennial anniversary of Canada, we celebrate the values that built this country and made it strong. I was very mindful of this at a few recent community gatherings in Flamborough—Glanbrook that honoured our history and looked to our future as a nation.

Last Saturday I had the pleasure of attending the 115th anniversary of the Rockton Women's Institute. The village of Rockton is the kind of place that embodies the values of community, duty, honour, and freedom that we celebrate at Canada's 150th. What is more, the event took place at the Beverly Township Hall. Its heritage legacy and the local history on display illustrated these values being handed down from generation to generation.

In a similar vein, I also attended the grand openings of the Grace Christian School in Millgrove and the Bellstone Christian School in Glanbrook. In both cases, hundreds of enthusiastic students and their parents celebrated the rights and freedoms to a faith-based education in Canada, recognizing the duty that education gives all of us to be good contributing members of our society. From what I saw

### Statements by Members

throughout the riding, the future indeed looks bright for Canada past our 150th year.

\* \* \*

### VOLUNTEERISM IN EGMONT

**Mr. Robert Morrissey (Egmont, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize two groups of volunteers from my riding who deserve recognition.

Recently, the town of Tignish was awarded a gold rating, as well as named champions of the small communities category at the Communities in Bloom symposium. This would not be possible without the leadership of committee members Judy, Karen, Roger, Garth, and Jamie, and everyone in the community who strives to make Tignish a better and more beautiful place to live with their commitment to environmental awareness and heritage conservation.

I also wish to recognize the efforts of the organizers called the Fab Five—Della, Billy, Jo-Anne, Dean, and Tammy—as well as the countless volunteers who assisted in the campaign for O'Leary to be named Kraft Hockeyville for 2017. It was an honour for me to be in attendance at the NHL pre-season game between the Ottawa Senators and the New Jersey Devils for the presenting of the \$100,000 award, which will be used to upgrade their community arena.

Congratulations to the communities of O'Leary and Tignish.

\* \* \*

### ORANGE SHIRT DAY

**Ms. Georgina Jolibois (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, NDP):** Madam Speaker, September 30 is Orange Shirt Day. This marks the date on which children were taken from their homes and brought to residential schools. Orange Shirt Day evolved from the St. Joseph's Mission residential school commemoration event's retelling of Phyllis Jack's story. She had her new shirt taken away from her on the first day of school.

The legacy impacts all Canadians. However, the greatest impact plays out in indigenous communities, with the disruption of indigenous languages and cultures. The 1960s and 1970s child scoop and first nation, Inuit, and Métis in foster care, juvenile detention, and corrections directly relate, as do the wide range of health epidemics seen through high numbers of depression, alcoholism, drug abuse, and suicides today.

In the spirit of healing, reconciliation, and hope, it is past time to address policies that infringe on indigenous peoples across Canada.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### IMMIGRATION CENTRE

**Mr. David Lametti (LaSalle—Émard—Verdun, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, this year, the community of LaSalle—Émard—Verdun and the entire greater Montreal area are celebrating a major event, the 70th anniversary of the Centre social d'aide aux immigrants.

*Statements by Members*

The centre is a non-profit community-based organization that welcomes government-assisted immigrants and refugees.

[English]

Its long history began after the Second World War, in 1947, with the arrival of Polish Jews to the country. Over the years, this centre has played a leading role in the great waves of Canadian and Quebec immigration.

• (1105)

[Translation]

The centre helps newcomers get settled and integrate into our society by organizing information and orientation sessions and by providing technical assistance with administrative forms, immigration, aid, and social support. The centre works hard every day to ensure that newcomers become active members of Quebec society.

[English]

As a son of immigrants, I share the deep values that are central to the mission of the centre, such as mutual aid and empathy. I wish them the best.

\* \* \*

**VOLUNTEER IN WILLIAMS LAKE**

**Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak about an extraordinary Canadian who just happens to be a constituent of mine. Her name is Michelle, and we have been friends for a very long time.

As many know, my hometown of Williams Lake was evacuated during this summer's unprecedented fire season. Michelle was one of the evacuees. Instead of settling into her temporary accommodations, Michelle immediately flew into action. She was volunteering, doing whatever was needed to assist other evacuees. Michelle put in long hours, right up until her doctor told her she could no longer do so. Michelle has genetic hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, and has been diagnosed with congestive heart failure for well over a year. She is waiting for a donor heart. One would never know it upon meeting her, and I confess that up until just a few days ago, I only knew her as my friend with the golden heart, a huge heart. I truly had no idea how sick she was.

I would like Michelle to know her community stands with her. I thank her for all she does. We are praying for her and we love her.

\* \* \*

**50TH ANNIVERSARY OF FANSHAWE COLLEGE**

**Ms. Kate Young (London West, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to congratulate Fanshawe College in London on its 50th anniversary. I am an alumna from the broadcast journalism program, so the college has been an important part of my life. My father taught at Fanshawe. My brother and I both attended the college, and so did my daughter. I was honoured to receive the distinguished alumni award, and I also served on the board of governors.

Hardly a year goes by that I am not invited back to talk to a class about my career, a career that would not have been possible without the great education I received at the college. I have seen first-hand

how Fanshawe instructors, professors, and staff care deeply about their students and the community. London is a great city, in large part because of Fanshawe.

I thank Fanshawe College for always changing with the times and always offering programs that produce students ready to take on the challenge of this new world. Here's to another 50 years.

\* \* \*

**PEI INTERNATIONAL SHELLFISH FESTIVAL**

**Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the Prince Edward Island Fishermen's Association has recently set a new world record, thanks to a beloved crustacean. We now own the title of the world's longest lobster roll, again.

For years there has been a friendly rivalry between Charlottetown and Shediac, New Brunswick. In July, Shediac set the benchmark. Their glory, I am pleased to report, was short-lived. Two weeks ago, at the PEI International Shellfish Festival, a whopping 61-metre-long savoury seafood sandwich was born.

Fifteen volunteers spent the night baking the massive baguette, and more than 100 more volunteers delicately and carefully stuffed it with 12 jars of mayonnaise and 60 kilograms of lobster meat. Festival-goers chowed down on the historic lobster roll, with funds going to the Canadian Cancer Society, but not before the official measurement, after which association president Bobby Jenkins summed it up quite nicely when he proclaimed, "Take that, Shediac!"

\* \* \*

**ORANGE SHIRT DAY**

**Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC):** Madam Speaker, September 30 is Orange Shirt Day, which remembers and honours the survivors of the Indian residential school system, a system that had a profoundly lasting and damaging impact on indigenous culture, heritage, and language, the effects of which are still felt to this day.

As we continue to learn more about the truths of the impacts of residential schools on former students and their communities, we must continually seek to educate ourselves and those around us about our shared history.

In Chilliwack—Hope, we are fortunate to have indigenous leaders in the Sto:lo Nation who are committed to moving our relationships forward in a spirit of reconciliation. I am committed to working with them in those efforts. I believe that reconciliation is not a destination, but rather an ongoing journey on a path that we have set out on together. We must constantly work toward it.

I wish to honour those who will organize and participate in Orange Shirt Day events and thank them for helping us all to remember that today, and every day, every child matters.

*Statements by Members*

[Translation]

**CANADA'S FOOD SYSTEM**

**Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant (La Prairie, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to wish all of Canada's farmers a good harvest season.

Over one million Canadian households are still food insecure. The world population is expected to grow to over nine billion people by 2050, which will require a 70% increase in global food production. That is one of the reasons we want to hear Canadians' ideas about a food policy for Canada.

My colleagues and I had the honour of travelling across the country in order to listen to Canadians' concerns and ideas. We listened, and we are going to use the information we collected to implement a food policy for Canada. Our approach to developing this policy is comprehensive, co-operative, open, and transparent.

In short, we are doing everything possible to ensure that Canada's food system fully contributes to our economy and especially the well-being of families.

\* \* \*

• (1110)

[English]

**BRITISH HOME CHILDREN**

**Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, from 1869 to the 1930s, over 100,000 poor, orphaned, and homeless British children were herded into camps and shipped across the seas to the Colonies. While some of these children would go on to build new lives, the program was stricken with corruption, and it was poorly implemented and virtually unsupervised.

Children shipped to Canada often found themselves forced into indentured servitude and hard labour, often facing physical and emotional abuse from their new parents, who viewed them as disposable, unpaid workers to be discarded if they did not perform.

Some of them were fortunate in finding a family like that of my constituent Anita Nevins, which took in one of these home children who had run away and welcomed him into their family as their own son.

September 28 is recognized in Ontario as British Home Child Day. I rise today to recognize the contributions of former home children and to express our sorrow and regret to these children and their descendants.

\* \* \*

**RURAL CRIME IN LAKELAND**

**Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC):** Madam Speaker, in Lakeland this summer, the top concern was rural crime.

In 2015, Canada's crime index rose for the first time in 12 years. The biggest increase was in Alberta. It is getting worse. Small towns and rural areas are being hit especially hard with break-ins and robberies.

Rural Albertans are scared and angry. A constituent told me he has been robbed not once or even twice, but five times in the last three

and half years in a town of 300. He says, "My concern is all the stealing. ... The RCMP do a fantastic job, but then these guys get to a judge and they are free soon after. I am just tired of being robbed and wonder what can be done. ... I know that we aren't the only place."

This is happening to vulnerable families and businesses everywhere in Lakeland, at all hours of the night and in broad daylight. People are organizing crime watches and trying to protect themselves and their property.

Front-line officers do their best but are stretched thin. For instance, a four-member detachment in one part of Lakeland covers 1,800 square kilometres and 7,600 residents, rarely with two on duty at once.

I hope the Liberals will act to protect innocent residents, crack down on—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The hon. member for Laurentides—Labelle.

\* \* \*

**ARNOLD CHAN**

**Mr. David de Burgh Graham (Laurentides—Labelle, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I rise to pay tribute to my friend Arnold Chan. While I did not know him long enough to sign his passport application, he had a profound impact on my life and on my understanding of this job.

A year and a half ago, he asked me to join him for a walk in the frigid weather. He needed to talk to me in private. He told me that his cancer had returned. He had just told his sons, saying, "They know what this means." His eyes were open.

Arnold always made sure that everyone else was okay before himself, that his responsibilities would never be shirked, that nothing and nobody would be forgotten.

He asked me that night to take on his duties of deputy House leader during his treatment, and after a year of believing I was doing him a favour, I learned that it really was the other way around. He had, as he had for so many others, mentored me.

I wish I could thank Arnold for his friendship, his confidence, his mentorship, and his contribution to making this a better place for me and me a better person.

I would like to thank Jean and the boys for sharing this amazing person with us.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**BOUGARICCI CLOTHING**

**Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am honoured to rise in recognition of the tremendous work being done by fashion designer Bougaricci.

### Oral Questions

At 41 years of age, Marc Lessard traded his construction career for sewing machines and decided to set up shop in his hometown. He took a chance on making Valleyfield a fashion mecca, just like Milan. He is known for being a visionary, a dreamer, and a bit of a madman—all completely true.

He also decided that all of his creations would be 100% made in Quebec. His passion, his straight talk, and the unique quality of his clothing have charmed many, myself included. A bit of a darling in the region, he has been named ambassador of the Beauharnois-Salaberry RCM. He has been hosting more and more events at his shop, including tastings of local products and a performance by Yann Perreau for the Artefact festival, in order to showcase local artists and entrepreneurs.

Bougaricci has dressed more than 40 Quebec artists, including Véronique Cloutier and Dead Obies. His program, *#Bougaricci*, on Véro.tv recently earned this generous, bearded, bespectacled gentleman a Gemini award. This guy is amazing.

Master Bougaricci, thank you for putting your heart and soul into everything you do and for believing in Valleyfield.

\* \* \*

● (1115)

[English]

### CHINESE-CANADIAN COMMUNITY

**Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC):** Madam Speaker, Chinese Canadians have made great contributions to our country over generations. They are hard-working men and women who invest long hours in building up their businesses. They are an integral part of Canadian society.

Recently we learned of a company in Markham that is producing video games that use racist stereotypes to insult and demean Chinese restaurant owners. I am disgusted by the use of these stereotypes to sell video games, and so is our leader. In fact, our leader, the member Regina—Qu'Appelle, will be visiting a Chinese restaurant with the member for Markham—Unionville in Markham today to show their support for the Chinese community.

This has no place in Canada.

Conservatives will always stand by our Chinese community and our country's small business owners.

\* \* \*

### ORANGE SHIRT DAY

**Mr. Don Rusnak (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, tomorrow, September 30, we encourage all Canadians to wear orange to raise awareness about the tragic legacy of residential schools and to honour the survivors.

“Orange Shirt Day: Every Child Matters” grew from the story of one child, Phyllis Webstad, whose grandmother gave her a shiny orange shirt to wear at the St. Joseph Mission residential school in British Columbia. The shirt was taken away from Phyllis on her first day of school, and her connection to her home was severed. However, Phyllis persevered, and now her story is shared so that we can all better understand Canada's legacy of residential schools.

All Canadians have a role to play in reconciliation. On September 30, we encourage everyone to wear orange and to also take the opportunity to learn more about the residential school legacy.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

### TAXATION

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC):** Madam Speaker, on becoming Minister of Finance, the member for Toronto Centre signed an agreement with the Ethics Commissioner, “to prevent a conflict of interest situation from arising and to avoid the perception of preferential treatment...[it] is necessary...to abstain from any participation in any matters...relating to Morneau Shepell...”

Yesterday we learned from witness testimony that the minister's tax increase on small businesses will force many to move money into individualized pension plans, which are a rare and unique form of savings that Morneau Shepell specializes in offering.

Why did the minister not keep his word to abstain from any matter relating to Morneau Shepell?

[Translation]

**Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, let us be clear.

First of all, the tax rate for small and medium-sized businesses is not increasing and remains the lowest in the G7. We are encouraging business owners to reinvest the money they earn into their businesses in order to stimulate growth and innovation.

However, the fact remains that our current tax system has some inherent inequities that allow wealthier Canadians to enjoy benefits that are not available to the middle class. Our goal here is to achieve greater tax fairness.

[English]

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC):** Madam Speaker, this morning the Minister of Finance had a rendezvous with reality. A group of small business people piled in to his town hall meeting in Oakville and told him that his plan will not only pick their pockets but screw up their life plans.

It will make it impossible for them to save for maternity, severance, a rainy day, or retirement. It will mean fewer doctors in our rural communities. It will mean a harder time for young women to get into entrepreneurship.

He is going to have to back down from this tax increase. Why does the minister not just do it today?

*Oral Questions*

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, we were elected on a very clear promise to grow the middle class. We made a commitment to all those who were forgotten for 10 years under the previous government, which focused on constantly giving tax breaks to the rich.

That is why we raised taxes on the richest 1% in order to lower taxes for nine million Canadians, a measure that the Conservatives voted against. That is why we brought in the Canada child benefit, which is going to lift hundreds of thousands of children out of poverty. That is another measure the Conservatives voted against. We will continue to pursue our objective of achieving greater tax fairness.

[*English*]

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the Liberals were not elected to raise taxes on Andrew Lovell, the family farmer from New Brunswick who said now he will not be able to set aside money within his company to prepare, for example, for a rainy day, which happens on the farm every once in a while.

It will also mean he will pay higher taxes to eventually sell his farm to his kids than he would to sell it to McCain Foods, which owns 200 farms in that same province.

Why is the government trying to put an end to the family farm and favouring the big corporate takeover artists?

• (1120)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I was actually in Saskatchewan just yesterday to meet with representatives of Saskatchewan's agrifood sector, agricultural producers, and farmers. We will always stand behind our farmers and defend the family farm model. That is why there is nothing in our proposals that would prevent a family member from working on a farm or in a business.

We want to make sure we get this right. That is why we are actively listening, so we can improve tax fairness and maintain our support for farmers and family farms.

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Madam Speaker, in committee, in the House, and in all other settings, the Liberals have become masters of the empty rhetoric. They only speak in talking points: the middle class and those working hard to join it; the wealthiest 1%; a good deal, not just any deal.

It is impossible to get a straight answer out of this government. In the real world, there are real crises to deal with. My question is simple.

Yes or no: will the government extend the consultations on its tax reform plans, which are going to hurt small businesses and farms, Canada's real job creators?

**Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is worth pointing out that our small business tax rate is the lowest in the G7 because we stand behind our Canadian business people and want them to have that competitive advantage.

Since the member mentioned talking points, I would like to talk about the Canada child benefit, a benefit that, had it been around when I was young, would have given my mother, my brother, and me an extra \$1,036 per month tax free. That is not a talking point; it is a fact. We are talking about a 40% drop in child poverty in Canada. We are proud of that, and we will take no lessons from anyone over there.

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Madam Speaker, what a parrot.

The Liberal government's problem is that it has zero credibility. The Liberals break their promises and pit Canadians against each other. They never walk the walk and are always making excuses for the unintended consequences of their actions.

People expect an NHL-calibre government in Ottawa, but what we have is a garage league B team. It is time for a new coach. Canadians deserve better.

Is this government even playing on the same team as Canadian small businesses and farmers? Will some backbencher finally stand up and tell the Minister of Finance to stop scoring on his own net?

**Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, how ironic for a member who is reading his question to call me a parrot.

I would like to remind him of one thing: our government is focused on growth, something that the Conservatives did not manage to accomplish during their 10 years in office because they were busy giving tax breaks to the wealthy. We have created 400,000 jobs, most of which are full-time positions. Our GDP has experienced the strongest growth in 15 years. Prosperity and growth are important to us, but prosperity must be inclusive.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I would like to remind the member for Mégantic—L'Érable that the House listened patiently while he asked his question, so he should listen to the answer, even if he does not like it.

[*English*]

The hon. member for Sherbrooke.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

#### CANADIAN HERITAGE

**Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP):** Madam Speaker, francophone communities, including Quebec, are not very happy that the Liberals signed a secret deal with Netflix without any guarantee that the company would invest in French-language content.

That is completely unfair to our Canadian broadcasters, who have to play by the rules. Even worse, this deal will further jeopardize the culture of Quebec and other francophone communities.

It is simple. The Liberals are going to let an American company decide the future of our culture. Do the Quebec members across the way think it is a good idea to sub-contract the protection of our culture to the Americans?

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, our creators and artists work every day to tell unique stories about who we are. Our government always stands up for Canadian artists.

What is more, we have already invested \$1.9 million in arts and culture. We reinvested in the CMF to protect our productions, and we invested \$125 million to ensure that our stories are shared with the world. We believe in our artists, and we are adapting our system to the digital age.

\* \* \*

**TAXATION**

**Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP):** Madam Speaker, the government is calling this a historic agreement. It is certainly a historic agreement for Netflix.

As the saying goes, when the cat is away, the mice will play. Clearly, many people across the aisle are asleep at the switch. American multinationals must have lulled them into a deep sleep. After the Liberals promised to actively fight tax evasion, the Minister of Canadian Heritage signed a tax evasion contract with Netflix.

Who will be the next lucky winner—Google? Facebook? With all of CRA's purported efforts to combat tax evasion, is the Minister of National Revenue pleased to see her colleague from Canadian Heritage signing secret deals with multinationals so they can avoid paying their fair share?

● (1125)

**Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for giving me the opportunity to talk about all the hard work we have done to tackle tax evasion and tax avoidance.

Over the past two years, we have invested over \$1 billion, which has put us well on our way to recovering \$25 billion. In fact, 335 cases have been transferred for criminal investigation and millions of dollars in fines have been imposed, including \$44 million in third-party penalties.

We will keep working for Canadians and continue to keep our promises.

\* \* \*

[English]

**CANADIAN HERITAGE**

**Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP):** Madam Speaker, it sounds like the answer is yes.

Last year, Netflix said it would continue to spend “hundreds of millions of dollars” in Canada, but yesterday the heritage minister bragged about a sweet deal she scored by securing \$100 million a year. That is about one per cent of Netflix's budget just for content creation. This happened at the same time that in Canada, Netflix raised its prices.

This is a great PR opportunity for Netflix, and it gets to maintain its unfair advantage in the marketplace. A fantastic deal for Netflix, but what did we get?

**Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, our government is committed to growing our creative industries. The deal with Netflix is part and parcel of that. It is a huge, huge vote of confidence by a global player, for the first time ever, to make an investment. It is a vote of confidence in the strength of our Canadian creators. This is a good news story: \$500 million over five years. We are world leaders, and this has now been recognized by a global player. Nothing but good news here.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP):** Madam Speaker, let us do some math. Netflix raises its prices by \$1 a month on Canadian accounts. With the millions of users in Canada, that generates about \$72 million a year of new revenue for Netflix. To be clear, nearly three-quarters of this massive commitment from Netflix is coming directly from the pockets of Canadians. We already knew that Netflix intended to maintain investments in Canada. Knowing this, will the minister admit that Canadians were ripped off?

**Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, this deal with Netflix speaks volumes to the strength of the creative sector here in Canada. This is a global player that for the first time has invested outside the United States, and it chose Canada. Canadians love Netflix. Netflix loves the Canadian creative sector. This is a win-win for Canada. It is a win-win for consumers. It is a win-win for our creators. This is a good news story.

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**TAXATION**

**Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC):** Madam Speaker, Canadians are learning more about who wins and who loses under the Liberals' tax-change plan. It is very simple. Mom-and-pop shop owners lose. Family-run restaurants lose. Farm families lose. Big Bay Street firms, like the finance minister's own Morneau Shepell, they win. Clearly the minister is in a conflict. He preaches the gospel of tax fairness while sheltering his own family fortune from the harmful changes he proposes. Can the finance minister explain why small-business owners in my riding should pay more, while he and his companies get a free ride?

[Translation]

**Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, we have always been very clear. The fact is that our tax system currently has some inequities that we want to fix. Currently, some wealthy Canadians are encouraged to incorporate so they can access tax benefits that are out of reach for the vast majority of Canadians.

Our goal is to ensure that our small business tax rate remains the lowest in the G7, that the middle-class tax rate remains low, and that we bring a bit more fairness to a tax system where fairness is in short supply.



*Oral Questions**[English]*

**Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the small-business owners in my riding did not make their fortunes on Bay Street, they are not trust fund babies, and they certainly do not have any taxpayer-funded nannies. The small-business owners in my riding are middle-class working families that work hard, take risks, and make sacrifices to put food on their tables and to support our community. Why should these families pay more while the minister and the Prime Minister protect their own family fortunes from these harmful Liberal tax changes?

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, if he wants to talk about passive investment and passive investment income, then it is interesting to note that 1.7% of Canadian businesses hold 80% of the income generated by passive investment. That is essentially 29,000 businesses. We are not targeting small businesses or middle-class entrepreneurs. Our objective is to have greater tax fairness to ensure that everyone pays their fair share.

● (1130)

*[English]*

**Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC):** Madam Speaker, my constituent Dacan owns a successful local family business. He has managed to raise a family of six and has contributed to the local economy through employment. Dacan ruptured his patella and had surgery, with serious complications, which prevents him from walking. There were no benefits. There were no sick days. There are no vacations. His wife drives him to work and job sites. He continues to bid on projects, and he supervises while he is infirm. How is it fair that hard-working people like Dacan will have to now pay more taxes while the fortunes of the Prime Minister and the finance minister are unaffected?

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his poignant question.

I want to reassure him on one point: we will always be behind small and medium-sized businesses in Canada. They are the cornerstone of our growth. That is why we are keeping the small business tax rate low. We are encouraging them to reinvest in growth and innovation in their business. We will always stand behind our small business owners.

**Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC):** Madam Speaker, every year, hundreds of youth take part in a fantastic arts program at the Moulin La Lorraine arts centre. This program is made possible by the generosity of Assurances Pouliot & Associés Inc. of Sainte-Justine, which pays for bus transportation.

However, the tax hike the Liberals want to foist on our local SMEs would put these worthy community initiatives in jeopardy.

Why is the Minister of Finance taking aim at youth cultural development in Lac-Etchemin, while his company, Morneau Shepell, and the Prime Minister's fortune will be unaffected?

**Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I will say it again: our goal is to build a fairer tax system. We have seen that some of the wealthiest

Canadians are encouraged to incorporate so they can access tax benefits that are out of reach to the middle class. This likely does not apply to the situation the member was talking about. To give you an example, a professional earning \$300,000 can incorporate and use income sprinkling to save \$48,000, the equivalent of the average salary in Canada.

These benefits are legal, but the fact that they are available to some Canadians but not others is unfair. That is what we want to fix.

*[English]*

**Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC):** Madam Speaker, this is not fairness, it is hypocrisy. The Prime Minister was clear on how he feels about small businesses: they are just tax shelters used by wealthy Canadians to avoid paying taxes. The Liberals framed their tax grab on business owners as an attempt to close loopholes for the wealthy 1% and those who live in gated communities, those like the Prime Minister and the finance minister.

The Liberals talk a good game, but their actions tell a different story. While small-business owners face tough choices, the fortunes of the Prime Minister and the finance minister will be sheltered. Fairness? In what universe is that fair?

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, we will always stand behind the middle class. The first thing we did when we came to power in 2015 was raise taxes on the wealthiest 1% in order to lower taxes for nine million Canadians. We brought in a more progressive Canadian child benefit that will lift hundreds of thousands of children out of poverty. Meanwhile, for 10 years, the Conservatives gave tax breaks to the rich. Our goal is to help the middle class, help SMEs, and introduce greater tax fairness into our tax system.

*[English]*

**Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC):** Yes, Madam Speaker, they will stand behind business owners with their hands in their pockets.

Businesses thrive on stability, and all they see from the government is fiscal uncertainty. They worry for their employees and their families. Will kids be able to go to university, or will they have to settle for less? What choices will they have to make? Will they let people go or just close up shop altogether?

Why is the Prime Minister conducting this assault on the middle class and those working hard just to stay in it?

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I think that we made it very clear to Canadians during the last election campaign that we were committed to help the middle class by reducing inequality and reviewing the inequities in our tax system. That is what we want to correct. We are at the consultation stage right now, and the consultations are set to conclude next week. We are listening to Canadians, farmers, and small business owners to make sure that we get this right.

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[English]

**INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS**

**Ms. Georgina Jolibois (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, NDP):** Madam Speaker, we have learned that the government spent more than \$110,000 fighting a first nations girl in court. It fought to block payment for the orthodontic treatment that cost just \$6,000 to save her teeth. Instead the government spent 18 times more money fighting her in court. This is sickening. The government promised a nation-to-nation relationship. It promised that the relationship with first nations people is the most important.

How can the Liberals stand and repeat those lines while continuing to fight first nations kids in court?

• (1135)

**Mr. Don Rusnak (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, while I cannot speak about the specifics of a case, we know that there are issues with the non-insured health benefits program. This is not something new.

I have met with deputy Grand Chief Smallboy, Chief Janice Henderson, Chief Patricia Big George, Chief Collins, and Grand Chief Daniels, among others. We are all committed to reforming the system, and we will build upon the work we have all begun. The Prime Minister and the Minister of Indigenous Services are absolutely committed to making improvements to the non-insured health benefits program and are taking other steps toward true reconciliation.

[Translation]

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP):** Madam Speaker, the Human Rights Tribunal was clear: the government must stop taking legal action against indigenous children who need medical treatment. That is clear and something that could be done immediately. However, the government spent more than \$110,000 fighting a child over a \$6,000 dental procedure. It makes no sense.

Will the minister commit to ending this fight immediately, covering the medical costs, and ending the systematic denial of services for indigenous children?

[English]

**Mr. Don Rusnak (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, as I said, I cannot speak about the specifics of a case. The minister and I have been working with partners, and I am willing to work with the members opposite to improve the non-insured health benefits program. The Prime Minister and the Minister of Indigenous Services are

committed to building positive change and working with all partners to improve the lives of indigenous Canadians.

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**TAXATION**

**Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC):** Madam Speaker, last week I heard from Mike, chairman of Tri-Mach manufacturing in Elmira. Mike employs 150 Canadians and had purchased more land with plans to expand his company and add another 100 employees, but these proposed Liberal tax changes have halted all of his plans. In fact, Mike is now planning on selling the land and downsizing his operation.

Why has the finance minister designed a system that will make Mike pay huge increases in tax that will cripple his business, while the family fortunes of the Prime Minister and the finance minister remain untouched? How is that fair?

[Translation]

**Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his question. Once again, I want to reiterate that the tax rate for small and medium-sized businesses in Canada remains the lowest in the G7. We are encouraging our entrepreneurs to invest in growth and innovation. Clearly, this is working. Since we took office, 400,000 jobs have been created, most of which are full time. With regard to the system we have created, it has been designed to increase growth and prosperity, but prosperity inclusive of all Canadians.

**Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC):** Madam Speaker, most local business owners are part of the middle class. These are people who put all their time, energy, and efforts into paying the bills and paying their employees before they pay themselves. These are not huge multinationals; they are our neighbours. They are the mainstay of the local economy in Lévis—Lotbinière.

Why is the Prime Minister targeting our local businesses with a massive tax increase that will threaten jobs and the communities that depend on them?

**Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I want to reiterate that we are keeping tax rates low for our SMEs. We know how important SMEs are to the Canadian economy, and we will always stand behind our entrepreneurs.

The only problem is that we have noticed some inequities in our tax system that encourage certain individuals in Canada to incorporate themselves and use corporate entities to access tax benefits that the vast majority of Canadians, like my colleague's constituents and the middle class, do not have access to. We think that we can do better and make our tax system a little fairer, and that is what we are working towards.

*Oral Questions*

[English]

**Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC):** Madam Speaker, more than 110,000 energy workers have lost their jobs since 2015. The Liberals are making it worse. Seventy percent of oil and gas service and supply companies are small businesses. They have been hit especially hard. The Liberals already added red tape and more costs. Now they are planning to kick them while they are down with a huge tax hike, while sheltering the Finance Minister's billion-dollar family business and the PM's family fortune. That is not fair.

Why are the Liberals making it so much harder for struggling small businesses?

**Ms. Kim Rudd (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, as I have said many times in the House, we have been able to do what the Harper government could not achieve in a decade. We have approved infrastructure projects that will create tens of thousands of good-paying middle-class jobs across Canada, and let me tell members what some of those jobs are: Nova Gas pipeline, 3,000 jobs; Line 3 replacement program, 7,000 jobs; Trans Mountain expansion pipeline, 15,440 jobs. I could go on and on.

These projects and others will create more than 38,000 good-paying jobs in Canada.

• (1140)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I want to remind the members of the official opposition that they have an opportunity when they are asking questions to have the respect of the House, and I expect that they in return will allow that respect to flow through this House.

The member for Barrie—Innisfil has been screaming quite bit throughout. I want to say that it is not acceptable and to allow the government side to answer the question. Even though the member may not be in agreement with the question, they still deserve that respect.

The hon. member for Lakeland.

**Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I asked about taxes, but yesterday the minister agreed with me that natural resources drive Canada's economy. However, since he started his job, more Alberta energy workers have lost their jobs than in nearly 40 years. More than 600,000 Canadians work in energy. More than one-sixth of them have lost their jobs under the Liberals.

Energy is the biggest private sector investor in Canada, but under the Liberals, it has had the biggest two-year decline in 70 years. Now they will hammer them even more with this new huge tax grab. When will the Liberals actually walk their talk and champion Canadian energy small businesses?

**Ms. Kim Rudd (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, as I said a moment ago, I could go on and on about job creation. Canadians know that strong action on the environment is good for our economy. It makes us more competitive, it fosters innovation, and it reduces pollution. Our support for the energy sector reflects a balanced approach that ensures that the environment is protected and that we continue to create good, well-paying jobs for Canadians, many of which are in Alberta.

After 10 years of inaction by the Harper Conservatives, we have approved pipelines, creating tens of thousands of good-paying, middle-class jobs across Canada. Our approach builds community—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The hon. member for London—Fanshawe.

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**AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY**

**Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Madam Speaker, today the CAMI strike continues in Ingersoll, where workers' jobs are currently threatened with relocation to Mexico. The jobs that are at risk sustain workers' families and the region, and these good manufacturing jobs sustain this country. They must be kept in this community.

The loss of the Terrain production cost more than 400 jobs, and now a second line is at risk, yet the Liberals are still missing in action. These workers are standing up for all workers in this country. When will the Liberal government stand up for them?

**Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, we obviously, as a government, understand the critical importance of the automotive sector in Canada and with respect to Canada's economy. Our government is committed to keeping Canada's automotive sector globally innovative and globally competitive.

We have recently launched the strategic innovation fund to continue to attract and support new high-quality investments in a number of sectors, but in particular, the automotive sector. Our strategy is to continue to support this sector as we move forward in light of the current context, and we will continue to put our money where our mouth is.

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**INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Madam Speaker, the Liberal government says that its most important relationship is with Canada's indigenous peoples. While they are fighting young girls in court to stop dental procedures, they are also denying the Nuu-chah-nulth Nations their right to catch and sell fish on their traditional lands. The Nuu-chah-nulth went and reaffirmed their rights at the B.C. Supreme Court eight years ago. They do not want to be in court. They want to be on the water fishing.

When will the Liberals stop dragging their feet, finally honour their commitment to indigenous peoples and respect their legal rights?

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I had the pleasure of visiting and attending at many indigenous communities over the summer. I understand the very close and important relationship that our indigenous peoples have with fish. That is why our government is investing over a quarter of a billion dollars over the next five years to make sure that there is access to fish and the capacity to fish. That includes more than \$60 million on an ongoing basis.

These commitments are already working to create real middle-class jobs in the fishing sector for indigenous communities, with over 2,800 middle-class jobs to date.

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**SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, poverty is an issue that all governments work to address. The last federal government achieved next to nothing in reducing the poverty rate in Canada. I was glad to see our government introduce the Canada child benefit in budget 2016. This is a great help for the families in my riding of Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill.

Could the minister inform us on the next steps toward his mandate to create a poverty reduction strategy?

• (1145)

**Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill for the question and her focus on seniors' poverty as well.

Every Canadian deserves a real chance at success and to retire with dignity. This is why since we have taken office our government has taken significant and concrete action to reduce poverty in this country. In fact, the minister hosted a national poverty conference this week to engage stakeholders and people with lived experience to find out how we can do even better on this subject.

Our government will soon be delivering the first-ever Canadian poverty reduction strategy that will tackle the impacts of poverty and, in particular, the impacts that racism and sexism have on this sector. We will be setting clear targets and having clear—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The hon. member for Sarnia—Lambton.

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**TAXATION**

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC):** Madam Speaker, Theo Kusters and his wife Gertie immigrated to Canada and have worked hard all their lives. They run a dairy farm in my riding with their son, Martin, and daughter-in-law, Elsie.

Theo was planning on passing his business on to his son, but under the new Liberal tax grab, the tax bill for retiring farmers will be significantly higher if they sell to their son than to a large corporate entity. Why has the finance minister designed a tax system in which Theo's family will pay significantly higher taxes, while the

family fortunes of the Prime Minister and the finance minister will not be touched. How is that fair?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, we have been working on this issue, listening to farmers, and meeting with agricultural sector representatives.

I can assure the House that we will take the sector's views into account as we plan for the future. Our priority is tax fairness, and we want to avoid unintended consequences for our hard-working farmers. I can assure the House that our government will not be changing the tax breaks that help family businesses grow and create jobs.

**Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am going to try to get some answers from the Minister of Finance's pet parrot.

A car dealership in Rivière-du-Loup is planning to invest \$5 million in the coming year to expand its services and its client base. That investment could not have happened if the owner had not been able to grow his long-term investment returns, which the Liberals now want to tax more heavily as part of their unfair reform.

Why do the Liberals want to penalize businesses all over Quebec, including in my riding, while leaving the Prime Minister's fortune and that of the Minister of Finance untouched?

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The member has used the word "parrot" twice now, and I would like to remind him that this is unacceptable because it is a personal attack.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance.

**Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I think the member's lack of respect is shameful. I know he can do much better.

I want to reassure all the business owners who are listening that our goal is to improve tax fairness. We are keeping a low tax rate for our small businesses because we know how crucial they are to the Canadian economy and how much they contribute to our growth.

We want to create an environment that is conducive to growth, and we have been very successful on that score since coming to power. I am talking about 400,000 new jobs, the highest GDP growth in the G7, the strongest growth rate in 15 years. These are results the Conservatives were never able to achieve.

We are moving forward with our objective of improving tax fairness and supporting our SMEs and the middle class.

[*English*]

**Mr. David Yurdiga (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC):** Madam Speaker, my office has been flooded with calls from small business owners regarding the Liberals' small business tax hike.

*Oral Questions*

Times are difficult in Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, and businesses cannot afford a new massive Liberal tax on investment. Everyone I have spoken to agrees that this is just a reckless tax grab.

Why is someone like Brad Musat, who owns Lac La Biche Ford, being hit with a huge tax hike, when the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister have family fortunes and businesses that will not be affected? How is that fair?

[Translation]

**Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I will start by reminding the member that we are holding consultations at this very moment. We are listening to Canadians to make sure that we get it right and that our changes will not have any unintended consequences.

The fact is, there are inequities in our current system that allow some of the wealthiest Canadians to access tax benefits that are out of reach to the vast majority of middle-class Canadians. We will always stand behind our small and medium-sized businesses and behind the middle class. I might add that the Conservatives actually voted against several measures specifically aimed at helping the middle class.

• (1150)

[English]

**Mr. Dave MacKenzie (Oxford, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the new Liberal tax hikes on local businesses are set to make life very hard for farm families, young entrepreneurs, and local business operators.

Why did the Minister of Finance design a system in which farmers and local businesses in my riding will pay significantly higher taxes, while the family fortunes of the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance will not be touched?

How is this fair for hard-working Canadians and their families?

[Translation]

**Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I would like to once again remind members that, as long as the money stays in a business to be invested in that business's growth and innovation, there will be no change. We will continue to offer the lowest tax rate for SMEs in the G7 because we know that it gives them a competitive advantage. We support our SMEs.

The only problem is that the existing system is unfair and encourages wealthy Canadians—and I am not talking about the middle class here—to incorporate so they pay a lower tax rate than most Canadians. We think we can do better and make our tax system fairer.

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[English]

**CANADA POST**

**Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, NDP):** Madam Speaker, the new Minister of Public Services and Procurement has yet to agree to appear before the government operations committee.

As vice-chair of that committee, I am wondering when the government will respond to the all-party report we tabled more than nine months ago, calling on Canada Post to restore door-to-door mail

delivery, or should Canadians instead write “return to sender” on the Liberal platform as broken promises pile up faster than junk mail around a community mailbox?

**Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, our government has delivered on its promise and its commitment to suspend the implementation of community mailboxes and to undertake a comprehensive review of Canada Post. The member knows that very well, because he participated in that very review undertaken by the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates, accompanied by a special task force. We have their reports. We have all of the evidence.

The government is considering the future of this treasured national institution that is Canada Post and its employees. We will report to the House this year.

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[Translation]

**CANADA REVENUE AGENCY**

**Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP):** Madam Speaker, it takes so long for the Canada Revenue Agency to deal with files that families in my riding are losing up to six or seven months of benefits before receiving anything. That is completely unacceptable. These families are already struggling to make ends meet, and the CRA is making things worse for them. Perhaps the Liberals should wake up before we have another catastrophe like Phoenix on our hands. The federal government has been boasting about so-called investments in the CRA.

Will the government hire more staff to meet the needs of families and individuals who are struggling to earn a decent living?

**Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the CRA provides quality services to Canadians. It is unacceptable that some Canadians are not receiving their credits and benefits within a reasonable period of time.

Many vulnerable Canadians depend on these credits and benefits to get by, and we will redouble our efforts to make them more accessible. I would like to remind Canadians of how important it is to file their income tax return in order to receive the credits and benefits they are entitled to.

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[English]

**TAXATION**

**Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC):** Madam Speaker, Andrew and his wife risked everything to open a small coffee shop in Vernon. They built a life plan based on Canadian tax laws. Now the Liberal government is threatening to tear up their life plan, changing the law, and killing their initiative to be independent.

*Oral Questions*

Why has the Minister of Finance designed a system in which Andrew and his wife will pay significantly higher taxes, while the family business fortunes of the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance will not be touched? How is that fair?

[Translation]

**Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, parts of our current tax system are unfair because they encourage the wealthiest Canadians to incorporate so they can access tax benefits that the middle class cannot.

We think we can do better. We think it is not fair when a professional who earns \$300,000 per year can incorporate and save the equivalent of an average person's income in taxes every year. That is what we want to fix. We stand behind our small businesses and our middle-class business people, and we always will.

[English]

**Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC):** Madam Speaker, how is it fair that a billionaire finance minister and a millionaire Prime Minister's trust funds and fortunes will be protected under these current changes? That is not fair.

Ranching and forestry are economic drivers of communities throughout British Columbia. Evan, a rancher in my riding, stood beside his family and neighbours and courageously fought back the fires. They saved properties and lives. He said to me recently, "With the devastating fire season we have just come through and all we're dealing with, and now the tax changes that are being proposed by this government, our ranchers don't stand a chance."

When will the finance minister abandon these tax changes and start standing up for foresters and ranchers?

• (1155)

[Translation]

**Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, we were elected because we made a very clear promise to the middle class and our small and medium-sized businesses. That is why we are keeping the small business tax rate below that of all other G7 countries, which encourages them to invest in growth and innovation.

We are not going after middle-class business people. We are going after some of the wealthiest Canadians who can use tax breaks in the current system that the vast majority of Canadians do not have access to. That is what we want to fix. We are holding consultations because we want to make sure we are doing things properly so there will be no unintended consequences.

[English]

**Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I recently asked how the Liberal government's proposed tax changes would affect farmers using AgriInvest, and it was obvious from the parliamentary secretary's answer that he has no idea how AgriInvest works. AgriInvest is a self-help tool that allows and encourages farmers to put money away for a rainy day. In essence, it is a way for farmers to get their income from the marketplace and not from their mailboxes.

Now the finance minister wants to triple the tax on something that the agriculture minister has urged farmers to do. How the heck is that fair?

[Translation]

**Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, federal, provincial, and territorial agriculture ministers reached an agreement on the main elements of the strategic framework. The Canadian Agricultural Partnership will be in place on April 1, 2018.

It will support and strengthen Canada's agriculture and food processing sector through innovation and give it a competitive edge globally. The partnership will invest \$3 billion over five years in science, research and innovation, trade, the environment, and value-added industries.

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**NATIONAL DEFENCE**

**Mr. Ramez Ayoub (Thérèse-De Blainville, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, in the new national defence policy, the government recognizes that when it comes to the military, our service members are our number one resource. Last year, however, the Auditor General indicated that our armed forces were massively understaffed, and that the problem was going to get worse, not better.

Would the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence tell the House about the efforts being made to reverse this trend and ensure that we can increase the regular force and the reserves, not only in Quebec but across the country?

**Mr. Jean Rioux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, Canadians will have an opportunity tomorrow to see all the hard work our reserve forces do in Canada and internationally. On Saturday, September 30, all units of the Canadian army reserve will open their doors to Canadians. This initiative is part of the army's efforts to recruit new regular and reserve personnel.

This is a unique opportunity to meet soldiers in their working environment and learn more about the important contribution they make.

I invite all my colleagues to support this event to ensure the success of this open house all across the country.

\* \* \*

[English]

**PRIVACY**

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, we have just learned that a government employee from CRA has been suspended for six days for taking home over 1,000 files. Canadians need to know whether their personal information has been compromised.

*Oral Questions*

Can the minister please inform this House what information the government may have about the theft of these sensitive files?

[Translation]

**Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I want to reassure my colleague that confidentiality is the Canada Revenue Agency's top priority.

I am not aware of the situation the member is referring to, but my hon. colleagues can rest assured that all necessary measures are being taken to ensure the confidentiality of information at the Canada Revenue Agency.

\* \* \*

[English]

**CANADA REVENUE AGENCY**

**Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the dream of home ownership seems to be moving further and further away from middle-class Canadians in my riding of Scarborough—Guildwood. While many of my constituents try to save for what will likely be the biggest investment in their lives, we continue to see stories of rampant speculation by certain individuals who cheat the system.

Would the Minister of National Revenue update the House and all Canadians on the progress made to crack down on those who do not comply with real estate tax laws?

• (1200)

**Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, our government recognizes the importance of a fair housing market for all Canadians. We have increased the agency real estate audits in the Vancouver and Toronto markets. These audits found over \$275 million in unreported income. We have applied over \$20 million in penalties through these audits.

Let me be clear that tax evaders can no longer hide.

\* \* \*

**EMPLOYMENT**

**Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the Minister of Public Safety is closing down the Canada Border Services Agency office in my riding of Oshawa. Oshawa is investing millions of dollars in its runway infrastructure to make our community more competitive, while the Liberals continue to introduce policies that do the exact opposite.

There was no consultation on this Liberal decision until after the fact. Local governments have been trying to reach out to the minister, but have received absolutely no word as to why the CBSA office is being shut down in my riding.

Would the minister explain why he has decided to negatively impact Oshawa's growth as a transportation hub and kill local jobs and future opportunities?

**Mr. Mark Holland (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, of course, our officials did talk with the City of Oshawa and the mayor, and made it very clear that services were going to be improving, that in fact there were going to be more Canada Border Services agents available to process goods and services and

passengers. I am pleased to say that for Durham Region and Oshawa this is a material improvement and it is good news.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

**Mr. Simon Marcil (Mirabel, BQ):** Madam Speaker, the government will not let up on former Aveos workers. The government caused them to lose their jobs in 2012 by refusing to enforce the Air Canada Act. It even changed the legislation last year to ensure that these people would not get their jobs back.

Now the government is going after them for EI benefits they received five years ago as a result of the government's own mistake.

Will the government stop harassing the 400 former Aveos workers and forgive them their EI debt?

**Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question.

I know that some former Aveos employees are in a tough situation.

[English]

My department and the Canada Revenue Agency are working together to offer flexibility and options to ensure people are treated fairly and respectfully as we move to correct the situation and address individual cases as they appear.

[Translation]

**Mr. Simon Marcil (Mirabel, BQ):** Madam Speaker, that is nonsense.

The file has been on the minister's desk for four months. This week, from the comfort of his limousine, he sent collection agents to harass Aveos workers.

The thing is that he is not short on cash because the employment insurance fund had a \$1.4 billion surplus last year, and as hon. members will recall, the government does not put a single penny into that fund.

Out of a \$1.4 billion surplus the government cannot find \$4 million to right a wrong that it committed.

When will the government settle this and do right by the former Aveos workers? It is time for action.

**Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I know that some former Aveos employees are in a tough situation.

*Routine Proceedings*

[English]

We recognize this is a very significant issue and we are working very hard to address it. However, in this situation, according to EI regulations, the Employment Insurance Commission of Canada has the authority to write off these overpayments, and it does so on a case-by-case basis. We are working hard to address this and have worked with officials in that jurisdiction to make sure we address them as quickly as possible and as fairly as possible.

[Translation]

**Mr. Simon Marcil (Mirabel, BQ):** Madam Speaker, everyone keeps passing the buck on this issue.

It took four months to change the law and make sure that former Aveos workers would not get their jobs back. It would seem, however, that letting up on them will take a bit more doing.

I have here an email from the office of the Prime Minister, the same Prime Minister who was protesting alongside Aveos workers with a megaphone five years ago.

What does the Prime Minister tell former Aveos workers? He tells them it is the minister's job and the minister is supposed to take care of it.

The minister is the one who should lose his job. When will he forgive this debt?

[English]

**Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, our department and the Canada Revenue Agency are working together to offer flexibility and options to ensure people are treated fairly and respectfully. We know, and the House knows, that the Social Security Tribunal is an arm's-length judiciary process that deals with these cases on a case-by-case basis. We are working hard to make sure this situation is addressed properly and fairly, and we will be reporting back to the House when new developments occur.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**CANADIAN HERITAGE**

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Madam Speaker, the Liberal Party seems to be completely oblivious to the plight of ordinary Canadians. When they need help, the Liberal Party is nowhere to be found.

I am calling on the Minister of Canadian Heritage. Whenever foreign online companies want to do business in Canada, they can count on the minister and the federal government. Netflix, Google, Spotify, and Amazon get preferential treatment over Quebec companies. This is a clear-cut case of total submission, of digital colonization.

How can the minister justify giving preferential treatment to foreign companies? She gives tax dodgers a reward that she would never give to companies—

● (1205)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Order. The hon. parliamentary secretary.

**Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the Bloc Québécois may not like our government's vision for our creative community, but SOCAN likes it a lot. In fact, SOCAN congratulated the Minister of Canadian Heritage on our government's vision for a creative Canada because it emphasizes the importance of music creators.

Telefilm Canada agrees with SOCAN. It said, "The vision announced today by the Minister of Canadian Heritage will help Canada to position itself as a key player in the global cultural marketplace. I am—"

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Order. Question period is now over. Does the hon. member for Mirabel wish to rise on a point of order?

**Mr. Simon Marcil:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I seek the unanimous consent of the House to table the email from the office of the Prime Minister.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Does the hon. member have unanimous consent to table this email?

**Some hon. members:** No.

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

[English]

**PETITIONS****CONTRACEPTION**

**Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I have two petitions to present to the House today.

The first petition is from a group of concerned young women and men who would like the Government of Canada to support free prescription birth control. There are 15% of Canadians who have no contraception at all, and a significant number of Canadian women cannot afford contraception.

The petitioners ask the House to support my Motion No. 65, which calls on the federal government to work with the provinces to cover the full cost of prescribed contraceptives.

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Madam Speaker, my second petition has to do with protecting the rivers and lakes in this country.

As members may recall, the Conservative government stripped away environmental regulations through the navigable waters act and left thousands of rivers and lakes vulnerable. In my city of London, the North Thames River, the Middle Thames River, and the Thames River itself are at risk. This is a heritage river.

The petitioners are asking that the federal government live up to its promises in regard to environmental protection and support my Bill C-355, which commits to protecting the Thames River and amending the Navigation Protection Act.



*Routine Proceedings*

## PHYSICIAN-ASSISTED DYING

**Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am honoured to present three petitions today.

The first petition relates to conscience protection. The petitioners highlight that coercion, intimidation, and other forms of pressure are being applied to force physicians, health care professionals, and institutions to be parties to assisted suicide and euthanasia, which is in violation of freedoms of conscience in Canada. This is another promise the government broke when it passed legislation regarding assisted suicide.

The petitioners are calling on Parliament to enshrine in the Criminal Code protection of conscience for physicians and institutions.

● (1210)

## SENIORS

**Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the second petition relates to a national seniors strategy.

The petitioners highlight the fact that right now one in six Canadians is a senior, and within twelve and a half years it will be one in four Canadians. This major demographic change in Canada needs to be prepared for. We need to have a national seniors strategy so that we can properly care for our aging population.

## PALLIATIVE CARE

**Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the last petition I wish to present today deals with palliative care.

The petitioners highlight the fact that 70% of Canadians who need palliative care in the last days of their lives do not have it available to them. They are calling on the government to ensure that palliative care is available to every Canadian who needs it.

## CRIMINAL RECORDS ACT

**Mr. Dan Vandal (Saint Boniface—Saint Vital, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is my honour to rise to present petition e-1007, initiated by one of my constituents, with over 1,000 signatures.

The petitioners are requesting that changes to the pardon system that were made in 2012 be reversed. The changes brought forward under the previous government in 2012 resulted in a significant increase in wait times before a pardon could even be applied for. As well, the changes resulted in a 400% cost increase for those applying for a pardon. That has negatively impacted constituents in my riding, as well as many ridings throughout Canada, as families work hard to rebuild their lives.

It is an honour to submit this petition to the House.

## CRIMINAL CODE FIREARMS PROVISIONS

**Mr. Brad Trost (Saskatoon—University, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present a couple of petitions today.

The first is petition e-575, which calls upon the Government of Canada to empower Canadians to be responsible for their own health and safety by removing the prohibition of sound moderators from the Criminal Code.

The majority of G7 nations allow for the legal use of sound moderators by hunters and sports shooters to reduce noise pollution and noise complaints around shooting ranges and near farms and other areas where hunting and target shooting is legal.

## MARIJUANA

**Mr. Brad Trost (Saskatoon—University, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I would also like to present petition e-1053, which calls upon the House of Commons to revoke Bill C-45, the cannabis legislation.

The petitioners are deeply concerned about how the legalization of cannabis will affect Canadian youth. For example, the government's proposal that every household will be able to contain four marijuana plants will make the possession of cannabis by children incredibly difficult to control and make it harder to prevent distribution of this thought-impairing drug by criminals.

[*Translation*]

## IMPAIRED DRIVING

**Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC):** Madam Speaker, today, I would like to table two petitions on the same subject that have been signed by Canadians from across the country, particularly British Columbia and Alberta. These petitions deal with impaired driving and the need for minimum sentences in cases of impaired driving causing death.

[*English*]

The second petition states that the current impaired driving laws are too lenient and that in the interest of public safety, the petitioners want to see tougher laws and the implementation of new mandatory minimum sentencing for those persons convicted of impaired driving.

I have tabled a private member's bill in that regard, so I fully support these petitions.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Just to remind the member, petitions is the time to summarize the petitions and not to provide support, or not, for them.

## FALUN GONG

**Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I rise to table a petition signed by a number of Canadians, including from my riding, mostly in the Calgary area.

The petitioners are concerned about the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners. Specifically, they request that the Canadian government condemn the illegal arrest of a Canadian citizen for practising Falun Gong and call for the immediate and unconditional release of Canadian citizen Ms. Qian Sun.

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## QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

*Government Orders***GOVERNMENT ORDERS***[English]***OCEANS ACT**

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-55, An Act to amend the Oceans Act and the Canada Petroleum Resources Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The hon. member for Edmonton Manning had four minutes of questions and comments remaining.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Chilliwack—Hope.

**Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I listened with interest to the speech of the member for Edmonton Manning on this important bill. I certainly noticed in the first two years of the new Liberal government, that any time it needed to make a difficult decision, a lot of time the Liberals put off the decision by saying that they needed to consult with Canadians or that they needed to get it right. It went on and on and they would not take a firm position on anything.

However, with this bill, the Liberals have rushed it through without conducting adequate consultations. Would the member talk about the inconsistent approach of the government and why it should take the time to get this right?

• (1215)

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the tone of the government and the experience of the vast majority of Canadians with the government has been that the Liberals consult when they should not consult and when they need to consult, they rush things through.

With the second half of their mandate, the Liberals seem to have fallen behind. They fooled around with some of these files for a long time. Now, all of a sudden, they want to push them through without the proper consultation with the main stakeholders in all areas of interest. This is a common trend so far, and this is probably one of the worst that has happened this season.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP):** Madam Speaker, when I knocked on the many doors across my riding, what I heard, again and again, was great concern about the past Conservative government's failed ability to protect marine biodiversity.

When we look at the reality, only 1.5% of our oceans have protection, which is certainly not enough. They look after our communities and we need to see them protected, not just for particular communities but for many businesses across my riding. People are harvesting from the ocean. People in the tourist industry are sharing the beauty of our area. We desperately need that protected area. Why did the Conservatives continue to gut environmental regulations, instead of protecting them as they needed to?

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:** Madam Speaker, the record speaks louder than some of the statements we hear. I appreciate the question from the member on the NDP side, but that is not true. We believe in environmental responsibilities at any level. The previous govern-

ment invested \$252 million to secure the ecological sensitivities in the lands and oceans. Therefore, the Conservatives have done what they can.

The approach has to be balanced. This is how we look at things. We need to have proper consultation and speak to the main stakeholders in all areas to have a balanced approach that will serve Canada for the long run.

**Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Oshawa, and I would ask if you could give me a one-minute warning before my time is up.

It is always a pleasure to rise in the House to speak on behalf of my constituents of Chilliwack—Hope, especially when it comes to things that relate to fisheries and oceans.

Chilliwack and Hope are home to a large stretch of the Fraser River, which runs through the heart of my riding. It certainly plays role in our community, whether it is indigenous and sports fishing. These interests are represented and take full advantage of that great natural resource. Therefore, any time I can stand to talk about fisheries and oceans legislation, I welcome the opportunity.

We are here to talk about Bill C-55, which purports to set aside a percentage of the ocean as marine protected areas and ban certain activities from happening in those areas. As the member for Edmonton Manning just concluded, the main issue we have is that the government has failed to adequately consult with the stakeholders that will be most impacted by this decision, whether angling or indigenous groups. These groups have not been consulted, and there is real confusion as to what the government's plans are.

As the member for Cariboo—Prince George indicated earlier in the debate, numerous studies and witnesses have appeared before the fisheries and oceans committee and have shown that this is a slapdash approach that will not serve the environment, fishers or the communities to be impacted by the arbitrary targets set by the government.

I mentioned the Fraser River. All summer long, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans failed to adequately consult with or respond to the concerns of sports fishing interests on the Fraser River. They tried in vain, through numerous letters, calls, and contact with members of Parliament across the political spectrum, to get some action to get the river opened for sports fishing when other interests were exercising their right to fish. It was a real disappointment for the people in my riding, especially the Fraser River Sportfishing Alliance. It wrote to me and contacted my friend from Cariboo—Prince George and others. It was frustrated at the lack of response from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. We see this in Bill C-55 as well. It ignores stakeholders and their concerns with respect to fisheries policy.

*Government Orders*

In this case, the Fraser River Sportfishing Alliance supports conservation first and foremost. That is what it wants to see done. This is its primary concern. It wants the fishery to be there for future generations as it has been for us. It respects the constitutional priority that is given to first nations for food, social, and ceremonial fisheries. However, what it does not respect is a department of fisheries and oceans that does not respect it, that does not take into consideration the specific concerns it has raised, that does not provide any flexibility to allow it to use selective fishing methods, to allow its members to get out on the water with their kids and grandkids to exercise their right to enjoy that public resource.

I bring that up because I told the alliance that I would bring it to the House of Commons. It is endemic of the concerns we have with DFO's approach and with the approach of the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans to stakeholders that have a very real interest in how our fisheries are managed.

Another aspect of the bill is to prevent oil and gas development activity where these marine protected areas are developed. It is a real lack of consultation, which has again been a pattern for the current government. When it brought in its ill-advised top-down Arctic offshore drilling moratorium, it did not have the courtesy to give the premiers of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut a sufficient heads-up. It called them two hours before the announcement to advise them that offshore oil and gas drilling would be banned in the Arctic. What does that mean?

• (1220)

It meant that devolution to the territories meant nothing. It meant that Ottawa knew best, that decisions on what was best for northerners would continue to be made south of 60 in the Prime Minister's Office. That is a real step backwards when the people of Nunavut and the Northwest Territories specifically worked for years to get a devolution agreement that gave them the power over decision-making on things like natural resources and energy, which was then stripped away by a press release from the Prime Minister's Office, instead of respecting our northern communities that would see a lack of economic opportunity.

Premier Bob McLeod said this felt like a step backwards. He stated:

We spent a lot of time negotiating a devolution agreement, and we thought the days were gone when we'd have unilateral decisions made about the North in some faraway place like Ottawa, and that northerners would be making the decisions about issues that affected northerners.

Peter Taptuna also said:

We do want to be getting to a state where we can make our own determination of our priorities, and the way to do that is gain meaningful revenue from resource development.

They want to control their own destiny when it comes to natural resource development. The federal government, with its Ottawa knows best approach, stepped in and killed that, very much in opposition of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut premiers.

Order Paper questions are an opportunity for opposition members to submit in writing detailed questions asking about the government's activities that relate to any matter we want to raise. When I was the former shadow minister for energy and the former shadow minister for fisheries and oceans, I asked questions on two

occasions. I asked about the decision to conduct the offshore oil and gas exploration ban in the north, and I asked where the consultations were. What I got back was that the Liberals did not do the consultations before the announcement, but they were consulting now, after Ottawa had already made the decision. That is not the way it should be done. If we want communities to come along with us and to get community buy-in, we need to consult before we make an announcement.

We see the same pattern again with Bill C-55. The consultation phase is cut short, a decision is made by the government, and then it will consult now that it has said how it will to be.

It reminds me of the small business tax changes we are talking about right now. The Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance are not listening to Canadians. They are telling Canadians how it will be and are getting an earful because of it. Canadians want to have the opportunity to be heard. They do not want to be told how it will be. When I asked the government about this in Question No. 950, it said that no consultations were done in advance, that it would have them after the fact.

Another example was when the government arbitrarily shutdown the northern gateway pipelines project. I specifically asked if it had consulted with over 30 indigenous communities that stood to gain \$2 billion in economic activity in their remote northern communities, where economic activity is a bit scarce. I asked the government to show me where the consultations were. It said that there were none, that it did not have an obligation to consult, so it arbitrarily shut down the project.

This is the pattern of the government. It says that it will consult when it wants to delay making a decision. When it wants to put off the tough choices, it hides behind consultation. When it already knows what it will do, when it has its Ottawa knows best approach, there are no consultations. The consultation is after the fact.

The Conservatives will oppose Bill C-55, because of this same approach to a lack of meaningful consultation and because Ottawa knows best. That is not the approach the government should take, and we cannot support it.

• (1225)

**Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC):** Madam Speaker, one of the things we hear over and over again is about a percentage of protected area. That we need to reach a certain percentage is very interesting to me. Could the member comment on percentages, where these percentages come from, and how they can be used on the world stage?

**Mr. Mark Strahl:** Madam Speaker, it is clear that our previous Conservative government supported marine protected areas. However, we believe that these should be done right. In fact, we established three of them, one in New Brunswick, one in my home province of British Columbia, and another in the Beaufort Sea. We certainly do not oppose marine protected areas.

*Government Orders*

We believe that we should move forward on them, but they have to be done the right way. Again, the government simply has an Ottawa-knows-best approach, and is once again preaching and trying to gain favour with international audiences. It has nothing to do with protecting the environment in Canada. It has nothing to do with making sure that the oceans that so many Canadians rely on are available to them. It has to do with impressing people in foreign capitals with arbitrary targets and arbitrary deadlines.

That is not good for the Canadian economy. That is not good for the stakeholders who rely on the resource. That is why we cannot support bill.

**Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I had the honour of sitting with the member for a short while on the fisheries committee as a deputy under him.

We did some travel to the Maritimes last year. Could the member explain those consultations a little more, including what we heard from fishermen, how they need to have input into the fisheries programs, the possible closures that could help and the possible closures that are in place and maybe need to be removed, and how fishers need to be able to provide that input?

• (1230)

**Mr. Mark Strahl:** Madam Speaker, it was a great trip, and specifically in P.E.I., where we travelled around.

What we heard, again, was that the Liberal members of Parliament were not consulting with the fishermen who were being impacted by their decisions. The point was made time and time again that this sort of top-down, Ottawa-knows-best approach would never have taken place when another member from Egmont, Gail Shea, was a member of Parliament and the minister of fisheries.

This is a new approach by the Liberal government. It has happened on things like the carapace size of lobsters. It is just a top-down, DFO, Ottawa decision that has negatively impacted people in P.E.I. The government did not care. It had already made the decision and imposed it on fishermen in P.E.I.

We heard time and again that there had been no consultation, no consideration of the economic impacts, and no realization of what the resulting uncertainty would do to their businesses. We are seeing it again with the small business tax proposal, wherein the government is bringing in uncertainty, punishing small business owners, like fishermen. We cannot support that.

**Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I would like to say thank you to my colleague for his speech. You really reiterate how the Liberals are not listening—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I just want to remind the member to address the questions to the Chair and not to the individual member.

**Mr. Colin Carrie:** Madam Speaker, Ian MacPherson, the executive director of the Prince Edward Island Fishermen's Association, was very clear that fishing is the lifeblood of many of these communities. They agree with the protection, but it has to be done in a prudent manner.

Could the member comment on what this will do to the competitiveness of industries in these communities? What kind of

effect does the member think it will have on the families who really rely on the fisheries for their livelihood?

**Mr. Mark Strahl:** Madam Speaker, once again, the government does not care about competitiveness. It does not care about leakage of business to other jurisdictions that do not have the same red tape, that do not have the same tax regime, that do not have the same over-regulation.

We believe that we need to consider our competitiveness, whether it is in the fishery, the energy sector, or business generally. The government fails on all those counts.

**Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC):** Madam Speaker, as the MP for Oshawa, of course I do not have an ocean coastline in my community, but we certainly have an active fishing community in Lake Ontario and in our northern lake country. As a son of a proud navy officer, I spent most of my formative years in Nova Scotia. Indeed, I want to say hi to my family in Sydney.

Yesterday, many of my colleagues had an opportunity to rise on Bill C-55, An Act to amend the Oceans Act and the Canada Petroleum Resources Act, so I will try not to be too repetitive here today. I am happy to be the voice for those affected by this most recent poorly thought out Liberal approach, because their Liberal MPs, unfortunately, will not be.

As we all know, the minister of fisheries and ocean's mandate letter instructs him to:

Work with the Minister of Environment and Climate Change to increase the proportion of Canada's marine and coastal areas that are protected—to five percent by 2017, and ten percent by 2020—supported by new investments in community consultation and science.

I want to highlight the part of that mandate letter about consultation and science. The Liberals' attempt to achieve an artificial political timeline has led them to rush a bill that has lacked exactly that: proper consultation and science. Are any of us in the House surprised? The Liberals are becoming notorious for limiting consultation periods in order to pass their own agenda and silence the public. Sadly, as I said in question period, a local issue that is very important in Oshawa is the Liberals' decision to shut down the Canada Border Services Agency office in my community. Typically, I found out after the decision was made. There was no consultation with local politicians, businesses, or stakeholders. This is going to affect families in my community, job creators, and businesses.

The Liberals are consistently putting artificial political timelines and ideology ahead of local interests and families. This seems to be the rule, not the exception. We have also seen it with their apparent consultation on their small business tax increases, on which the Minister of Finance made it very clear that the consultation would not change the direction of the government. We are seeing it again now with Bill C-55. The minister said that the government is not going to change direction on it.

What really is Liberal consultation? I say it is arrogance. There is no intention to listen. They have made up their mind: Ottawa knows best. Rather than consulting communities that will be most impacted by the Liberal plan on marine protected areas, the minister has fast-tracked this process. Sadly, the Liberal MPs from the Maritimes who are hearing from their constituents about this very issue are doing and saying nothing.

*Government Orders*

The Liberal commitment to protect 5% of marine and coastal areas by 2017 will result in enormous areas from coast to coast being closed to commercial and recreational activities. Again, Liberal MPs are invisible. They are saying and doing nothing. In fact, a large number of academics, industry, commercial, and recreational fishing groups have come forward to speak against the minister's MPA targets within the current time frame. Why? The Liberal government's targets cannot be achieved without extensive consultation and a rigorous effort to prioritize the needs of local communities.

If the Liberals will not listen to Canadians affected by their rushed decisions, let me put what some of the stakeholders have said on the record. Maybe that is the only way the Liberal government will hear. These are the comments of those who will be directly impacted by this arbitrary timeline.

Leonard LeBlanc from the Gulf of Nova Scotia Fleet Planning Board said:

The process DFO used to approach harvested associations and consult on the areas of interest for designation was unorganized and totally not transparent.

Ian MacPherson of the Prince Edward Island Fishermen's Association said:

The PEIFA understands the requirement to protect marine environments, but we do have concerns surrounding the tight timelines to accomplish these goals.

• (1235)

These are quotes from Atlantic Canadians. I would like to remind everyone again that every single Atlantic seat is held by a Liberal member, including the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard himself. Unfortunately, they are silent.

There is another important quote by Mr. MacPherson:

The displacement of fishers from one community to another as a result of an MPA would shift the economics of the island. Throughout the consultation process, fishing areas were discussed, but not the economics of how a large MPA along the small coastline of Prince Edward Island would impact the island.

I could go on.

I am very curious to know whether Liberal members elected by Atlantic Canadians will listen to their constituents and vote against this bill due to the lack of scientific, economic, social, and cultural information taken into consideration.

Speeding up the MPA designation process could have significant impacts on the economy, as stated earlier, leading to job losses and fisheries closures in the coastal communities.

Let me make this very clear. The Conservative Party is not opposed to the creation of MPAs. In fact, we have championed conservation and marine protection in the past. I was very proud to be part of the previous Conservative government that launched the national conservation plan, the NCP, which invested \$252 million over five years to provide a more coordinated approach to conservation efforts across the country. We took steps to add more than 220,000 square kilometres to federal parks and marine protected areas. That was an increase of more than 58%.

Under the Oceans Act, we accomplished the protection of three new marine protected areas. The first one is Musquash Estuary, in New Brunswick. The second is Bowie Seamount, off the coast of

British Columbia, and the third is Tarium Niruyutait, in the Beaufort Sea. We developed our conservation policies and were successful because we respected the economic aspirations of local residents and always focused on building a stronger economy from coast to coast to coast.

The Liberals, however, have not listened to Canadians. They have not been listening to their constituents, and to be honest, I do not think they are even starting to see the damaging consequences of the Prime Minister's agenda. The Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard stated that he would take a balanced and fair approach. That is what he said, balanced and fair, in meeting the government's targets under the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity.

He stated that the Liberal government was committed to a process that was transparent and science based and would consult with the provinces, industries, and indigenous peoples. That is what he said, except that Bill C-55 would allow the minister to make these designations without proper scientific review, which, not surprisingly, is a complete contradiction of his own promises and the Prime Minister's promises.

Let us remember that this is a government that promised to strengthen relationships with the provinces through consultations and collaboration, except, it seems, when most provinces and territories are criticizing the Liberal approach these days. With increased taxes, burdening legislation, and now giving themselves more power to unilaterally create MPAs that are not even backed by science, it seems that the Liberals' relationship with the provinces is worse than it was under the previous government. An MLA from Nunavut stated that Bill C-55 would be an "absolute travesty" for his constituency. He also stated that the federal government never consulted with northerners on what concerns they may have with the bill. It never consulted with northerners. That is sad.

Again, I repeat, the government needs to start making evidence-based decisions and to stop making political decisions that hurt Canadians. Liberals need to start listening to Canadians and ensure that the proper science backs up their decisions in establishing MPAs. Instead, they seem to be more concerned about their international commitments than jobs, growth, and economic development in our communities.

I will not be supporting this bill, because it seems that the Liberals' sole purpose here is to please other countries, even if that means hurting hard-working Canadians. I call on Liberal MPs to stand up for their constituents, not bow down to the PM who wants to create the world's first post-national state at the expense of Canadians. I cannot agree with a bill that eliminates consultation and evidence-based decision-making simply to meet these international commitments.

*Government Orders*

• (1240)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Canada has committed to protecting 10% of its oceans by 2020, including 5% by 2017. However, to date, we have only protected 1.5% of marine areas.

In light of this information, does my colleague not think that this bill should go further? There are not even any minimum standards for creating protected areas and protecting biodiversity. Conservation studies have been done, and several fishing industries are saying that if we want a sustainable industry, Canada needs to get on board and protect marine areas.

I look forward to hearing my colleague's answer.

[*English*]

**Mr. Colin Carrie:** Mr. Speaker, I think everyone is on board with protecting our environment. I am very proud of our government, because we added over 220,000 square kilometres to federal parks and marine protected areas, which was an increase of more than 58%. That was a record.

The key here is the consultation process, not moving forward with an artificial timeline. We have to make sure this is done right. Do not take my word for it. I would like to quote Sean Cox, who is a professor at Simon Fraser University. He said:

...there was a claim that there was overwhelming scientific proof that MPAs are beneficial and widely successful. I think that was misrepresentation of the actual science....

Just enforcing MPAs would be hugely expensive. Again, if you're looking at it from a fisheries management point of view, it's far more cost effective to do other things that don't cost that much.

The key here is also to do no harm. These communities rely on fishing, something that is passed down through generations. It is in their blood. It is something they want to continue to do. To have these unintended consequences simply due to an arrogant government that moves forward from a top-down, Ottawa-based format is something Liberal MPs have to put their voices forward on in the House, because the people who will be hurt are their constituents.

• (1245)

**Hon. Hunter Tootoo (Nunavut, Ind.):** Madam Speaker, I am truly intrigued by the new-found interest of members of the official opposition in Nunavut and in listening to the Inuit. We will recall that just this year, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled in favour of Clyde River. When the opposition was in government, Clyde River was crying for help, crying to be heard and listened to.

The member said the record speaks for itself. With the record they have, could he explain where they were when they were in power and had the ability to actually act, listen, and respond to the Inuit?

**Mr. Colin Carrie:** Madam Speaker, actually, I am really pleased to hear the member for Nunavut stand up in the House. However, he is not talking about what is happening right now. He wants to bring up an issue, a very important issue, but the former MP from Nunavut actually made a difference and put her voice forward every single time an issue from the north came up.

Do not take my word for it. An MLA from Nunavut stated that this would be an absolute travesty for his constituency. He stated that

the federal government never consulted with any northerners on the concerns they may have with the bill.

Where was this member when this bill was being drafted? Where was the member when the Liberal government wanted to jam this down the throats of northerners? It is up to him right now. I want to see him stand in his place today and speak in the House. He is allowed to do that. This is a very important bill for our northern peoples. He needs to stand on their side, not on the side of the Liberal government.

**Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is a real honour to speak to Bill C-55. I will be splitting my time with the member for Calgary Shepard.

Legislation and the policy of government must be based on logic, on science, and on sound consultation. I want to focus my comments on the process of consultation, which, I am hearing from Canadians in my riding of Langley—Aldergrove, is disingenuous and may be fake consultation giving the impression of consultation.

The Liberals, unfortunately, have a timeline they have set. It is often not well thought out. They set a target date, they make the announcements, and they move forward. Consultation is part of the optics, but their minds are already made up.

Bill C-55 would make the minister responsible for increasing the portion of Canada's marine and coastal areas that are protected to 5% by 2017 and 10% by 2020. For the previous government, protected areas were very important. There is a legacy of Liberal governments creating a mess and ignoring the environment and then Conservative governments being brought in to clean up the mess, and that has happened throughout Canadian history. That is what happened over the last nine years under a Conservative government. It increased the protected areas, but it was done based on science and based on consultation.

On a personal note, I love the environment. I consider myself an environmentalist. I spend lots of time walking in the forest. We have an invasive species called English ivy. In off hours, I get some exercise but also do tangible things to improve the environment around where I live. I cut off the bottom seven feet of English ivy that is growing around beautiful cedar trees. There is lots of cottonwood, birch, and alder. These trees will die if we do not take care of them and take off that invasive species, so I do that. Behind our townhouse complex in a beautiful pathway that goes through the forest. It is called Fairy Lane. We have not seen the Prime Minister with his shirt off running around through the forest yet, but maybe one day. For my wife and I, next month will be our 45th anniversary. Diane and I were married in 1972, and she is the best thing that ever happened to me. We like to walk in the forest and enjoy the environment.

*Government Orders*

As Parliament, we have a responsibility to make sure that we are protecting the environment for ourselves but also for the coming generations: our children, our grandchildren, and future generations. I am proud of the accomplishments of the previous Conservative government, but I am very concerned that the current Liberal government is making mistakes similar to those that past Liberal governments made. I am referring to past comments by the Environment Commissioner. The Environment Commissioner, relating to the past Liberal government, said that there is a gap between what the Liberal government said it would do and what it is actually doing. Good intentions are not enough. Another report from the commissioner, referring to the Liberal government, said, "When it comes to protecting the environment, bold announcements are made and then often forgotten as soon as the confetti hits the ground. The federal government seems to have trouble crossing the finish line."

Nothing has changed, it appears. The Liberal government is making announcements, proclaiming there is going to be consultation, and then is moving ahead without basing it on science or good input.

● (1250)

There has to be a balance, and we have heard the Prime Minister say the right things about the importance of consultation and having a balance, saying that we can have a healthy economy and a healthy environment. That is true, but again, we have to have true, genuine consultation.

When designating a marine protected area, we have to consider the impacts on local economies in fishing, in forestry, in mining, and at all levels of industry and the environment. We need to base that designation on consultation, including first nations and aboriginals. For the knowledge we need, we need to consult, and it has to be genuine consultation, and that often takes time if it is done right.

In the middle of summer, when people were enjoying time with their families after working hard and paying increasing Liberal taxes, we had an announcement that there was going to be a form of consultation that would end on October 2. This consultation is on the new Liberal tax attack on small business. It is unfair, and that is what I am hearing over and over again. The consultations are town hall meetings that are being held at 3 p.m., when Canadians are at work, again evidence that it is disingenuous.

That applies to consultation on the environment, marine protected areas, taxes, and even the artificial target date of July 1 of next year, when marijuana is to become legal in Canada. On that consultation process that the government does not want to hear, police chiefs from across Canada and saying to slow down, that we are moving too fast and that the country is not prepared for some of these changes.

Generally speaking, the consultation process appears to be disingenuous. The government is not listening to Canadians.

At the very beginning, when this Parliament started, one of the first issues I was involved with was the issue of assisted suicide and euthanasia. Consultation happened, and I sat on both the special legislative committee and the justice committee on that issue. In my riding and a neighbouring riding, we had town hall meetings, and I

reported back to the committees what we heard. That was put aside because a Liberal member said it was just a moment in time, not really true consultation, and did not represent Canadians because it was a small group of people. They were people that we represent.

Unfortunately, if the Liberal members do not hear what they want to hear, it is not reported. It is dismissed. If we are going to have true consultation, we need to listen to Canadians. We need to hear what they are saying, report it to Parliament and adjust. We should not be stuck going in one direction, unwilling to listen or to adjust and create good policy that creates a balance between a healthy environment and a healthy economy.

On Bill C-55, dealing with the marine protected areas, I want to make some very important points.

If we are not including consultation that listens and makes a difference, then we end up creating something that is rushed and does not have the desired impact. Rather than consulting communities that are most impacted by the Liberal government's plan, the minister has chosen to fast-track this process in order to meet the government's self-imposed political targets. Unfortunately, we will end up with a problem, another mess that a future Conservative government will have to clean up.

● (1255)

**Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Madam Speaker, before I ask my question, I have a comment to make.

The member for Oshawa rose in the House and attacked the member for Nunavut. He attacked his credibility. This is a member of Parliament who is representing his riding. When he comes to this House, he should be treated with decorum and respect. When we come here, we bring our issues and we represent our people. We should be treated equally and we should be focused on the issues, even if they are partisan issues. We should not be questioning the credibility of members of Parliament on whether they are working hard on behalf of their constituents, because we know they are.

For the member, I wonder if the member agrees with the Liberal government. Does he believe that oil and gas exploration should be permissible in a marine protected area? The whole idea of marine protected areas is to protect the marine environment. I do not understand how oil and gas could be permitted in an area that we are supposed to be protecting for future generations.

**Mr. Mark Warawa:** Madam Speaker, I do not believe that the member for Oshawa made any disparaging comments to the member for Nunavut. All members of our Conservative caucus greatly respect that member. I think he was pointing out that the previous member representing Nunavut was a minister in our government who set a high standard and did an incredible job. I do appreciate the member for Nunavut, as I am sure we all do.

*Government Orders*

We need to protect these areas. It has to be done properly on the basis of good consultation and science. If an area's natural resources can be developed, that development should only proceed if it can be done properly and safely. If it cannot be done safely, if it will have a negative consequence for the environment, it should not happen. That would be good science. The member knows that. It is done on a case-by-case basis and should be based on science.

**Hon. Hunter Tootoo (Nunavut, Ind.):** Madam Speaker, I have heard numerous times here the words “no consultation” and “lack of consultation” with respect to this legislation. When I go through the minister's speech from earlier this week, I lose track of the number of times he says that the government will work collaboratively with indigenous people. That is something the previous government missed, as my previous question pointed out. Clyde River was looking for help and there was nothing but silence. The indigenous people were ignored and they ended up going to the Supreme Court, where they won. The government should have listened to them, but refused to.

Some of this rhetoric reminds me of the comic character Dennis the Menace, who was always raising stuff that was not really accurate.

It says in the legislation numerous times that the government will work collaboratively with indigenous groups, and that includes Inuit, throughout the whole process. How can the member say that is not going to happen?

• (1300)

**Mr. Mark Warawa:** Madam Speaker, again, I have the utmost respect for that member and I appreciate his question.

I can only speak from my own personal experience. The previous Conservative government had great respect for first nations people. I have in my riding the Katzie and Kwantlen first nations, and I have a wonderful relationship with them. We were deeply frustrated with what was happening on their island in the middle of the Fraser River. Many acres of land were disappearing every year. Between 2004 and 2006, I told the Liberal minister that their island was disappearing and that the top of the island needed to be armoured. The Liberals did nothing. We had a plan, an engineering design, which showed how to armour that island. So in 2006, when the Conservatives became government, we put in the money and armoured the island to protect the Kwantlen First Nation. I am so proud of what we did. I am proud of the great relationship we have with Kwantlen First Nation.

**Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Langley—Aldergrove for his contributions to the debate so far. I am pleased to be rising to speak to this bill.

Alberta is really known for its coastlines.

There was not even a laugh in the chamber. I thought at least some people would appreciate that.

However, Albertans do care about coastlines. Members may have heard that for the past few years there has been a great debate on the construction of pipelines, for which Alberta is well known and for which Alberta has a lot of technical expertise.

Albertans are especially in pipelines that reach a coastline of some sort, so that we can sell our product at a higher world price. That is what has been consuming the interest, the time, and the debates in politics for the better part of the last few years in Alberta.

This bill to amend the Oceans Act and the Canada Petroleum Resources Act also deals with conservation and stewardship. When I worked in Alberta for the Minister of Sustainable Resource Development, we were charged with the stewardship of not only Alberta's natural resources but also its wildlife, fauna, and aquatic resources. We do, indeed, have many of those. Some of the greatest inland sport fishing that can be done is in Alberta. No hooked barbs are used there. It all has to be done in our lakes and waters without any use of hooked barbs, so it takes quite a skilled angler to actually get it done.

Other members have already gone over some of the defects and some of the inconsistencies they see in the bill that the government has proposed, so I would like to focus my time on what is important when we are trying to talk about stewardship and protecting marine environments.

We should be measuring results by outcomes, not necessarily by whatever ranking we are trying to attain on some international statistic. We should not be using the government's stick to impose something on people. We should be using kind words and going out and reaching out to people, asking them what works in their particular area. That type of approach is the “Ottawa does not know best” approach.

Ottawa actually knows very little about places on any coast of this country, especially in our northern territories. People in those localities have a much better understanding of the local needs of the marine environment.

In the example I gave about measurements and ranking systems and international institutions grading different countries for reaching a certain goal or objective, the latter is good to have, but it is not the primary measurement goal. What we should be doing is asking whether we are reaching our own objectives. We, as Canadians, should be setting our own objectives, local communities' objectives.

It is not for Ottawa to set an objective of 1%, 2%, 5%, 10%, 20%, 30% or 40%. What do the local communities want? What are they talking about? What works for them? Is there one model for everyone? Could there be one model on the east coast, maybe another model on the west coast, and another in the north? Can it be made even more varied?

Can we say that we will call them MPAs, but within the MPAs we will allow it to vary and we will allow differences for different people? Can we also consult ahead of time?

I know the government has made a really big deal out of telling people that it is going to consult more and that the previous government did not do that. I feel that like most Liberal promises nowadays, this one should come with a warning label, such as “promise will be smaller than it appears” or “this promise may not be what it appears to be”.



*Government Orders*

I thought we were on the receiving end of science-based decision-making, which a lot of this proposal lacks. If the government is going to be moving ahead with forcing an MPA onto a local community or region or area, and then deciding after the fact whether it achieves all the goals we wanted to achieve or even to vary what an MPA is, then should it not be based on the best possible local science available first? Should it not be more transparent and have more consultation?

It seems that what the government is doing is very much the opposite. The government is giving the minister a stick to be used against local communities, instead of using kind words and enabling the minister to do the job in a more consultative manner.

What did the Liberals promise in their party platform in the last election? In the environmental section, they actually spent more time talking about Stephen Harper than they did about the marine environment. It is a seven to four difference. Maybe there should be a Stephen Harper protection area created. It could be all of Calgary.

In the document, the Liberals spent a lot more time complaining about what was not done before and saying that Stephen Harper did all these terrible things, and that in the marine environment the Liberals would do X, Y, and Z. However, they talked very little about the actual objectives.

The fisheries and oceans committee met and heard witness testimony. The member for Barrie—Innisfil quoted Sean Cox, a professor at Simon Fraser University, so I will not go over that particular point, but it provided valuable input. He said:

MPAs aren't likely to be effective scientific tools, either.

That was a direct quote.

● (1305)

He also said:

Just enforcing MPAs would be hugely expensive. Again, if you're looking at it from a fisheries management point of view, it's far more cost effective to do other things that don't cost that much.

He continued:

Looking at some of the previous testimony, there was a claim that there was overwhelming scientific proof that MPAs are beneficial and widely successful. I think that was misrepresentation of the actual science. Stephen just cited some of the studies that find that they're not broadly successful.

He was not saying that they do not work, but just that they are not as broadly successful as they are made out to be. Therefore, it is really a matter of what the content of the MPAs are. Do they match local community needs? Will they achieve their goals?

Brian Clark, an environmental adviser and registered professional biologist with Pacific NorthWest LNG, asked the following: "Where are the no-go zones? What are the thresholds for impacts?" He also said that "we need specific plans for coastal areas of high industrial activity."

He added that "there is a lack of clear process for integrated coastal planning that leaves proponents to develop strategies in an information vacuum." However, that information was collected from the local community. If we impose upon them an MPA and then say that we will formulate what it will actually be later on, what the permanent plan for the area will be, we will create anxiety, panic,

and fear. It is like what the Liberal government has done with the small business tax changes it is proposing with a 75-day consultation window. To me, this seems like more of the same.

We have leaders from the territorial governments who have come out and openly attacked this proposal, Bill C-55.

Not to belabour the point, other members have mentioned that the MLA Johnny Mike, who is also the minister of the environment of Nunavut, openly attacked Ottawa. I have a headline that reads, "Nunavut MLA attacks Ottawa, Inuit orgs on proposed federal law." I have another headline entitled, "Northern premiers present united front against Ottawa", which is always a great headline for a government to have when it is two years into its mandate.

I will quote from that article:

To industry, the premiers delivered a message that they want to make investment in the territories more attractive rather than increase "regulatory complexity or uncertainty."

That is exactly what this will create. It is an Ottawa-knows-best approach, one in which we have a box that we are going to impose on a community, a community that will have to live with it and comply with our plans and what we want to do.

Another headline, dated August 31, from Yellowknife is entitled "Territorial Premiers discuss plans to create strong sustainable North." The article states:

Northern Premiers appreciate the federal government's interest in improving the Oceans Act and the Canada Petroleum Resources Act, and recognize the increase in federal oceans protection commitment by 2020. However, the proposed amendments to...Bill C55 allow for the creation of...[these interim MPAs] by a federal minister without prior consultation. This amendment should not be part of Bill C55.

When we have northern leaders telling us that we have it wrong, we should go back and ask, "What did we get wrong?" When they are telling us that those types of amendments should not be in this bill, we should commit to removing them right away or, even better, we should just remove the bill and start over again. That is what I have said that the Liberals should do on many other occasions with many different bills. They should take the bill off the table, such as the access to information law they have proposed before the House and that has now gone to committee. They should go back to the drawing board and get it done right the first time.

*Government Orders*

I have a Yiddish proverb to recite, which I know many members are probably waiting for. I mentioned the Ottawa-knows-best stick. The proverb goes like this, “It’s not the stick that helps but the kind word.” That is what the federal government should be doing. I will make a comparison here with the small business tax proposals the Liberals have brought forward. I think this is very much the same. We can see both sides of this. On the one hand, the government has said there would be 75 days of consultations, and then on the other hand, it had said that it will drop the hammer, leaving no time for small business owners and farmers during harvest to contribute to the debate and provide information on how their businesses will be affected. How will people in these communities be affected by MPAs when these marine protected areas are imposed on them? It is a one-size-fits-all approach for everybody. What works on the east coast will not work on the west coast. Even areas 100 kilometres apart on the same coastline might be different. We have heard it said many times in the House that we have the longest coastline in the world. What are we protecting it for if not for the local communities?

• (1310)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his input in this debate. One of the questions I have in mind when we debate this issue is whether designating marine protected areas as this bill proposes will actually improve things. We need to draw up well-defined rules for these marine protected areas.

In the end, it is practically useless. If we look at the facts, people will be able to carry out virtually any project or activity they like in these areas. Ultimately we will find that there is no difference when we compare with non-protected areas.

Could my colleague please explain how designating marine protected areas will be of any use when, in the end, anyone can do virtually the same things there as in non-protected areas?

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** Madam Speaker, I do not think that marine protected areas should be the same in every community where they are found. I also do not believe that there should be a minimum amount of protection. There can be a lot of differences between those areas and what they protect.

We need to consider the impact on local economies and tourism. If we create a marine protected area, tourists will come see it, as is the case with our national parks. In Alberta, we have national parks that have pipelines running through them, but that does not prevent people from coming to visit them and spending money in local communities. That is the only way for some small businesses there to remain in the middle class.

[*English*]

**Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I live in a coastal community. I know the immediate threat to our oceans and coastal communities is serious and urgent. I know the member has children, like myself, and cares deeply about the future of our oceans and our country. While the Conservatives were in power, they only protected 1% of our oceans through marine protected areas.

Does the member believe there is a sense of urgency for us to create more marine protected areas so we can meet the international agreements to which we have committed?

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** Madam Speaker, the member for Courtenay—Alberni and I work on various Kurdish issues, so we have had a lot of time to get to know each other. I somehow knew this question was coming, so I looked it up.

Canada has 243,042 kilometres of coastline, 1% of which would be about 2,500 kilometres of coastline. We have the largest coastline in the world, but where is it being protected? If we protect it in certain regions, say the Northwest Territories, are any people going to be able to enjoy this marine protected area? I really and truly believe that if we are not doing this for people and we are just doing this to get a plus one from the World Wildlife Fund or getting a higher ranking in some international organization’s ranking system, then we are not doing it for the right reasons. We should be doing it for local people, tourists, and Canadians to enjoy pristine landscapes. They should be for that.

It is not about the 1%, 10%, 20%, 30% or 40%. We should do what we can for 100% of the coastline. However, if it is not for people and local communities, then we have it all wrong.

• (1315)

**Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC):** Madam Speaker, my colleague was challenged a moment ago about what the Conservatives had done in only designating 1% of the coastline or oceans areas as protected. There is far more than that protected under fisheries closures and so on. For some of the areas being announced now, the process and method by which those have been identified have been going on for a long time. A lot of those areas are now being protected because of the work of the previous Conservative government. Could the member confirm that?

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** Madam Speaker, the previous Conservative government did quite a deed for stewardship and conservation. It looked at what it could do for local communities and how it could improve access, say, to national parks. More national parks and more natural landscapes were protected because Canadians wanted to take advantage of that. They want to be able to visit pristine landscapes, go camping, fishing, and hunting. The vast majority of anglers and hunters want to do that as well.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Before we move on, I will remind the next speaker that unfortunately I will have to interrupt at some point, but whatever time is remaining he will have the next time the matter is before the House.

The hon. member for Saskatoon—University.

**Mr. Brad Trost (Saskatoon—University, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I believe I have about 13 minutes left in debate before we go to the private members’ hour, so I will try to make my remarks fit within that time.

*Government Orders*

The hon. member who spoke before me began by saying that Alberta's coastline was very important, and how great it was. Coming from the province of Saskatchewan, I think I come from the only province that has less of a coastline than Alberta. We are that square in the middle of the rectangle in the middle of the country whose boundaries are not made by any natural coastline or mountain, but by someone who just drew lines on a map.

People may think it is somewhat interesting that a member from Saskatchewan would get up to talk about this at the end of a Friday in the House of Commons. However, I think it is appropriate that we in the opposition push the government very aggressively on this bill for a couple of reasons. The first has been the theme of most of my colleagues today, that we feel that the people who are most directly impacted by this legislation have not been heard.

I was looking through some of the testimony at committee. Witness after witness said that this bill did not meet the needs of the local communities. There were representatives of fishers in Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia, and a professor from Simon Fraser University who was an expert on the subject. Time and time again they said that the government needed to slow down and talk to them. This has an impact on their day-to-day lives. This is something that could have vast repercussions for what they do.

When we hear the witnesses who represent these areas and the people who will be directly impacted say that they are not opposed to the idea in its entirety but need to have input because of the drastic implications this could have for their lives, we begin to realize that the government has not been doing an effective job at consulting with people.

I know that the government has been criticized in the past for over-consulting. Somewhere it needs to be able to find a balance. The purpose of consultation should not be delay, as the government tries to figure out what to do or to put off a difficult decision. The purpose needs to be to acquire the views of the people who are most directly impacted.

This drives to the nub of what the issues often are when it comes to conservation and environmental issues throughout the country. Now, I do not have personal experience in the fisheries or any of the marine industries. I was raised on a family farm and have experience there. Prior to being elected to the House of Commons, I was a mining exploration geophysicist, someone who had the privilege of working in northern Quebec, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Yukon. I particularly enjoyed my time up in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, seeing the great majestic splendour of our north. I had the chance to enjoy and work in it, and I came to understand parts of Canada that, unfortunately, too many Canadians from the south never really get to live and experience.

When one works in those sorts of occupations, one really begins to understand that it is ultimately not a question of the environment versus industry. These things are necessary and work together. This can often be a problem for people who do not work in these natural resource, agricultural and, in this case, fisheries-related industries, where there is a real daily physical interaction between nature and the activity humans are trying to engage in to create a livelihood.

We can see that tension in the debate and the testimony by witnesses on this bill. They are very concerned that marine protected areas could be imposed upon them in a way that is detrimental to their livelihoods. That is a real concern, because nowadays there are increasingly large numbers of people who no longer have that direct connection to the places where raw, natural products come from.

● (1320)

The joke, which is a somewhat unfair stereotype, is that people in the cities believe milk comes from a carton in the store and not from a cow. The same could be said for fish and where it comes from. Not everyone can quite understand that someone has to go out there and harvest it. If environmental decisions for a marine protected area are made without direct consultation, this could have a real and direct impact on the livelihoods of people.

The concern about the legislation is that it would give power to the minister to create a temporary marine protected area, whereas previously, it was a long consultative process to ensure all interests were brought in, aboriginal, local sport users, and various people, to ensure there was a solution that worked for everyone in the area.

One might say if it is temporary, it can be quickly overturned. When temporary decisions are made, they often become de facto permanent decisions. While people are waiting for a quick resolution of the environmental issues for an area, their lives have to go on. They have to move, and they are unable to continue with their livelihood. That major concern is coming from communities in Atlantic Canada, the west coast, and, as we heard earlier in reference to an MLA speaking of Nunavut, communities up north.

They are concerned that a minister could be under political pressure to green wash the government's politics in time for an election, or to perhaps help the Liberals win some votes to get their much coveted seat on the UN Security Council. With some quick green washing, a temporary marine protected area could be set up and that would have detrimental effects on the livelihood of people worked there to make a living.

Again, I do not have that direction connection with the fisheries community that some of the hon. members in the House do. However, I can understand how that would feel in the agriculture area. I was a farmer and I grew up in a farm family. I also worked in the natural resources industry up north. People feel very vulnerable when they realize someone, who has no understanding of the actual day-to-day operations of their industry and the necessity of the things that need to be done, can come out of nowhere and make an arbitrary decision that could absolutely ruin their livelihood. They feel vulnerable and scared.

I am pretty sure the government is not trying to frighten Canadians. Politicians generally do not try to. This might look good from political optics and it might look good if they need to burnish their environmental credentials with international bodies, but while it may look good, they need to understand this can have a very real impact on the ordinary livelihoods of people.

*Private Members' Business*

The opposition is asking the government to step back from the legislation, put it on hold for a while, spend more time consulting, and pull away from the whole concept of a temporary measure that could, out of nowhere, lead to de facto permanent impositions on an area. The hon. members on the other side talk about science. Science is rarely quick. That is why we need time to do this right, to be involved, and to consult.

As a member who has a scientific background, and a career based in the natural sciences before I came here, I urge the government to take those principles, the understanding of science and marry it with the democratic principles of consultation and working with people in the rural communities who are trying to make their living through fishing. Do not to scare them, but work with them.

Putting all that together, we can have better legislation, better protections for the environment, and economic growth for these areas. Ultimately, to have good environmental protection, and we see this throughout the world, we need a growing and strong economy and we need the local population to be strongly supportive. The Government of Canada taking steps to frighten local people away from supporting environmental provisions is not the proper way to do that.

• (1325)

As there are only a couple of minutes left, I would like to give my colleagues in the House the time to ask me a few questions. With about three or four minutes before the clock winds down, I will allow my colleagues to wind up the day with a couple of questions.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP):** Madam Speaker, my question is about corporate responsibility in the case of marine accidents. That is the issue that concerns me today.

What does my colleague think about it? We hear about marine accidents that cause debris to wash up on the beaches in some areas of Canada's Pacific coast, and I am sure the same thing happens on the Atlantic coast as well.

How much added responsibility will be placed on the corporations responsible for these accidents and the mess they make in our oceans and especially in the marine protected areas that will be covered by the new measures we are discussing?

[English]

**Mr. Brad Trost:** Madam Speaker, the principle is very clear. Whoever takes an action should be responsible for the results of that action, and when it comes to pollution, we try to make the polluter, the person who polluted, who was the cause of the accident, ultimately responsible. We know that in international shipping lanes, where there are ships from all around the world with flags of convenience, that may be difficult and, unfortunately, impossible at certain times.

That is why throughout history various governments and regimes have looked to various forms of insurance and collective action and those sorts of procedures to try to cover those loopholes. That is something that any government should look at. It should try to find out where there are loopholes where people are polluting and are evading their responsibility, and make them directly responsible.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The member will have about eight minutes of questions and comments left the next time this matter is before the House.

It being 1:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1330)

[Translation]

### JOURNALISTIC SOURCES PROTECTION ACT

The House resumed from September 19 consideration of the motion that Bill S-231, An Act to amend the Canada Evidence Act and the Criminal Code (protection of journalistic sources), be read the third time and passed.

**Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleagues for their warm reception. I am delighted to rise here this morning to speak to Bill S-231 on the protection of journalistic sources.

Journalists play a vital role in our democracy. Parliament is a fundamental democratic institution, but I believe that journalism is, as well. Just look at what programs like *Enquête* and *The Fifth Estate* have achieved. Those are two of the most commonly used examples, but they are not the only ones. All journalists, including our friends in the parliamentary press gallery and parliamentary correspondents—they all do extremely important work.

In order to do their job, however, they must be able to work freely, without undue interference. Unfortunately, we have seen a very troubling trend in that regard. There have been some disturbing examples, like the ones reported in Quebec, specifically in Montreal involving Patrick Lagacé and Joël-Denis Bellavance, but we have also seen a broader, long-term trend that should be setting off alarm bells among those who care about our democracy.

For example, under the Liberal government, Canada's global ranking for freedom of the press dropped 14 points. That raises a lot of questions. That is why Bill S-231 is a real step in the right direction, quite timely, and so important.

The bill will do a number of things. It will allow journalists to better protect their sources. That is important because when journalistic sources do not feel protected, they keep quiet. Speaking of sources, they are drying up. They are holding on to information that can sometimes be crucial, which prevents journalists from giving us the complete story and getting to the bottom of things.

Through the proposed legislative changes in this bill, a journalist could refuse to disclose information if he believes that the confidentiality of his source would be compromised. In fact, the onus is reversed. Now it will be up to the police to prove that the information they are looking for is more important for public safety than the right to protect sources. That is a key component.

*Private Members' Business*

We are also going to take the power to issue search and surveillance warrants away from justices of the peace. Obviously, we still need some judges to have this power, so it will be transferred to superior court judges. I think this is a very important change. I would like to cite one figure I find quite surprising: 98% of the search or surveillance warrants requested by Montreal police were granted. I think that is a very high success rate. It is not that I do not trust the police or think they are not being diligent, but that percentage seems a little high to me. I think it is a good idea to keep a close eye on this.

Let us take a closer look at what this bill is proposing. A judge will be able to appoint defence counsel, of a sort. Normally, when this kind of warrant is requested, the journalist or media outlet being targeted is not notified.

• (1335)

Obviously, someone who wants to conduct a search or surveillance is not going to notify the target. The target does not know what is going on. Having a special advocate to defend the rights of the journalist or media outlet will ensure that all perspectives are taken into account and result in a more fair and comprehensive legal process. There are other elements that I will not mention here today, but I think they are all very important.

Nevertheless, I want to emphasize that this bill is not perfect. During the Senate debates, the definitions of “media” and “journalist” were narrowed somewhat. We have so many platforms nowadays that it is hard to pin down who exactly is a journalist, who is a part-time or full-time journalist, and what counts as traditional media versus new media. It is important to work with fairly broad definitions of “journalist” and “media” even if that means judges have to make their own calls about that as necessary.

This is an important bill whose time has come. I know the Liberals slowed the process down a bit, but I think they eventually came around to our view that we really have to pass this bill quickly. I hope that this bill will be sent to committee soon and come back to us for third reading before too long. That is all I have to say.

**Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC):** Madam Speaker, as I was saying earlier, I had the opportunity to be here in the House to hear the farewell speech of former NDP leader Ed Broadbent. He said that we tend to focus more on what divides us, that 80% of the time we are in confrontation mode, and 20% of the time, we are not talking about what unites us.

I have to say that I am very pleased to rise in the House today following my colleague from Laurier—Sainte-Marie, only to agree with her and the rest of the House, and support an important bill that, in a way, preserves one of the pillars of our democracy, specifically, freedom of expression.

I would first like to commend the hard work done by the bill's sponsor, my Conservative colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent, who is himself a former journalist and who understands, from first-hand experience, the importance of being able to protect journalistic sources. Unfortunately, in recent years, these sources have been mistreated, and there have even been attempts to expose sources that have revealed some of the scandals that unfortunately occur in our public institutions and elsewhere. Hats off to my colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent for taking the lead on this bill.

My colleague was only able to sponsor this bill because, in the wake of a scandal that erupted in Quebec, Conservative Senator Claude Carignan took the bull by the horns and proposed the bill we are discussing today, Bill S-231, an act to amend the Canada Evidence Act and the Criminal Code regarding the protection of journalistic sources. Senator Carignan tabled his bill less than a year ago in November 2016. The bill was passed by the Senate in April 2017, which shows how fast it has progressed.

Last spring, the bill was tabled in the House, where it was slightly amended with the collaboration of the government, the NDP, our sponsor, and our party. Now we are at the final stage in the House, the statements leading up to the vote at third reading, after which the bill will move forward. Since the House of Commons has made amendments, the bill will have to go back to the Senate for the changes to be approved. It is interesting to note that this time, it is the House of Commons that is acting as the chamber of sober second thought for the other place.

The bill we are discussing today, as my colleague said, introduces a key component: it changes the burden of proof. That is one of the key components of the bill. What is more, my colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent mentioned that this bill was reviewed by the Department of Justice and police forces to ensure that it is balanced.

According to *La Presse*, the interesting thing about this bill is that it will take Canada from slacker to leader. We will be on par with countries that have measures to protect journalistic sources, countries such as Australia, Germany, France, and Great Britain. This is a positive outcome to an alarming situation. Let us not forget that a Quebec journalist, Patrick Lagacé, was under police surveillance by a municipal police force. That is troubling.

This is nothing new. In 2007, a former Bloc Québécois MP, Serge Ménard, introduced a similar bill. Unfortunately, we were under a minority government at the time and the bill died on the Order Paper.

Today, we truly have an opportunity to achieve the desired result and a chance for the bill to receive royal assent. I will come back to that a bit later.

Of course, journalists like Patrick Lagacé were wiretapped. Closer to home, Senator Claude Carignan reminded us that among the examples of journalistic revelations based on confidential sources wanting to reveal information, there was the famous sponsorship scandal.

*Private Members' Business*

● (1340)

*Globe and Mail* reporter Daniel Leblanc relied heavily on information from a confidential source known as “Ma Chouette” in writing a series of articles on the sponsorship scandal. The confidential information he got from his source about fraudulent activities related to the sponsorship scandal resulted in what was certainly Canada's biggest political scandal in recent decades. The problem is that Mr. Leblanc, who did his job to protect democracy, had to fight tooth and nail to defend himself in court and protect the journalistic source who enabled him to expose the scandal.

If not for those whistle-blowers, if not for people being able to talk to reporters in strict confidence, hundreds of millions could have been squandered without the Canadian people ever getting wind of it. In a healthy democracy, the media function as a check and balance and journalists do enjoy press freedom. That is a basic right, but, as we saw with Mr. Leblanc, who was taken to court, it is a fragile one.

I would like to quote a Supreme Court ruling, because it is important. The top court asked us to take action, in a sense, because we have a constructive dialogue with it. In the *National Post* ruling, the court states:

The role of investigative journalism has expanded over the years to help fill what has been described as a democratic deficit in the transparency and accountability of our public institutions. There is a demonstrated need, as well, to shine the light of public scrutiny on the dark corners of some private institutions.

The Supreme Court goes even further:

...unless the media can offer anonymity in situations where sources would otherwise dry-up, freedom of expression in debate on matters of public interest would be badly compromised.

Freedom of expression is one of the pillars of our democracy. It is what is at stake here today, and what we want to protect. As I have already mentioned, and as we have heard in previous debates, the bill aims to protect sources, reverse the burden of proof, and clarify the definition of “journalist”. In addition, if this bill passes, going forward, only Superior Court judges, as set out in section 552 of the Criminal Code, will be able to rule on the terms and conditions. In Quebec, it would be a Quebec court judge.

Time flies, but I just want to say that this bill provides parameters. In particular, it provides a definition of “journalist”. The purpose is not to place journalists above the law, but rather to give them the tools to protect their journalistic sources. It is a bill to protect journalistic sources.

In closing, I want to quote Senator Carignan:

Honourable senators, the purpose of this bill is to protect the best interests of Canadians and preserve their trust in the integrity of their institutions. It is about protecting ourselves against attacks on one of the pillars of our democracy, Canadians' right to information and sound administration of their public institutions.

There is no better way to defend this bill than to quote Senator Carignan.

My colleagues and I know that politics is a matter of trust. We know how important it is to maintain trust between the public, our political institutions, and our public institutions. We truly have a chance to do that today, especially considering that the symbol of our democracy, the governor general, will take office next week. I hope that with the co-operation of hon. members of the House of Commons, we will give her the opportunity to stand up for freedom

of expression by giving royal assent to this bill to protect journalistic sources.

● (1345)

**Mrs. Mona Fortier (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I thank you for this opportunity to speak to Bill S-231, an act to amend the Canada Evidence Act and the Criminal Code (protection of journalistic sources).

[*English*]

Please allow me, Madam Speaker, as others have done before me, to express my gratitude to the Senate sponsor for his hard work and dedication in relation to this important bill. My thanks also go to my colleague opposite, the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent, for his role in helping move Bill S-231 expeditiously through the House. Finally, I would like to thank the various witnesses who appeared before the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security during its study of the bill, including representatives of the media who shared their compelling stories and the important challenges they have faced in protecting the confidentiality of their sources in the course of doing their work, particularly in the aftermath of the events in Quebec last fall.

Evidently there is overwhelming support for the bill's overall objective. This bill truly reflects a multi-partisan consensus. All agree that due consideration must be given to the protection of journalistic sources. This is true not only when someone is seeking the disclosure of a document or information before a court that would identify a journalistic source but also when law enforcement officers are seeking a warrant, or other court orders, to obtain information or documents relating to a journalist.

[*Translation*]

Before I get into the various measures proposed in the bill, I would like to remind members that Canadian law is not silent in this regard. In fact, the protection of journalistic sources afforded by common law and the Constitution are rigorous.

[*English*]

Because of this, we have a responsibility to ensure that this bill reflects the common law as much as possible to avoid unintended consequences. More specifically, we have a responsibility to ensure that we do not unintentionally undermine existing protections. We must also ensure that the new protection measures introduced by the bill would apply in all appropriate cases, but only in appropriate cases. I will come back to this shortly.

*Private Members' Business*

This, in essence, is what the proposed amendments to Bill S-231 made by the public safety committee are all about. As we know, Bill S-231 would amend two acts. The first set of proposed amendments relates to the Canada Evidence Act. The amendments are aimed at protecting the confidentiality of journalistic sources in the courtroom context. The second set of amendments relates to the Criminal Code and seeks to protect confidential journalistic sources in the investigative context by introducing a new process for the issuance of search warrants, and other orders, in relation to journalists' communications and their belongings.

• (1350)

[*Translation*]

I will focus first on the second series of amendments because they target the main concerns arising from the Lagacé case, which had to do with whether common law protections for the confidentiality of journalistic sources are in effect given due consideration when warrants and orders are issued against journalists.

[*English*]

In essence, the new process proposed in Bill S-231 for obtaining warrants and orders concerning journalists would not only codify the existing common-law protections but would also add additional safeguards to ensure a high level of scrutiny when the state wished to intrude on the privacy of a journalist. For example, such warrants would only be issued by superior court judges, and only if there was no other way to obtain the information and if the public interest in the investigation of the crime outweighed journalists' right to privacy in doing their work. Also, the resulting evidence would be automatically sealed. All these new measures would be designed to protect the confidentiality of journalistic sources at the investigative stage, before the state has brought charges or obtained evidence.

[*Translation*]

The amendments that the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security made to the new process and to the changes to the Criminal Code proposed in Bill S-231 can be summarized as follows: first, the override clauses were removed from the proposed changes to the Criminal Code in order to prevent potential conflicts with other federal laws, particularly with regard to matters of national security and privacy protection. The rules set out in Bill S-231 are sufficiently clear and there is no need to override other federal laws in this regard.

[*English*]

The second amendment relates to the scope of application of the proposed Criminal Code process in practical terms. As originally drafted, the new requirements for police to apply to a judge of a Superior Court for a warrant, authorization, or order relating to a journalist would have applied in all cases where a journalist was involved, regardless of whether police were actually aware that their investigation related to a journalist.

This needed to be fixed, because in real life, particularly in this day and age of online crime, police do not always know the identity of the suspect, let alone what that person does for a living. Unless police know a journalist is involved, they cannot logically be expected to apply the new Criminal Code process. The amendment

made at committee makes it clear that the new process only applies if police are aware that a journalist is implicated.

That said, if and when police subsequently find out that their investigation relates to a journalist's communications, the amendment would require that they apply to a judge at a Superior Court so that the warrant or order can be confirmed and appropriate conditions can be imposed to safeguard journalistic sources. In the meantime, police would be prohibited from examining the evidence and from making copies of it. I believe this is a significant improvement to the bill.

Another important issue with regard to the proposed new Criminal Code process for issuing warrants and orders in relation to journalists—and I think we are all in agreement on this aspect—is that this process is intended to protect the confidentiality of journalistic sources. It is not, however, intended to protect journalists from criminal investigation and prosecution when they engage in criminal conduct.

• (1355)

[*Translation*]

The original version of Bill S-231 did not make that distinction. The changes made by the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security clearly state that the new Criminal Code criterion for issuing a warrant, authorization, or order relating to a journalist does not apply when the journalist engages in criminal conduct.

[*English*]

Such a warrant or order would, however, still be issued by a judge of a Superior Court, and, where necessary, the judge would be able to protect the confidentiality of journalistic sources by ordering that some or all of the evidence be sealed. This, in my view, is a very sensible and necessary amendment.

Insofar as Bill S-231's proposed new Canada Evidence Act provisions are concerned, it is important to remember that they seek to protect confidential journalistic sources by allowing a journalist to object to the compelled disclosure of information or document on the grounds that it identifies, or is likely to identify, a confidential journalistic source. The provisions would also ensure that disclosure in such cases is only authorized if certain conditions are met.

[*Translation*]

I wanted to speak briefly about the amendments made by the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, but since I have very little time left, maybe I can ask one of my colleagues to present them.

In closing, the amended bill we are proposing will provide better protection for confidential journalistic sources, in the interest of all Canadians, and it deserves everyone's support.

*Private Members' Business*

[English]

**Mr. Bill Blair (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to have the opportunity to rise in the House today and speak to Bill S-231, an act to amend the Canada Evidence Act and the Criminal Code, otherwise known as the journalistic sources protection act.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude. There are sometimes issues that arise in the House for which there is all-party agreement that action is necessary and appropriate. In this case it is very appropriate for us to take the opportunity to acknowledge, first of all, the outstanding work of Senator Carignan, with the assistance of Senator Pratte, in ensuring that this very important issue was brought forward, as they sponsored bringing Senate Bill S-231 before the House. I would also like to take the opportunity to thank and acknowledge the work of the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent for helping bring the bill before the House.

The issue that is contained within Bill S-231 is an issue that affects and concerns all Canadians in the aftermath of the Lagacé issue that arose in Quebec. In other instances as well there is legitimate concern among Canadians about the protection of our journalists and journalistic sources. The independence of a free press is the hallmark of our democracy, and it is critical. All members of the House recognize the importance of protecting our journalists and allowing them to do their job.

The bill before us today reflects that shared value that everyone in the House and all Canadians feel about the importance of the fifth estate, of journalists, in helping keep Canadians informed and in having the ability and the freedom to bring forward issues that might not otherwise be made public, thereby protecting the rights and the values of all Canadians.

It is also important to acknowledge the important work that our Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security did. I want to thank the chair, the hon. member for Don Valley West, and the members of that committee for the very conscientious way in which they approached the bill to ensure that it reflects long-standing traditions in our common law and creates protections while upholding and maintaining the important values that were represented in the Senate bill. Frankly, as a former police officer, I feel that the clarifications that the public safety committee brought to the bill did much to restore all Canadians' confidence that the law will be appropriately applied.

In particular, I wanted to acknowledge the work of the committee to ensure that this legislation did not provide a shield for criminal behaviours that might be perpetrated by a journalist, yet provided those absolutely essential protections for journalists when doing their job. I am very confident that the legislation that has been produced and is before the House is worthy of all-party support.

While the amendments brought forward by the public safety committee are limited in number and scope, they are important for very many reasons. They ensure that the new measures in Bill S-231 will apply in appropriate circumstances without undermining the important protective measures that are arguably already in place in a very complex area of the law. Second, I believe that the work of the SECU committee in bringing forward these amendments provides more clarity in terms of how these measures are intended to be applied in practice. This will be invaluable assistance to those engaged in journalistic practice throughout the country and those who are tasked with the important job of keeping all of our communities safe.

I believe Bill S-231, as amended, will translate into better protection to all confidential journalistic sources to the benefit of all Canadians and I believe it is worthy of all-party support.

• (1400)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Is the House ready for the question?

**Some hon. members:** Question.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** 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 Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** In my opinion the yeas have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Pursuant to Standing Order 98 the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, October 4, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

It being 2:03 p.m., the House stands adjourned until Monday at 2 p.m. pursuant to order made on Friday, September 22.

(The House adjourned at 2:03 p.m.)







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