



HOUSE OF COMMONS
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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Tuesday, February 27, 2018

—

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, February 27, 2018

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

conservation, which aims to improve and preserve the environment so as to prevent increasing natural disasters by designating the wetlands bordering Lake Saint-François as a protected area.

[*English*]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

GREAT LAKES

• (1005)

[*English*]

PETITIONS

IMPAIRED DRIVING

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to present two petitions.

The first petition, sadly, highlights the issue of impaired driving. Families for Justice is a group of Canadians who have lost a loved one killed by an impaired driver. They believe that Canada's impaired driving laws are much too lenient. They want the crime called what it is, vehicular homicide. It is the number one cause of criminal death in Canada. Over 1,200 Canadians are killed every year by impaired drivers. The petitioners are calling for mandatory sentencing for vehicular homicide, and they wish that Parliament had supported Cassandra's law.

SEX SELECTION

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): The second petition, Mr. Speaker, highlights the issue of sex selection. Gender-based violence against girls begins before they are born. A CBC documentary revealed that ultrasound is being used to determine the sex of the unborn child, and if it is a girl the pregnancy is tragically ended. The petitioners are calling on Parliament to condemn the practice of sex selection discrimination against girls.

[*Translation*]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition signed by more than 1,000 people in my riding, especially in and around Soulanges. Given that more than 80% of Canada's original wetlands have disappeared and that global warming is increasing, the importance of protecting wetlands is becoming very clear. Wetlands have great ecological value in terms of flood prevention, buffer zones, and threatened and vulnerable plant species. The signatories therefore call upon the Government of Canada to take a firm position in order to ensure compliance with the 1996 federal policy on wetland

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am rising today with an e-petition calling on the Government of Canada and the Parliament of Canada. It is a petition from indigenous and non-indigenous people from the Great Lakes region, first nations, Métis, and Inuit, calling on the House to confer legal status as a person to each of the Great Lakes in order that they be recognized as living entities and have powers under our laws as such. This is not as extreme as it may seem. This has been done in many countries around the world, granting legal rights to nature. The petitioners support the formation of a multi-interest Great Lakes tribunal led by indigenous people to act as the voice for these newly created persons.

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Scarborough—Rouge Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I would like to present two petitions from my constituents.

The first petition is from the West Hill United Church first nations study group. This petition contains 240 signatures and calls upon our government to correct many historically rooted injustices of indigenous communities, most notably overcrowded housing, long-term boil water advisories, funding shortfalls in child welfare, as well as the high prevalence of suicide in first nations communities.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Scarborough—Rouge Park, Lib.): Second, Mr. Speaker, I am presenting a petition from Open Doors Canada. It is a petition that calls on the government to work with the UN to ensure equal rights protection for Christians and other minority groups in Syria.

Government Orders

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I present a petition signed by many of my constituents in Winnipeg North, asking the government to recognize the importance of providing for and assisting with quality health care and palliative care, and the importance of that very issue for all Canadians.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

IMPACT ASSESSMENT ACT

BILL C-69—TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.) moved:

That, in relation to Bill C-69, An Act to enact the Impact Assessment Act and the Canadian Energy Regulator Act, to amend the Navigation Protection Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, not more than one further sitting day after the day on which this Order is adopted shall be allotted to the consideration at second reading stage of the Bill; and

That, 15 minutes before the expiry of the time provided for Government Orders on the day allotted to the consideration at second reading stage of the said Bill, any proceedings before the House shall be interrupted, if required for the purpose of this Order, and, in turn, every question necessary for the disposal of the said stage of the Bill shall be put forthwith and successively, without further debate or amendment.

●(1010)

[Translation]

The Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 67.1, there will now be a 30-minute question period. I invite hon. members who wish to ask questions to rise in their places so the Chair has some idea of the number of members who wish to participate in this question period.

[English]

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am so disappointed that the Liberals are limiting debate on second reading of this bill. I want to note the implicit hypocrisy in shutting down debate and input on a bill about which one of the Liberals' key claims is consultation.

This bill is major. It would create three new, distinct legislative acts; a new environmental impact assessment agency; a new life cycle regulator for natural resources projects like pipelines, LNG, and mines; and a new system for navigable waters. This bill demands full, thorough, and meaningful debate on its merits and flaws, especially because of the importance of responsible natural resources development to the Canadian economy, to every community right across the country, to the nearly one million Canadians

whose livelihoods depend on this sector, and to the thousands of Canadians beyond that who work in spinoff and indirect employment fuelled by responsible natural resources development in Canada. Members of Parliaments owe Canadians nothing less than full due diligence in exploring this bill.

Why will the Liberals not let MPs do their jobs and debate and discuss this bill, as long as it takes, at second reading?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I absolutely agree that this bill is of critical importance. It is really important that we rebuild trust for lost protections when it comes to our environment, fish, and waterways. We need to make sure that we engage with indigenous peoples. We also need to make sure that we attract investment. It is very important that the environment committee have the appropriate time to review, hear witnesses, and work through the clause-by-clause of Bill C-69. I really hope that the party opposite will join in detailed questions at committee.

[Translation]

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to stress my disappointment with this government's use of time allocation for Bill C-69. This is an incredibly important bill that is over 400 pages long and affects 36 acts.

The bill was tabled quite recently, on February 8, and was called for debate the following Wednesday, less than a week later. Bill C-69 has been debated for just two hours so far. We still have a chance to debate it today, but our discussion will be curtailed by the government's time allocation motion and the tabling of the budget. Our only other opportunity to debate this bill will be Friday. That means the mammoth Bill C-69 will be debated for less than 10 hours total in the House of Commons.

●(1015)

[English]

We just heard the Minister of Environment say that this is a critical bill and it is really important. I just want to ask the government why it is forcing us to have less time to look at this bill and debate this important piece of legislation. It is important to engage in this House of Commons. It is important to make sure that we have the time necessary to evaluate this bill.

[Translation]

Hon. Catherine McKenna: Madam Speaker, our government knows how important it is to establish better rules for reviewing environmental processes to protect this country's environment, fish, and waterways, restore public confidence, respect indigenous rights, strengthen our economy, and attract investment.

Government Orders

We agree that this is very important, and that is why it is important for the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development to have enough time to complete its study, hear from witnesses, and work on Bill C-69. I hope the NDP will work with us to make sure we have good laws to protect environmental processes.

[English]

Mr. Mike Bossio (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to commend the minister for the huge effort she, her staff, and the department have put forward in order to bring about this bill.

The question I have follows up on the questions coming from the other side of the House. Could the minister please tell this House how much consultation actually went into creating this bill in the first place, to help inform this bill?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: Madam Speaker, these better rules are based on 14 months of engagement. This was engagement with provinces and territories, with indigenous peoples, with businesses, with environmental groups, and with companies across the country.

We understand how important it is to get this right. When we look at the major resources projects planned, over \$500 billion over the next 10 years, we know that we need to ensure that we have better rules to protect our environment and communities while making sure that good projects get built to create jobs for the middle class. We also need to be working in partnership with indigenous peoples.

I cannot express how pleased I am that we were able to come together. In my job, it is important that we work with environmentalists, provinces and territories, industry, and indigenous peoples. That is exactly what we are doing. We understand that the only way in the 21st century we will get good resource projects to go ahead is if we recognize that the environment and the economy go together.

I look forward to answering questions at committee.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I hear quite a bit of heckling. I just want to remind members that when a member has the floor, the member is to be afforded the respect that he or she deserves. If members have questions or comments, those individuals can stand up to be recognized.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, I agree with my colleagues that it is totally hypocritical that the government would be shutting down effective consultation on a bill that is supposed to be about effective consultation. Clearly, the Liberals do not want to consult with fellow parliamentarians.

This is happening at a very bad time. We see that the Liberals have already killed two pipeline projects, energy east and NorthWest, and are in the process of killing Kinder Morgan by slow death. At the same time, our neighbours to the south are actually reducing regulations and moving on promoting the oil and gas industry.

This process is going to add 180 days to the consultation, and at any time, the minister, on a whim, could veto a project. Could the minister let me know how this adds any certainty to the building of these kinds of pipeline projects in Canada?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: Madam Speaker, as I said, I am very pleased that we are bringing forward better rules for reviewing major

projects. That is not just pipelines. That is hydro projects. That is mines. We know that we need to be doing better.

In terms of getting resources to market, we also appreciate the importance of that. That is why we have worked so hard to understand the concerns of industry, as well as looking at how we make sure that we also protect the environment and work with indigenous peoples.

I am very pleased that we will have a single agency, the impact assessment agency of Canada, which will lead all impact assessments for major projects. That will ensure the approach is consistent and efficient. That is something the industry made very clear that it needed. Also, our goal is one project, one review. We need to streamline the process and coordinate with provinces and territories to reduce red tape for companies and avoid duplicating efforts in reviewing proposed projects. We have also reduced the timelines.

We think that we have done the right thing that will ensure that we get good projects going ahead in a way that protects our environment.

• (1020)

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, we are talking here about a 350-page omnibus bill. The government was the first to chastise the former Conservative government when it brought forward omnibus bills and when it brought forward time allocation and closure motions.

I bring to members' attention the concerns raised yesterday by our colleague from Abbotsford on a question of privilege. He recounted again that, in the mandate letter to the minister, she is to be accountable for a commitment to a different style of leadership, close collaboration with her colleagues, and meaningful engagement with opposition members of Parliament. Is this the meaningful consultation with Parliament?

This is a bill that impacts every corner of our country, every indigenous community, every farm community, every conservation organization. Yes, this is after two years of consultation with the public, but there has been absolutely no time for parliamentarians who represent Canadians to discuss this bill. What happened to a constructive Parliament? I am deeply troubled by what the minister has done. It makes a joke of the mandate letter and a joke of the Liberals' commitment to consultation.

Finally, I have heard the minister repeatedly say they brought forward this bill to finally provide rules and certainty. If there is anything that is not in the bill, it is rules and certainty.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: Madam Speaker, this is absolutely not an omnibus bill. This brings together four pieces of legislation that are interconnected. We cannot look at how we are going to protect our environment and our fisheries, make sure that we work in partnership with indigenous people, and also ensure that good projects go ahead without bringing coherence.

Government Orders

This is what is very clear in my mandate letter. It was discussed in our platform. It was clear in the interim principles that this was the approach, and when I heard from Canadians, that is what they wanted. They expected us to bring it all together and that is what we have done.

There were consultations over 14 months. We introduced the interim principles in January 2016. We have been at this for a long time. We had expert panel reports and parliamentary committees. We brought together all of this through a discussion paper. We did more consultations and now I am very pleased that it is going to go to the parliamentary committee and I will be there to answer any questions on the bill. We also need to hear from witnesses and we need to do clause-by-clause. This is exactly the way we are moving forward on this.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I must say I am astonished that the minister is so unfamiliar with the content of the bill she is attempting to rush through the House on this day. This is an omnibus bill, but it is not, as she claims, a bill that brings together four pieces of legislation. If she were aware, Bill C-68 is the Fisheries Act and it was not lumped together with Bill C-69, which is an omnibus bill and requires proper study. It is offensive. If it were good legislation, I might get behind rushing it through, but it is decidedly not good legislation and it must not be rushed. Bill C-68 is good legislation and the fisheries minister, lucky for him, does not have to wear the rest of this package of hybrid Harper-Liberal strategy that will make a mess of our environmental assessment.

Here is some gender analysis on this day that we are expecting a gender budget. For an omnibus bill including legislation that would normally be presented by the male Minister of Transport and another piece of legislation that would normally be presented by the male Minister of Natural Resources, why does she suppose they picked the Minister of Environment and Climate Change to wear the whole thing? They are eroding her political capital by having an omnibus bill where she is the only target.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to be the one who is introducing this legislation. The environment and the economy go together. I am pleased that I am a strong woman in doing that. I am also pleased that we have a gender-based analysis so that, for any major project that goes ahead, we need to have a gender-based analysis. We said that is part of the approach our government is taking.

I am actually very excited today because we know that there is going to be a gender focus in the bill. Let us be clear that there is coherence. The major projects that impact on fish will also be captured by this. This is a really important piece of legislation.

I appreciate the member opposite's commitment to the environment, understanding that we need to make progress on ensuring that good projects go ahead in a way that protects our waters, our environment, and our fish. It also ensures that we gain public trust and respect indigenous rights, and I certainly hope that the member will be actively engaged through the committee process.

• (1025)

Mr. Andy Fillmore (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there are some

who have expressed concern over the role of the offshore petroleum boards and the process of environmental assessments. I wonder what the minister might tell them to help them feel better about the bill.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: Madam Speaker, throughout the process we heard from a variety of different groups. As I have said, we heard from industry, offshore boards, and also from environmentalists, provinces, and indigenous peoples. What we heard was the importance of bringing coherence. We need to have a single agency, the impact assessment agency, that leads the assessment of major projects. We know that it needs to be working with life-cycle regulators, whether that is the offshore boards or the National Energy Board, because they have expertise throughout the life of the project. However, we also heard clearly that we need one agency that is going to bring coherence, make sure we protect the environment, do the necessary consultations with communities, and partner with indigenous peoples.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Madam Speaker, one of my concerns is that the minister just seems utterly unaware of Canada's long-standing reputation as the most environmentally and socially responsible oil, gas, and energy producer in the world, with the highest standards and a long track record of consultation, transparency, and robust rules and processes. She mentioned the word "trust" a number of times. The Liberals taking action like this is exactly what undermines trust among Canadians and public representatives.

As my colleague from the NDP pointed out, it flies in the face of exactly what the Prime Minister said in his mandate letters to ministers about working meaningfully with opposition MPs. Canadians deserve to know exactly what the Liberals have done on this bill so far, as well as limiting debate right now.

They offered a briefing in the morning the day this legislation was introduced only for stakeholders and media. In fact, my office, staff, and I were explicitly told we could not attend that technical briefing, as was every other opposition MP in the House of Commons. A technical briefing was finally offered but it was at 4 p.m., well after the legislation had been introduced and well after media and stakeholders were already making comment on the legislation.

Now the Liberals are invoking time allocation, shutting down debate and our ability to provide input on this legislation. Opposition members are getting blocked from effectively and fully participating. Will we get blocked from effectively and fully participating on behalf of the Canadians who sent us here to do this job in committee, in third reading, and for the rest of this legislation?

Government Orders

Hon. Catherine McKenna: Madam Speaker, to be clear, we provided copies of the bill to the opposition lobby immediately after the bill was tabled. That met our parliamentary obligations. We were also very pleased that members of the opposition were able to attend a briefing, which was over an hour and 15 minutes. My office is always available to answer any questions. Of course when this goes to committee, there will be an opportunity to ask full questions. I am available to do that.

In terms of recognizing the importance of the oil and gas sector, we absolutely recognize the importance but if we want to have good projects go ahead, we need to have the trust of the public. Unfortunately, what happened under the changes of the previous government, which gutted how we do environmental assessments and removed protections for waters and fish, was that it eroded public trust. As a result, it was much more challenging to get projects to go ahead. That is what we heard.

We have also responded to concerns about having a timely process and having one project with one assessment. What we have done is introduced legislation that meets those requirements. This is all about making sure we protect the environment and that good projects go ahead.

[Translation]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am quite taken aback by the time allocation motion moved this morning.

It is ridiculous that we are being muzzled after only two hours of debate on this bill. This document is over 350 pages long and amends 36 pieces of legislation, as my colleague said.

The Liberals are saying there has been adequate consultation. We have debated this bill for only two hours. I have not had time to consult civil society, the young people in my riding, and other youth across Canada.

We know that future generations are going to be affected by climate change, and yet the Liberals are giving us only two hours of debate. They are going to give parliamentarians a maximum of 10 hours to debate this issue. What do the Liberals have to hide?

Somewhere in these 350 pages, the bill talks about an agency that can make recommendations, but they would not necessarily be binding, because the minister would have an enormous amount of discretion. No one knows how the minister might use his or her discretionary and veto powers. What are the criteria? We do not have that information.

Is this really meant to protect the environment, or is it more about protecting the Liberals' interests and making it easier for Liberal supporters to develop their energy projects?

We have no information on this. It is incredibly difficult to get any information, even though the Liberals promised transparency. When debate on a bill is limited to 10 hours, that signals a real problem in terms of transparency, information, and intent. There must be something hidden in the bill. That is problematic.

● (1030)

Hon. Catherine McKenna: Madam Speaker, I am very happy to say that we are going to do what the opposition party member wants to do.

We have very clear criteria guiding our decision-making. Obviously, we need clear criteria, and we need to look at how major projects impact the environment. Climate change is real, and we have to consider greenhouse gas emissions.

As I said, we have had a lot of discussions. In January 2016, we introduced the interim principles. We held consultations. I put together an expert panel, as did the Minister of Natural Resources, the Minister of Transport, and the Minister of Fisheries. Two committees looked at their issues. Then we had a discussion paper, and everyone had a chance to provide feedback. We had lots of consultations with indigenous peoples, we met with industry, and we talked to the provinces and territories and environmental groups.

Obviously, we all have the same interests. The Liberal Party's interests are the same as Canadians' interests. We want to make sure we have laws in place and rules for reviewing environmental processes that will protect the environment. We want to restore public confidence and respect indigenous rights. Those laws and rules also have to strengthen our economy and attract investment.

[English]

Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have a simple question for the minister. She mentioned that she is happy to appear before a committee and answer any questions. How many hours is she committed to appearing before a committee?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: Madam Speaker, this is a very important piece of legislation. We understand that we need to get this right. The committee process is extraordinarily important. I have said I am happy to appear before a committee. The committee also needs to hear from witnesses. There needs to be clause-by-clause.

I have great confidence in the committee. I want to commend everyone on the committee, from all parties, because they have done excellent work on a whole variety of files that are critical to protecting the environment. I know they are well up to the task.

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am quite stunned to see the Minister of the Environment move a time allocation motion when we have been debating the bill for only two hours.

Government Orders

I represent five first nations communities and people who are concerned about the environment. I am here to share their concerns and their proposals for improving the bill. If I am prevented from speaking at second reading, then I cannot share those concerns before the committee meets to propose and make amendments to the bill. I therefore cannot talk about all the corrections that should be made to the bill at the appropriate stage of the process, before the bill goes to committee. That is a big deal. The bill is being referred to committee without input from members about the corrections they would like to see made. Committee members will not have input from all members of the House on what needs to be done.

The Minister of the Environment needs to understand the problem she is creating by sending the bill to committee when members have not had the chance to speak to it or ask any questions. I am very disappointed in this attitude, especially considering that this bill amends 36 statutes. For example, as far as the Navigable Waters Protection Act is concerned, I spent over 60 hours on my own bill for Abitibi—Témiscamingue. The government, however, seems to think that two hours of debate on a vastly broader bill is enough. The French version of the bill is 400 pages long. I am stunned and absolutely disappointed with the attitude of the Minister of the Environment.

• (1035)

Hon. Catherine McKenna: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

Indeed, it is very important to work in partnership with indigenous peoples. This is clearly the number one concern in my mandate letter, and I have taken this very seriously.

We worked together with indigenous peoples in drafting this bill, and we visited the communities. I spoke directly with a number of communities and national organizations representing the Inuit, Métis, and first nations peoples. That is also true for my other colleagues who worked on the process.

We want to hear from indigenous peoples. The committee will have the opportunity to hear witnesses, and that is very important. We also have a process to work with national indigenous organizations when we review the environmental assessment process. This is very important. This is what the Prime Minister asked me to do, and I take this very seriously.

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Madam Speaker, this is a sad day for democracy. There are 338 members of Parliament here who were elected to represent their constituents. Canadians chose us to defend our laws and advance society.

I do want to commend the environment minister, for whom I have the utmost respect, on her excellent French. I urge her to share her knowledge and encourage her colleagues to speak more often in French. I truly appreciate it.

That said, could the minister explain why she is proposing a time allocation motion on such an important bill? She has a vision and speaks positively about this bill. She has a good mission and good values, so why does she want to muzzle parliamentarians?

Is the minister a victim of her government? I think that is what is happening.

Hon. Catherine McKenna: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague. I try hard to speak French. I am from Hamilton. My father is Irish and decided that the four McKenna children would go to a French-language school. I therefore thank my father for making that decision. I always try to learn more French and not to make mistakes.

That said, I take this matter very seriously. As I said, we held consultations across the country. We spoke with indigenous peoples, the industry, the provinces and territories, and all Canadians who wanted to participate in the process. It is very important that the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development, which I highly respect, have the time it needs to hear from witnesses and to study the bill clause by clause. It is an important process. I am there to answer the detailed questions put by my colleague and all committee members.

• (1040)

[*English*]

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, nobody is questioning that the government spent two years consulting with stakeholders outside of this place. What we are concerned about is the absolute disdain for the House of Commons.

We were elected to represent Canadians. I have been reaching out for those two years, and since the bill was tabled, to find out whether this proposed legislation addresses their interests and concerns. There are deep concerns with the bill, which hopefully we will get into.

As a result of this time allocation, we have lost three-quarters of an hour when members could have debated the bill. It is reprehensible. This is the only public opportunity where Canadians can hear their concerns being raised. We will get to the clause-by-clause in committee all right, in camera.

I am wondering if the minister would commit today to working with her members to ensure that every Canadian who requests to be heard at committee can be heard and that the committee will travel to every corner of the country. Will she commit to truly getting back to people to find out if their concerns were addressed?

Hon. Catherine McKenna: Madam Speaker, let me be clear. Over the 14 months, we travelled across the country. We heard from Canadians. We heard from environmentalists. We heard from industry. We heard from provinces and territories. We heard from indigenous peoples.

When Bill C-69 gets to environment committee, we need to make sure it has time to hear from witnesses, to review the bill, to go clause by clause. As I said, I would be very happy to answer detailed questions at committee.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It is my duty to interrupt the proceedings at this time and put forthwith the question on the motion now before the House.

[*Translation*]

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Government Orders

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): Call in the members.

• (1120)

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

(Division No. 455)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Alleslev	Amos
Anandasangaree	Arya
Ayoub	Badawey
Bagnell	Bains
Baylis	Beech
Bennett	Bibeau
Bittle	Boissonnault
Bossio	Bratina
Breton	Brison
Caesar-Chavannes	Carr
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)	Casey (Charlottetown)
Chagger	Champagne
Chen	Cormier
Cuzner	Dabrusin
Damoff	DeCoursey
Dhillon	Di Iorio
Drouin	Duclos
Duguid	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dzerowicz	Easter
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Erskine-Smith
Eyolfson	Fergus
Fillmore	Finnigan
Fisher	Fonseca
Fortier	Fragiskatos
Fraser (West Nova)	Fraser (Central Nova)
Fry	Fuhr
Garneau	Gerretsen
Goldsmith-Jones	Goodale
Graham	Grewal
Hajdu	Hardie
Harvey	Hébert
Hogg	Holland
Housefather	Hussen
Iacono	Joly
Jordan	Jowhari
Khalid	Khera
Lampropoulos	Lametti
Lamoureux	Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lefebvre	Leslie
Levitt	Lightbound
Lockhart	Long
Longfield	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)	
May (Cambridge)	
McCrimmon	McDonald

McKay	McKenna
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendès	Mendicino
Milychuk	Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Soeurs)
Monsef	Morrissey
Murray	Nassif
Nault	Ng
O'Connell	Oliphant
O'Regan	Ouellette
Peschisolido	Peterson
Petitpas Taylor	Philpott
Picard	Poissant
Qualtrough	Ratansi
Robillard	Rodriguez
Rogers	Romanado
Rota	Rudd
Ruimy	Rusnak
Sajjan	Sangha
Scarpaleggia	Schieffe
Schulte	Serré
Sgro	Sheehan
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simms	Sohi
Sorbara	Spengemann
Tabbara	Tan
Trudeau	Vandenbeld
Vaughan	Virani
Whalen	Wilkinson
Wilson-Raybould	Wrzesnewskyj
Yip	Young — 156

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif	Albrecht
Anderson	Angus
Arnold	Aubin
Barlow	Beaulieu
Benson	Benzen
Bergen	Bernier
Berthold	Blaikie
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)	Boulterice
Boutin-Sweet	Brassard
Brousseau	Calkins
Cannings	Caron
Carrie	Chong
Christopherson	Clarke
Cooper	Davies
Diotte	Donnelly
Dubé	Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Dusseau	Duvall
Eglinski	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)	Fast
Finley	Fortin
Gallant	Garrison
Gill	Gladu
Godin	Gourde
Hardcastle	Harder
Hoback	Hughes
Johns	Julian
Kelly	Kent
Kitchen	Kmiec
Kusie	Kwan
Lake	Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Laverdière	Liepert
Lloyd	Lobb
Lukiwski	MacGregor
MacKenzie	Maguire
Malcolmson	Marcil
Masse (Windsor West)	Mathysen
May (Saainch—Gulf Islands)	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McColeman	McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)	Moore
Motz	Nantel
Nater	Nicholson
Nuttall	Obhrai
O'Toole	Paul-Hus
Paupé	Plamondon
Poillievre	Quach
Reid	Richards
Saroya	Scheer
Schmale	Shields

Points of Order

Shiple
Sorenson
Ste-Marie
Strahl
Sweet
Tilson
Trudel
Van Loan
Viersen
Warawa
Webber
Wong
Zimmer— 121

Sopuck
Stanton
Stetski
Stubbs
Thériault
Trost
Van Kesteren
Vecchio
Wagantall
Warkentin
Weir
Yurdiga

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

The hon. member for Berthier—Maskinongé is rising on a point of order.

* * *

● (1125)

POINTS OF ORDER

BILL C-69—PROPOSAL TO APPLY STANDING ORDER 69.1

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order regarding the omnibus nature of the most recent government bill, Bill C-69, an act to enact the impact assessment act and the Canadian energy regulator act, to amend the Navigation Protection Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts.

[English]

I do so somewhat reluctantly because the government has just finished passing a time allocation motion that will limit the debate on this enormous important and sensitive bill. There will be fewer than 10 hours of debate. The time is at such a premium here that I will do my best to be very brief.

I also note, Mr. Speaker, that in your ruling of November 7 of last year on a similar request, you said, “I would encourage them to raise their arguments as early as possible in the process, especially given that the length of debate at a particular stage can be unpredictable.”

I doubt even you could have foreseen the government would have shut the door on debate here after just two hours, but I trust that you will still have enough time to rule on this request before the debate wraps up this Friday.

[Translation]

Standing Order 69.1 states:

In the case where a government bill seeks to repeal, amend or enact more than one act, and where there is not a common element connecting the various provisions or where unrelated matters are linked, the Speaker shall have the power to divide the questions, for the purposes of voting, on the motion for second reading and reference to a committee and the motion for third reading and passage of the bill. The Speaker shall have the power to combine clauses of the bill thematically and to put the aforementioned questions on each of these groups of clauses separately, provided that there will be a single debate at each stage.

Mr. Speaker, as you can see, Bill C-69 repeals two laws, enacts three new laws, and amends 31 existing laws. In total, Bill C-69 will affect 36 statutes. Bill C-69 enacts the impact assessment act, which will replace the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. As a result, the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act and the

Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency, which were put in place by Mr. Harper in 2012, will be replaced by the new impact assessment act and the new impact assessment agency of Canada. This agency will now be responsible for any assessments requiring federal review—

● (1130)

The Speaker: Order. Apparently there is a problem with the interpretation. It is not the interpreters' fault; there seems to be some construction noise.

It seems to be resolved now. The hon. member for Berthier—Maskinongé.

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau: Mr. Speaker, Bill C-69 also enacts the Canadian energy regulator act. The impact assessment agency of Canada will be supported by the National Energy Board, which will become the Canadian energy regulator.

Bill C-69 also changes the Navigable Waters Protection Act, which was repealed by the Conservatives in 2012, and renames it the navigation protection act. With this bill, the Liberals have also expanded the Canadian navigable waters act, which was gutted by the Conservatives in 2012.

In the last election campaign, the Liberal Party promised Canadians that it would review the previous government's repeal of the Navigable Waters Protection Act, restore the lost protections, and add new, more modern ones. Although the new navigable waters act does increase legal protections for most navigable waters in Canada, it does not come close to restoring all the protections that were abolished.

The legislation used to provide both environmental and social protections for all future usage, as well as current usage. The new legislation is too technical, and its scope is too narrow, ignoring the overall social and environmental benefits of navigable waters.

Therefore, it would be entirely appropriate to split this bill for voting purposes at second reading so that members could review this legislation more carefully and better represent their constituents by voting separately on two completely different matters.

[English]

That is why, Mr. Speaker, we are asking you to separate completely the section of the bill concerning the impact assessment from clauses 1 to 9, 81 to 86, 101, 103 to 114, 143 to 146, 174 to 181, 184, and 189 to 196.

[Translation]

Then there is the part that establishes the Canadian energy regulator and sets out its composition, mandate, and powers. The role of the regulator is to regulate the exploitation, development, and transportation of energy.

[English]

We believe that this part is comprised of clauses 10 to 44, 87 to 100, 102, 115 to 142, 147 to 173, 182, and 185.

Government Orders

[Translation]

These are clearly not environmental matters because they have to do with natural resources, not the environment per se. We strongly believe that all matters related to natural resources, energy, forestry, ores, and metals should be dealt with separately from environmental matters.

[English]

Finally, there is the section on navigation protection comprised of clauses 45 to 80, 186, 187, and 188, which would modify the Navigation Protection Act, and also touches the transportation file.

This is a massive, complex, and blatantly obvious omnibus bill. Mr. Speaker, I am confident that you will agree that members and Canadians whom we represent would be much better served by dividing the votes on the bill accordingly.

[Translation]

The Speaker: I would like to thank the hon. member for Berthier—Maskinongé. I appreciate her patience with the interpretation issues. I will come back to the House with my ruling.

[English]

However, I also want to raise a point in relation to the Standing Orders that members do not all seem to be aware of. I want to remind members of the first part of Standing Order 16(2):

When a Member is speaking, no Member shall pass between that Member and the Chair...

At the beginning of the presentation by the hon. member for Berthier—Maskinongé, a member did cross between the member speaking and the Chair. The same thing happened yesterday and it happens all too frequently. This is not just a practice or a courtesy; it is a standing order. It is a rule of the House. It is an indication of showing respect for the House and so I want to remind members. I would ask those staff members listening in the offices of members to remind their members that members are not to pass between the person speaking and the Chair. I thank hon. members for their attention.

* * *

● (1135)

IMPACT ASSESSMENT ACT

The House resumed from February 14 consideration of the motion that Bill C-69, An Act to enact the Impact Assessment Act and the Canadian Energy Regulator Act, to amend the Navigation Protection Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: Resuming debate. The hon. member for Lakeland has twelve and a half minutes remaining in her speech.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to continue my comments on part 2 of Bill C-69, the Canadian energy regulator act.

Last week I shared some concerns about the bill, especially in the context of the Liberals' constant denigration and undermining of confidence in the regulator and in Canada's reputation at home and internationally, especially since the 2015 election, with respect to responsible resource development.

The Liberals have imposed new hurdles, delays, rule changes, called for phasing out the oil sands, added costs and roadblocks to the oil and gas sector, which is already the most heavily-regulated industry in Canada by all levels of government. They have told the hundreds of thousands of unemployed energy workers in Canada to just hang in there.

Regulatory and fiscal policies are key factors in the economics and business decisions of multi-year, multi-billion dollar energy projects for private sector companies. Now the Liberals are adding more uncertainty with more processes and more details yet to be known. The risk is the acceleration of the already massive investment and job losses in Canada's natural resources development as a result of the Liberals' ideological and anti-energy-driven decisions.

I am concerned about the new preplanning phase in part 1 that would apply to major projects like pipelines. Put aside the fact that Canadian common best practice already is to undertake early pre-project engagement with stakeholders, indigenous communities, and scientific experts. According to Bill C-69, after the initial six-month process, the minister alone can deny projects before the assessment stage. So much for experts, transparency, objective evidence and clear measures.

The bill provides no assurances that clear and publicly-known rules will be applied consistently to all project applications or that the full rationale for a denial will be made public. This approach clearly allows for political and ideological decision-making behind closed doors. The only hope for energy developers is that if a project is politically risky, the minister might kill it at the outset, instead of forcing proponents to wade through years of expensive reviews, wasting time and billions of dollars of capital investment, risking jobs in the meantime.

I want to review the three key claims made by the Liberals.

First, the Liberals claim that public participation will increase in both volume and effectiveness because of the elimination of the standing test of the National Energy Board. That test set out the two-pronged consideration for those who can participate: first, anyone who was directly affected by the project; and, second, anyone who had sufficient expertise or relevant information may be heard. On the face of it, that is reasonable.

However, let us look at a concrete example, the Enbridge Line 9B reversal and Line 9 capacity expansion proposal, about how this test operated in practice.

Government Orders

After receiving 177 applications to participate, the NEB granted 158 applicants full participation rights, and asked 11 applicants to submit a letter of comment. The board only denied eight. One of them appealed, so the courts examined her application and the board's decision. Her application was aimed at the second prong of the standing test, to contribute based on her expertise.

The judicial decision stated:

She stated that she had a specified and detailed interest in the matter...based on her religious faith. In her view, a spill from a pipeline, even far away from her home, is "an insult to [her] sense of the holy."

I think this case illustrates that the standing test worked reasonably, designed to keep the focus of the approval hearings on important issues and to weed out irrelevant information.

Now let us review the new standing provision. Section 183(3) states, "Any member of the public may, in a manner specified by the Commission, make representations with respect to an application for a certificate."

I note this language excludes no one. Every person or organization, so long as they comply with the procedure, may submit comment and be heard. This means that a radical anti-resources activist organization from Europe or an American-funded group competing with Canadian companies for investment dollars has the same right to be heard at a hearing for a pipeline, mine, or an LNG project in Canada under Canadian regulations, in Canada's process, as local stakeholders, indigenous communities, industry representatives, experts, and concerned Canadian groups.

Therefore, the regulator will have two options. It might choose to allow everyone who asks to be heard to provide comment, which effectively eliminates any meaningful participation, because when everyone is heard in fact no one is heard. Or the regulator will establish a hierarchy where some participants have the right to give oral and written evidence, others will give written submissions, and the least helpful or relevant contributions will be relegated to some kind of participation prize category where they can contribute but no one will care.

This is fundamentally chaotic, unpredictable, and unclear. How can a proponent prepare for a hearing process where literally anyone can provide comments and questions? Why should decisions about Canadian projects in Canada be influenced by non-Canadians?

The second key claim the Liberals make is that Bill C-69 would create concrete timelines of 450 days for major projects and 300 days for minor projects, except it does not really.

● (1140)

First, the clock starts only when the commission says the applicant has submitted the complete application, but it is entirely discretionary. The bill gives no definition of what is "complete". It does not prevent the regulator from continuously deciding that an application is incomplete for political reasons or otherwise.

The second problem is that the regulator may exclude any period of time from the time limit calculations, so long as reasons are provided. It is any amount of time and any number of times. Is a timeline that could have any part of it excluded from the calculation really a timeline at all?

The third problem is that the minister may extend the timeline indefinitely by issuing repeat orders granting new 300 or 450 day timeline resets. Stakeholders, like the Mining Association of Canada, are concerned that the proposed system for timelines could undermine the competitiveness and growth prospects of mining in Canada, a sector that is often the only or the major employer in northern, remote, and indigenous communities.

It is disingenuous of the Liberals to claim they have made timelines concrete when the bill clearly shows there is nothing concrete about them.

The Liberals third claim is that new factors for consideration will make the approval process more robust and produce better results for Canadians. Of course factors for consideration for a major pipeline project, for instance, are fundamental to its viability. For example, the Liberals interfered in the energy east hearings, and their appointed panel told the NEB that even though it was years and millions of dollars into the process, energy east should be reconsidered, based on upstream and, for the first time ever, downstream emissions. Making upstream and downstream emissions a condition for pipelines is a double standard to which no other major infrastructure, or any other sector or foreign oil, is held. It is already regulated provincially. The Liberals forced energy east to be abandoned.

On page 167, proposed subsection 183(1)(2), it states:

The Commission must make its recommendation taking into account...all considerations that appear to it to be relevant and directly related to the pipeline, including

(a) the environmental effects, including any cumulative environmental effects;

The term is not defined and may be designed to allow a project to be killed for political expediency.

Cumulative environmental impacts should be clearly defined here, not left broad and vague. Also, it is unfair to project proponents to account for impacts elsewhere in the value chain. For example, the approval of Trans Mountain should not hinge on Kinder Morgan accounting for emissions of planes flying out of Victoria and Vancouver. Imagine if that same standard applied to other vital infrastructure, like highways, airports, and rail.

On top of that, once a project gets through every single hurdle and even if approval is granted, the minister or the regulator can still issue a post-approval demand for further study and evaluation. This new measure almost guarantees delays after future approvals. Despite the Liberal rhetoric, that is exactly how the B.C. NDP is trying to kill Trans Mountain right now. Unfortunately, it is already clear that under the Liberals, federal approval of a national project in federal jurisdiction does not mean it still will not be stopped.

Government Orders

For every Liberal claim about the bill, the process is clearly designed for political influence and intervention. At any stage the minister can step in and kill the project. Even at the various stages where there is no formal ministerial approval required, the minister still could interfere, just as the Liberals did with energy east, and signal to the regulator that the project needs to be delayed or killed outright. It does not clarify or streamline an objective, evidence-based process where decisions will be made by experts.

What are the results? Suncor, the leading integrated oil and gas company in Canada, says that it will not invest in major projects in Canada in the future. Billions of investment dollars are leaving Canada for the U.S. and other energy-producing jurisdictions. The combined impact of additional regulations, higher taxes, and uncertainty makes Canada a more difficult place to invest capital.

There is another component of Bill C-69 that requires careful examination.

The government claims the bill would broadly enhance and expand consultations with indigenous communities, but the government should be more precise and accurate. Bill C-69 does not actually change the consultation rights for indigenous communities at all. Canada has developed, through laws, executive action, and court decisions, a framework within which meaningful indigenous consultation occurs. The crown has a duty, when it takes executive action, to examine if it would interfere with or infringe on a section 35-protected right of an indigenous community. If such a right is identified and the executive still intends on following that course of action, the indigenous community must be meaningfully consulted and compensated for any loss or infringement of the right.

Bill C-69 simply would not change this fundamental principle.

What I have heard from pro-energy and pro-natural resources indigenous groups is that the Liberals are interfering with their ability to responsibly manage their lands and to engage with industry in equity partnerships, which is a widespread practice. From the tanker and drilling bans to the northern gateway veto, the Liberals unilaterally destroyed immediate and future opportunities in responsible resource development for indigenous people, without consultation.

• (1145)

Canadian natural resource proponents have long worked with indigenous communities early to identify affected communities and establish relationships. In the case of Trans Mountain, literally any indigenous community that wanted to be involved was included in consultation. The project is supported by 40 aboriginal groups along the route and four of the six first nations in the area are equity partners.

The real question the House must consider about the legislation is this. What global oil market share should Canada own? As well, what will really be the future of natural resources development and all the jobs it provides across the country? The fact is that global demand for oil and gas is going to continue to increase. Countries that do not match Canada's environmental, human rights, labour and consultation standards, and transparency are ready to meet that demand.

If the Liberals continue to create more layers and uncertainty, it will only mean Canadian energy investment will continue to fall and energy resources will not be able to meet that increasing demand from Canada.

Energy is the number one private sector investor in the Canadian economy, and it is Canada's second biggest export. The importance of this sector cannot be understated. The responsible development and transportation of Canada's energy resources lifts that standard of living of every Canadian, reduces poverty, and funds important social programs in every community across the country.

Canada's economy needs a strong natural resources sector. It has sole ownership of 7% of GDP. It produces billions of dollars and a million jobs. It is Canada's opportunity to continue to be an environmental leader in the world.

Ramming this bill through is irresponsible. Industry is already pulling investment capital from Canada. It is warning about the impacts of this legislation. Hundreds of thousands of jobs have already been lost. If Bill C-69 passes, in one blow, the Liberals will have put at serious risk the immediate and long-term future of Canada's natural resources development.

I will oppose this bill and encourage my colleagues to do so. I hope, at the very least, the Liberals will allow us to represent the people who sent us here on their behalf to represent their interests and values, and to give this massive legislation the debate it deserves.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I agree with the member that Canadians understand the importance of the energy sector. Coming from the west, we understand the importance of markets abroad. For example, for 10 years the Harper government was unsuccessful in delivering pipelines, not one inch of pipeline that would lead to tidewaters. The Conservatives can talk about it, but through the minister, this government has delivered on pipelines and energy while taking the environment into consideration.

Could the member explain to Canadians why the Harper government was so unsuccessful at delivering that valuable energy to markets through pipelines to tidewaters?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind the member for Foothills that if he wishes to participate in the debate, he can stand and be recognized.

The hon. member for Lakeland.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Madam Speaker, under the previous Conservative government, 17 pipelines were approved, and four are in operation. The Liberals continue to spin this narrative that not one inch of pipeline was approved under the Conservative government. It is just not true. In fact, not one inch of pipeline the Liberals have approved, or any of the other initiatives, have been completed. They really need to drop this completely false rhetoric and misleading Canadians on this issue.

Government Orders

In fact, in recent history, only two new initiatives have been proposed as new pipelines to tidewater: the energy east pipeline, which would take Canadian energy resources to eastern Canadian refineries to secure our own energy independence and security and then shipped to European markets; and the northern gateway pipeline, which would have gone to the west coast to ship to the ever-increasing demand in the Asia Pacific.

The Liberals killed the energy east pipeline with rule changes and delays, and vetoed the approval of the northern gateway pipeline on the exact same day they approved other projects using the exact same science, evidence, and basis. It is all talk. No wonder Canadians do not trust them on this issue.

● (1150)

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am finding the debate most amusing, with both parties arguing over whose environmental assessment process guarantees that every project will be approved. It is not what the process is supposed to be about, but it is very revealing.

The member's colleague who sits on the committee with me has raised similar concerns to what I have about the uncertainty of the bill. Essentially, we have a framework where the details will come with regulations and rules to be implemented after the bill is finally approved.

I wonder if the member could agree with me that there is a serious problem. The decision on whether or not anything will be assessed will be left to a project list or to the discretion of the minister. Does she not agree that perhaps it would have been good to do this process at the same time that they were consulting on the bill?

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Madam Speaker, first of all, I do not want to be misunderstood. I do not think that Conservatives, or anyone here, are advocating that every single proposal or project must automatically be approved. Conservatives support, as we always have, the highest standards of consultation and environmental consideration, consultation with impacted communities and indigenous communities, for which Canada has long been known, for decades. In fact, we are second to none, to no energy producing country in the world. Canada is a world leader on all of those fronts. Conservatives support that and champion the Canadian energy and our long-time environmentally responsible, socially responsible, vigorous and rigorous standards, with a stringent consultation process for the consideration and approval of major energy projects.

However, I agree with the member wholeheartedly and completely that on a number of instances, as I outlined in my speech, and maybe we can get into it more through these questions and comments, the bill opens wide multiple levels and major scope of intervention by ministers—and it also should also be mentioned by non-Canadians—in the consideration and decision of Canadian projects that are so important to the entire economy and the millions of Canadians who are employed in the natural resources sector, both directly and indirectly.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Madam Speaker, I do not think there are too many people in the House who have the knowledge and expertise on this issue as does our shadow minister for natural resources.

Two things that the member touched on are quite important to discuss. Liberals are trying to talk about that this as a science-based, fact-based bill. However, the bill states that the Minister of Climate Change and Environment has the sole responsibility to decide if a project is in the public good and will decide whether that project moves from the assessment stage on to the full study.

What kind of impact will that have on a project when the proponent sees no clear path to success? In fact, he sees that no matter what kind of documentation, what kind of study and analysis are done, there is one person in cabinet who has the authority to say that the project is worthwhile and for the public good.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Madam Speaker, we need to put this into context about what is happening in energy investment in Canada since the 2015 election under the Liberals. The two years after the election saw the steepest decline of energy investment in Canada from any other two-year period in 70 years. The dollar values are the equivalent of losing 75% of manufacturing, almost the entire aerospace industry in Canada. It is shocking that this has not been a pressing priority for the federal government and that it is bringing forward legislation that will cause more uncertainty and more risk, deterring more capital from Canada, which is important to every Canadian across the country.

The member is right on when he says that this flies in the face of all the Liberals' rhetoric about evidence, scientific-based decision-making, when they allow for political interference at multiple levels, including before the process even starts, and afterward by one single member of the cabinet who has already demonstrated a radical anti-energy agenda.

● (1155)

Mr. Frank Baylis (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member pointed out that the process of having pipelines approved is lengthy and challenging. There is no question about that. It has also been challenged that the government has been misspeaking when it says that the previous government was not able to get one pipeline built to tidewater. That has been challenged and it has been said it is incorrect.

Could the member give us the name of that pipeline that was built to tidewater? If not the name, could the member provide maybe where it was built, from where to where?

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Madam Speaker, what Canadians would like is for the Liberals to one day take responsibility for being government and to focus on the debate at hand. Here is what they have done.

Government Orders

The Liberals disallowed opposition members and opposition staff from being able to participate in a full technical briefing on this legislation along with media and stakeholders. They offered a technical briefing hours after they had already provided full rationale for stakeholders and media. That did not just impact their colleagues in the Conservatives, but it impacted our colleagues in the NDP. They may approach this issue from a different perspective, but they deserve to be briefed just as sufficiently nonetheless. Now they are cutting off debate on one of the most important pieces of legislation that would impact a sector which literally underpins the entire Canadian economy. It puts our reputation at risk as a long-term and future environmentally and socially responsible producer of oil and gas in the world.

Let us use our time here today, limited as it is and shut down as hypocritically as it was by the dictatorial Liberals, and let us focus on the legislation at hand. Let us debate the impacts of the bill that they have put forward and are trying to ram through.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, I agree wholeheartedly with my colleague's comments about process.

In 2011, I wrote to Denis Lebel, the minister at the time in the Harper Conservative government, asking, from a local government perspective, for assurance that the government had a handle on what bitumen would do to the marine environment if spilled. I had a long list of questions, but they were never answered.

In 2013, the Harper government said it was going to conduct scientific research on bitumen, which did not happen, and then the National Energy Board process blocked the hearing of the evidence.

I would like to hear my colleague's views on how it feels to have this evidence come late into—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to allow a bit of time for the answer.

A very brief answer from the member for Lakeland, please, because the time is up.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Madam Speaker, the fact is that multiple studies have been completed on the effects of diluted bitumen. That is a fact. I understand my NDP colleague's task is to carry on the anti-energy agenda of the B.C. NDP to try to shut down the Trans Mountain pipeline. That is what this is all about.

The Royal Society has called for increased studies on diluted bitumen, and I do not think anybody here would oppose that. However, it is absolutely false to say that the effects were not assessed under—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Sorry, as I indicated, I wanted a brief question and a brief answer. When we indicate a short question or comment, it has to be that.

Resuming debate, the hon. Minister of Natural Resources.

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am proud to rise today to support the legislation before us.

Canada was built largely on investment and innovation in our abundant natural resources, from our oil and natural gas to our minerals, like gold, silver, copper, nickel, and zinc, to our vast and diverse forests. Canadians know that investment and innovation in

all of our natural resource sectors must continue so that we can get our resources to global markets and use the revenues they generate to invest in a clean energy future, a healthier future, for those who will follow us.

Bill C-69 recognizes that the only way to achieve this success is by creating a modern environmental and regulatory review system that is truly open and inclusive and that can get good resource projects built. This proposed legislation would restore investor and public trust, invite the full participation of indigenous people, and be grounded in science, evidence, and traditional indigenous knowledge. It would also be an important piece of a larger picture and a broader plan, one that responds with the global transition to a clean energy future. Canadians know that we are in the midst of that transition.

Last April, we invited Canadians to imagine Canada's energy future and to be part of the largest and most important conversation of its kind ever held in our nation. We invited Canadians to be respondent, joining in the conversation online by the hundreds of thousands, with hundreds more descending on my home city of Winnipeg for the two-day Generation Energy Forum last fall.

People came to Winnipeg from across the country and around the globe, from Norway, France, Mexico, and the United States. They came from every sector of the energy industry, oil and gas, wind, solar, nuclear, electricity. Indigenous leaders, youth leaders, community leaders, academics were all there. Several members opposite joined us as well, from every party except the Conservative Party. That speaks volumes about how much the official opposition cares about the future of the energy industry in this country. There was not one individual in a group of 650 from every region in our country who represented the official opposition. Had any of the members opposite felt it worth their time to join us, they would have found people who may never have spoken to each other before, in the same room challenging each other and themselves.

Suddenly, the questions became ever more pressing: What happens now? What if our individual choices could add up to transformative changes? Generation Energy tapped into something unexpected and special. Years from now, Canadians may very well look back and say that Generation Energy was a turning point, that it marked our emergence as a global leader in the transition to a low-carbon economy.

Our government is building a Canadian energy strategy, working with the provinces and territories to expand on what they have already done, leveraging the fossil fuel resources we have today to deliver clean energy solutions for tomorrow, leaning on shared priorities such as energy efficiency, clean technologies, and green infrastructure, and linking those provinces who have an abundance of clean electricity with those who are trying to get it.

Government Orders

Until this proposed legislation was introduced, we had been missing an important piece of this vision. We were missing an environmental and regulatory system that commands the confidence of Canadians, a system that ensures we can mine the minerals and metals that will go into tomorrow's clean technology, that we can tap our abundant natural gas as a transitional fuel, and that we can get our resources to market. Those resources, by the way, include Canadian oil.

One of the clear messages from Generation Energy was that Canadians want a thriving low-carbon economy, but they also know that we are not there yet. They understand that while we need to prepare for the future, we must also deal with the present, by providing energy that they can count on when they flick on a light switch, or fill up their gas tanks, or plug in their electric cars. This means we must continue to support our oil and gas industry even as we develop alternatives, including solar, biomass, wind, and tidal.

●(1200)

We do not share the view of those who would simply pump as much oil as we can as fast as we can, nor do we agree with those who say we should leave all of the oil in the ground and never build another pipeline. Both miss the larger goal of balancing economic prosperity and environmental protection. How do we do both?

We do it by promoting resource development while putting a hard cap on greenhouse gas emissions, including Alberta's 100-megatonne limit on the oil sands. We do it by putting a price on carbon, implementing a \$1.5 billion oceans protection plan, and enforcing new environmental safeguards, such as those in the Pipeline Safety Act. We do it by recognizing that a strong and sustainable oil and gas industry represents an enormous opportunity to fund the transition to a low-carbon economy.

Here are a few quick statistics. In 2016, the oil and gas industry directly employed 190,000 Canadians, producing \$75 billion in exports and accounting for almost 5% of our GDP. It also generated billions of dollars in government revenues, revenues that pay for our hospitals and schools, for the social programs that make us who we are, and for the clean energy and new technologies that represent our future.

The Harper government took the approach of ignoring indigenous rights, climate change, and the environment in favour of economic development at all costs. This resulted in Canadians losing trust in the way major resource projects were being assessed.

That is why, when we formed government, we introduced a set of interim principles to get environmental assessments and regulatory reviews moving on those projects already in the queue, principles that reflected our priorities: maintaining certainty for investors, expanding public consultations, enhancing indigenous engagement, and including greenhouse gas emissions in our project assessments.

The benefits of these interim principles were felt right away. Major projects, such as the Trans Mountain expansion and the Line 3 replacement pipelines were approved, while the northern gateway project was not. Each one was the right decision based on good jobs, sound science, and the national interest.

Our goal has always been a permanent fix to Canada's environmental assessments. Just seven months into our mandate,

we launched a comprehensive review that included modernizing the National Energy Board, protecting our fish, and preserving our waterways. We appointed expert panels, enlisted parliamentarians, released a discussion paper, and at every step of the way consulted Canadians, listening more than we spoke.

What emerged from these efforts were the same messages we heard through Generation Energy. Canadians are engaged. They are well-informed. They know the economy and the environment can and must go hand in hand. They agree that Canada works best when Canadians work together.

Those are the hallmarks of Bill C-69, a new and inclusive approach to protect the environment and build a stronger economy, creating good jobs and a sustainable future. It is an approach based on restoring public trust, renewing Canada's relationship with indigenous peoples, collaborating with the provinces and territories, protecting our environment, fish and waterways, and encouraging more investments in Canada's natural resource sector: better rules to build a better Canada.

It all starts with our proposal for an early engagement and planning phase that would help resource companies with new projects identify the priorities of local communities and indigenous peoples. This would create immediate benefits. First, the proponents and their investors would have a clear lay of the land before they spend a lot of money advancing their proposals. Second, by identifying the key issues early, the ensuing project reviews would be shorter and more focused. In other words, by engaging earlier, companies would be better able to plan and develop smarter, all of which would help them to attract investment, maintain competitiveness, and enhance bottom lines.

Bill C-69 also proposes to integrate project reviews within a single, consistent impact assessment, which Canadians have been calling for for years: one project, one assessment. Our legislation would do this by creating a new federal agency for impact assessments, the impact assessment agency of Canada, that would be responsible for coordinating indigenous consultations and collaborating with federal regulators who provide specialized expertise.

Government Orders

• (1205)

We are also proposing to establish a new federal energy regulator to replace the National Energy Board. Called the Canadian energy regulator, or CER, it would have the required independence and the proper accountability to oversee a strong, safe, and sustainable Canadian energy sector in the 21st century. Located in Calgary where much of the country's energy expertise is located, the CER would help restore investor confidence, renew Canada's relationship with indigenous peoples, and rebuild trust through open and inclusive public participation, all while ensuring good projects go ahead and our energy resources get to markets.

This new energy regulator would be specifically designed to deal with the shifting global energy markets of the 21st century, to respond to the evolving legal landscape for indigenous rights, and to adopt new technology that can support greater transparency and broader public engagement.

Let me outline how the new Canadian energy regulator would do this in five key ways.

First, it would have a more modern and effective governance. While the National Energy Board has served Canadians well, its structure, role, and mandate have remained relatively unchanged since the National Energy Board Act was first introduced in 1959. The Canadian energy regulator act clarifies the new regulator's responsibilities and operations, while strengthening its independence and its diversity. This includes separating the regulator's adjudicative function, which demands a high degree of independence, from its daily operations where a high degree of accountability is what we need. This would be achieved through a board of directors that would provide oversight, strategic direction, and advice on operations, while the chief executive officer, separate from the board, would be responsible for day-to-day operations.

The new regulator would also include a group of independent commissioners who would be responsible for timely, inclusive, and transparent project reviews and decision-making. The act would enhance the diversity of the new regulator's board of directors and commissioners, requiring the regulator's expert panels to include expertise in traditional indigenous knowledge, as well as municipal, engineering, and environmental issues, and ensuring that at least one member of the board of directors and one commissioner are indigenous.

Second, the act proposes to strengthen investment certainty and deliver timelier decisions. The energy sector's future success depends on a predictable process and timely regulatory decisions for major new projects, without compromising on public consultations, indigenous reconciliation, or environmental stewardship. The principle of "one project, one assessment" directly addresses those concerns.

Under the legislation, the Canadian energy regulator would work closely with the new impact assessment agency for new projects requiring a full impact assessment. With smaller projects, the new regulator would conduct the reviews and have final decision-making authority for minor administrative functions, such as certain certificate and licence variances, transfers, and the suspension of certificates or licences. Under our plan, project reviews would not

exceed two years for major new projects and not more than 300 days for smaller ones. The Canadian energy regulator act would also restore the regulator's pre-2012 decision-making authority to issue a certificate for major projects, subject to cabinet approval. This change is important because it removes the federal cabinet's ability to overturn a negative decision from the CER, but maintains the cabinet's right to ask commissioners to reconsider a decision.

The third key change is an emphasis on more inclusive public engagement. Our new approach would create more opportunities for Canadians to have their say on resource development. This would include more avenues outside of the traditional hearing process so that Canadians could debate pressing issues that are beyond the scope of the regulator's project reviews. The new Canadian energy regulator would also be more open and transparent, making more information public in a language that is easier to understand.

Here are a few examples. The NEB's existing "test for standing" would be eliminated to ensure every Canadian has an opportunity to express his or her views during project reviews. The new regulator would also accept comments from the public on a draft list of issues and factors. These would include explicit consideration of environmental, social, safety, health, and socioeconomic issues, as well as gender-based impacts and effects on indigenous peoples. As well, the CER's participant funding program would be expanded to support new activities.

• (1210)

Fourth, the new Canadian energy regulator would help advance reconciliation through greater indigenous participation. No relationship is more important to Canada than the one with indigenous peoples. Our government is committed to renewing that relationship based on recognition of rights, respect, co-operation, and partnership. Our government's new rights and recognition framework represents a historic step in that direction, replacing confrontation with collaboration, but we know we cannot do this on our own.

Canada's energy sector has been playing a key role in building indigenous partnerships through benefit agreements, indigenous advisory and monitoring committees for new pipelines, and indigenous-led assessments. Our legislation would complement those efforts by recognizing indigenous rights up front and confirming the government's duty to consult, requiring consideration of traditional indigenous knowledge, building capacity and enhanced funding for indigenous participation, and aiming to secure free, prior, and informed consent.

Government Orders

Fifth and finally, the new federal energy regulator would oversee stronger safety and environmental protection. The Canadian energy regulator act would strengthen the federal energy regulator's powers to protect Canadians and the environment in a number of important ways, such as assigning new powers to federal inspection officers, clarifying the regulator's role in enforcing standards related to cybersecurity, and authorizing the CER to safely cease the operation of pipelines in cases where the owner is in receivership, insolvent, or bankrupt.

In all of these ways, through modern and effective governance, enhanced certainty and timelier decisions, wider public engagement and greater indigenous participation, and strengthened safety and environmental protections, the Canadian energy regulator would help create the new environmental and regulatory system we want, one that promotes common values and ensures shared benefits. Our legislation is for the Canada we have today and the Canada we want tomorrow, a Canada that uses the resources of its land and the resourcefulness of its people to lead in this clean-growth century, a Canada that not only imagines the future but creates it for generations to come.

● (1215)

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, instead of making a crass personal insult to the minister about the degree to which he cares, I am just going to focus this debate on facts.

Oil and gas investment under the Liberals is down 46% in Canada and up 38% in the U.S. A sixth of Canadian energy workers in the entire industry have lost their jobs under these Liberals. Four projects worth \$84 billion were lost last year alone. The facts are that these Liberals have presided over the largest two-year drop in energy investment in Canada of any other two-year period in 70 years.

Instead of politicians debating back and forth about the facts, let us listen to the actual experts, which Liberals say that they love to do. WorleyParsons in 2014 said in an international comparison of leading oil- and gas-producing regions:

The results of the current review re-emphasized that Canada's [Environmental Assessment] Processes are among the best in the world. Canada [has] state of the art guidelines for consultation, [traditional knowledge], and cumulative effects assessment. Canadian practitioners are among the leaders in the areas of Indigenous involvement, and social and health impact assessment. Canada has the existing frameworks, the global sharing of best practices, the government institutions and the capable people to make improvements to [environmental assessment] for the benefit of the country and for the benefit of the environment, communities and the economy.

It continues:

...the review found that [environmental assessment] cannot be everything to everyone. In Canada, however, it is a state of the art, global best process, with real opportunities for public input, transparency in both process and outcomes, and appeal processes involving independent scientists, stakeholders, panels and courts.

Can we please just acknowledge the facts and stop undermining Canada's reputation and long track record as an environmentally and socially responsible oil and gas developer?

Hon. Jim Carr: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member quoted one person at great length, whereas we consult with leaders in the oil and gas sector all the time. We have had meetings one on one. We have had meetings in small groups. We have given many speeches in Alberta, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Newfoundland, Quebec, and Ontario about Canada's energy future. We have a constant

conversation with leaders in the oil and gas sector. We understand the values that matter most to them: the values of timeliness and predictability, and a regime that understands the value of job creation in the energy sector. Therefore, while the member at great length quoted one person of her choosing, she should know that this government consults a lot of people all of the time.

● (1220)

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I hate to cut through this love affair between the two parties about who loves the oil and gas sector the best but I would like to speak to the bill.

When the Liberals were running for office, they promised that no would mean no if indigenous people did not support a project. They promised no project approvals until a new law was enacted. Well, they approved a pipeline, a dam, and an LNG project despite the fact that indigenous people were expressing deep concerns.

We finally have this bill after two years of consultation. The minister has said that this is going to be a new and different process, that it will not be the same as the previous one, and the recommendations will no longer singularly be made by the National Energy Board. However, the bill proposes that the majority of members on an environmental assessment panel could be from the Canadian energy regulator. The Canadian energy regulator members of the panel would not have to consider climate or cumulative impacts.

Could the member explain how it is that the two parts of the bill are so different? Why is it that the energy authorities who will sit on the panel would not have to consider those matters?

Hon. Jim Carr: Mr. Speaker, for major projects, the life cycle regulators do not make up the majority of the panel.

The member seems to forget the range of principles that was announced by the government in January 2016 to deal with projects that were currently under review. Do I take it from her intervention that she would have squashed all of those projects under review that would have cost proponents hundreds of millions of dollars? Is that the member's sense of fairness? No. We said for those projects that are currently under review we would establish another process in the interim that would be guided by a set of principles, including greater consultation with indigenous peoples and with Canadians.

Let us keep the record straight. The fairness was embedded in those interim principles, which was the fairest way to proceed with those projects under review. If the member has a different interpretation, I would love to hear it.

Points of Order

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what the minister says always sounds really good, but what the government actually does is different. In the more than two years the Liberals have been in government we have seen the energy east project die from their lack of action. We have seen them kill the northern gateway pipeline. Kinder Morgan is in the process of dying due to their lack of leadership.

The other reality is basic math. If more consultation and 180 more days of pre-planning are added to the approval process, that makes the process longer, not shorter.

Could the minister explain why he is misleading Canadians into believing this process will be shorter?

Hon. Jim Carr: Mr. Speaker, I would ask the member rhetorically what the difference in the price of oil was between the time that the energy east project began and when the proponent decided to withdraw it. I would ask a second rhetorical question. How many pipeline approvals happened during that same period of time?

I will remind my colleagues that the Enbridge Line 3 replacement program was approved, the Trans Mountain expansion was approved, and President Trump approved Keystone XL. Perhaps the approval of that pipeline capacity and the change in the price of oil had something to do with that decision.

Why was the northern gateway application quashed by the Federal Court of Appeal? Was it because the proponent had not consulted sufficiently? No. Was it because the National Energy Board had consulted insufficiently? No. It was because the Harper government failed the legal test, which is why we said that we did not want to fail the legal test, so we applied a different set of criteria through the interim principles. That is the difference between—

• (1225)

The Deputy Speaker: Order. Questions and comments, the hon. member for Hastings—Lennox and Addington.

Mr. Mike Bossio (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the primary goals of our government and the minister has been to achieve a balance of the environment and the economy going hand-in-hand. Could the minister please explain to the House how Bill C-69 would help to achieve that balance?

Hon. Jim Carr: Mr. Speaker, the member is absolutely right. The three pillars of responsible energy infrastructure development are the ones he suggests, economic growth, job creation, and environmental stewardship, in partnership with indigenous communities, all of which are contained within Bill C-69.

One can certainly make an argument that it is because those three pillars were not in place for 10 years that the Conservative opposition can let us know about the pipelines that were approved during the Harper administration. However, the Conservatives cannot seem to name a single one that was built to tidewater, because those three elements were not in place.

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am listening and looking at the bill as it comes through the House and the sham it is following as it goes through the House. Of course, the Liberals are ramming it through. They are not going to give us

enough time to actually explain it in detail, to actually show how bad the bill will be for Canada.

Let us talk about competitiveness. Let us talk about what is happening south of the border. Let us see how that is impacting what the government is doing here on budget day. Instead of doing things to make Canada more competitive, to make sure it is a more predictable environment in which to invest, it is doing the opposite with this legislation. By putting in ministerial approval at any time through the process, the Liberals have basically gone to the business sector and said, “It doesn't matter how much science you follow, at the end of the day, the minister can still say that we don't want to do it.” How can that be fair?

Hon. Jim Carr: Mr. Speaker, the opposition, both inside and outside the House, and others too, like to talk about a group of political decisions. We are going to hear a budget speech in a number of hours and there will be many provisions within that speech, and all will be political decisions. The thing about political decisions is that politicians are accountable for the decisions they make.

The Canadian people will evaluate our record in its entirety at the end of the mandate and decide whether or not they want to give us another one, or give it someone else. There is nothing inherently wrong with the decision being political if the word “political” means the people who make the decisions are accountable for them. If the members opposite think that is a bad system, I would like to hear about a better one.

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POINTS OF ORDER

BILL C-69—PROPOSED APPLICATION OF STANDING ORDER 69.1

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to address the points raised by the member for Berthier—Maskinongé in her point of order.

Standing Order 69.1(1) is clear in outlining the procedure as it relates to omnibus legislation.

As stated by my hon. colleague, Bill C-69 seeks to amend more than one act. Where my hon. colleague and I disagree is in the claim that there lacks a common element linking the various underlying elements of this comprehensive piece of legislation.

This legislation is the result of the government's comprehensive review of federal environmental and regulatory processes that were launched in June 2016. The tabling of Bill C-69 in its current form represents the continuation of this government's commitment to address this priority. The engagement process for the bill brought together a range of stakeholders to inform our approach on interconnected and interrelated environmental assessment processes, such as the review of major projects, so as to minimize and mitigate impacts on the country's land, air, and waterways.

Points of Order

Its content represents the outcome of this engagement. Through this bill we seek to strengthen the existing environmental assessment and regulatory processes in a global manner to regain public trust, protect the environment, introduce modern safeguards, advance reconciliation with indigenous peoples, and help get natural resources to market. Introducing these changes via separate legislative vehicles would introduce unnecessary uncertainty and imperil the overall strategy that results from consultations with a broad range of stakeholders.

Our government remains committed to end the inappropriate use of omnibus legislation. Consequently, I respectfully submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that Bill C-69 respects both the letter and the spirit of Standing Order 69.1 in its establishment of a new single Canadian approach to impact assessments.

● (1230)

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. parliamentary secretary for his additional comments on the point of order raised by the hon. member for Berthier—Maskinongé.

* * *

IMPACT ASSESSMENT ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-69, An Act to enact the Impact Assessment Act and the Canadian Energy Regulator Act, to amend the Navigation Protection Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Brad Trost (Saskatoon—University, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with my good friend and colleague, the hon. member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands.

I can bring everything back to relevance, but the House will have to bear with me for one little indulgence. I should explain to the House why I was unable to be here for the last parliamentary sitting week, and that was because my household welcomed a new eight pound, 10 ounce little girl, Helena Esu Trost. I was not away at some costume party in India or something like that. I was actually celebrating the birth of my daughter, and doing some constituency work at the same time. These things always need relevance and, like every piece of legislation we are talking about, it always impacts our children's future.

This legislation is of particular interest to me. The members who have been here for quite a few years will understand why. Prior to my election to the House of Commons, I worked as a mining exploration geophysicist. Geophysics was my education. It was my primary degree at the University of Saskatchewan. I actually worked in the field on mining and mineral exploration projects.

For me, when I read bills that talk about regulation, about impact of natural resources, it is not an academic question. Nowadays, increasingly, we have more and more Canadians who are removed from the production of primary goods. We see more and more people, as the joke goes, who think milk comes from a box in the store, not from a cow. They think that houses magically appear, and they are not made out of lumber and wood.

The same thing happens with oil and gas and mineral resources. People often do not have a fundamentally good understanding of

where these products come from or the impact or what needs to be done. Rather than going through some of the technical elements of the bill, which my colleagues are going to do very well here today, I want to talk a little about what this actually means to people on the ground.

One of the things that needs to be understood by Canadians who are watching this, by people who do not live in primary natural resource communities, is what this actually means for the people in these areas, for their social well-being and health, and other things. Every time we make it more difficult to produce natural resource wealth from rural and remote areas, we completely and deeply impact the lives of the people who live in those areas. For people who live in downtown Toronto, downtown Vancouver, or even in my city, downtown Saskatoon, this is a remote issue for them. It does not actually impact their day-to-day life. Let me give an example of what things can actually change if mining and oil and gas projects get through.

In the year 2000, I was an exploration geophysicist up in Baker Lake, Nunavut, a great community. The geographical centre of Canada is just outside of town. In that community at that point, there was a high unemployment rate. Naturally, there were issues, and not all issues go away with economic development.

What happened in the following years after we were up there and working on the Meadowbank and the Meliadine project is that Cumberland Resources turned it into a mine. Today there is a gold mine not too far away from the community. People can drive there. They take out the ore deposits. Baker Lake has less than a 0% unemployment rate. They have full employment there. I had the privilege of sitting in at a committee hearing where representatives of Baker Lake actually came. They talked about what this means to their communities.

When we talk about this legislation here, we are not just talking about things in the abstract. We are talking about a change in standard of living, a change in communities, particularly for our remote and rural areas. This has more impact on the social well-being of many of these communities than all the government projects combined.

That is why I think it should be, in many ways, a prejudice, not a negative prejudice but a positive prejudice, toward development in these smaller communities in particular. When in doubt, we should give extra weight to people who will get economic benefit from these projects.

That is what concerns me about this legislation that the government is bringing forward today. The government has taken away one very important element in this legislation that previously existed, and that was the concept of standing.

● (1235)

Before someone would go before the National Energy Board or talk to regulators, etc., one had to have relevance to the matter, had to be involved or connected. It could be technical expertise, financial interest, or community interest. However, as we begin to take away that legitimate and democratic connection to a project, we water down the voices of the people who have standing.

Points of Order

Now gold mines are not generally as politically controversial as oil pipelines. However, just think if Baker Lake would have had major opposition from places such as Norway or the United States to the development of their gold mine, and someone said they needed tourism or other things there more than a gold mine. Should the voices of the local people who would have benefited, whose lives would have changed, businesses would have been developed, and social structure added to and enhanced, be decreased? That is what happens when we take away standing. It is a fundamentally anti-democratic provision. It allows people to have a say who should not have a vote on the issue, by bringing in people who can influence it but have no actual connection. The analogy would be to letting people vote in my constituency who are not part of it.

In Canada, we have the principle that there has to be some relationship to the representative. The same thing needs to be held in regard to presentations on environmental projects on things of this nature. Of all the things in here, that is what concerns me the most: the undemocratic nature of eliminating standing to allow people who can use their wealth and influence to protect power, and not just inside Canada, but literally from outside Canada. That is not just an abstract point; it is a fundamental point that relates to democracy and how we let voices and people govern themselves, in this case in a very specific point of legislation.

The other thing that concerns me is the ability to take what appear to be set timelines and turn them into continuous extensions due to certain loopholes in the legislation. Now, the minister talked about how everything is political and if people do not like what the government does they can vote them out. Again, as the point has been made in this debate, some areas of the country do not have as direct a stake in this matter as do other areas of the country. For someone who lives in Saskatchewan, the north, or areas directly impacted, this is important. There should be much stricter legal guidelines given to eliminate loopholes of continuous delays that the minister and other actors under the act are allowed to give. Ultimately, if someone is going to be able to do a project that is substantive, there needs to be certainty.

When I was a young geophysicist working in northern Manitoba, I remember how many hours the senior geologists would work on developing environmental plans, getting things for provincial governments. I mean, we had to check out everything from ice thickness to what happens to garbage and so forth. One of the things people need to understand is that the industry takes this very seriously. In fact, when I worked in Yukon, we would have less environmental impact than many of the tourist groups and tourism parties who were there before us. We would pick up their trash.

That is why a lot of the general public's thinking of what a time delay is and bringing in the public impact is somewhat misplaced. That is why certainty needs to be there. With all the good work that the industry does in trying to be responsible, capital will start to move if it loses the certainty. The natural resource industry tends to be cyclical. Money will move forward in huge amounts, and then it will flow out again very quickly. One has to be ready to move to catch those peaks in resource prices in order to capitalize on them. With falling prices over the last few years, it has not been as good as it was in previous years.

As I conclude my remarks, I want to make a couple of points. During some of the debate, we talked about how pipelines were not built to tidewater under the previous Conservative government.

• (1240)

For the record, the Keystone pipeline and the Alberta Clipper line were approved and built under the previous government. As was noted, other pipelines were approved and then cancelled by the later government, and the Line 9 reversal also happened. These things happened. The job was getting done. It is important that we continue to understand how this impacts people all across Canada, particularly in rural and remote communities.

Mr. Frank Baylis (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague brought up an interesting point about relevance and a question about who has standing. I think he is trying to make the argument that people who have direct economic benefit have more standing than others. I disagree with that.

How would an environmentalist, someone who has spent their life studying the impacts on the environment of a project, have no standing? How would a landowner who has had land confiscated for a pipeline running through it have no standing? How would an aboriginal community that is impacted by a project have no standing?

My overall question to the member is, can he explain how one group who economically benefits should have more standing than someone who has suffered from the impact but has no economic benefit?

Mr. Brad Trost: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member needs to understand that what he is saying is not quite what I said.

I said that one needs to have some relevance to the project. One may have technical relevance or, as the member noted, one's land may be impacted. However, there needs to be some sort of a test. Is one's interest relevant to the project? People in Saskatchewan are not going to have the same sort of relevance to a project in New Brunswick as the people in New Brunswick. An environmentalist in New Brunswick who has technical expertise in a subject definitely has standing, ties, etc.

There are various tests we can use, but the problem with the proposed legislation is that it would eliminate the whole concept of tests for standing. We need some sort of test, be it technical, geographical, economic, tests on first nations' rights, and other legal tests. We cannot leave this completely open to anyone anywhere, because it would devalue the rights of the people who are involved, who have some reasoned and proper arguments to bring forward on how it would impact their lives.

Points of Order

[*Translation*]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a two-part question about transparency.

The Liberals got themselves elected because they promised transparency. They introduced a bill that is over 360 pages long. We debated the bill for about three hours, and now they are limiting the time we can spend debating it. They are not winning any points for transparency with this one.

This bill also gives the Minister of Environment and Climate Change the power to veto any environmental impact assessment. Those assessments are vital to assessing the climate impact of any project.

If this bill passes, then no matter what the environmental impact assessment agency recommends, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change will be able to veto that recommendation and vote for or against environmental assessments.

Does my colleague agree with that? How responsible and accountable is it for the minister to give herself that power?

•(1245)

[*English*]

Mr. Brad Trost: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague brings up a very good point. This is not a simple piece of legislation.

Members may have noticed that, in my speech, I did not get into the details. Part of the reason is that to go through and comprehend a 370-page piece of legislation takes more than a few hours. The government is pushing through this proposed legislation quite rapidly.

I do not know why the Liberals are afraid of more public debate. This is not an issue that is going to go away any time in Canadian history.

I agree with my hon. colleague from the New Democrats. I am not sure what the Liberals are trying to hide. I am not sure why they are afraid to have more public input. I know they are going to get criticism from both the left and the right. It does not mean that the bill has balance; it means they have not thought about things such as environmental or economic impacts. That is why they are getting the criticism they so richly deserve on this proposed legislation.

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to rise today to discuss Bill C-69. I would like to hold up a copy of it. This bill is so thick that the super staplers could not drill a hole through it. It had to be put into two packages to make it presentable to us.

The government has decided, after two hours of debate, that it is going to bring time allocation on this bill, that it needs to limit debate on it.

As my colleague just pointed out, it is not a simple bill. It is 400 pages. The index alone is 27 pages. The summary takes up two of them. We need to spend a little more time discussing it than the government is prepared to let us spend. This bill is going to have more impact on Canada, particularly on western Canada, my area in particular, than the budget today will have. It will take a little longer for the effects to show, but it is going to be very damaging to a large

part of this country. My colleague just talked about some of the impacts that this bill will have on small communities.

I believe that as we do in small things, so we will do in large things. Therefore, I want to tell a story about the current government and the way it has approached an environmental issue in my riding. We can probably extrapolate from that how it is going to use this bill across the rest of the country.

A few years ago, our government made a decision that we were going to turn the PFRA pastures in western Canada back to the provinces, which previously had ownership of the land. The land had been turned over to the federal government in the 1930s when the provinces could not manage it, and the federal government had managed it since then. We made a decision to turn it back to either the local communities that wanted to buy it or the provincial government, and that process carried itself out.

There is a small pasture in the southwest corner of Saskatchewan called Govenlock. It has been federal land for 100 years. There was a discussion about how to handle this piece of property that was federal land. The decision was made that it was going to be transferred from Agriculture Canada to Environment Canada, and hopefully would be managed in a responsible fashion over the coming decades.

Our government made a decision that we were going to try something a bit different. We went to the local community. The minister's chief of staff went there to listen to the local community, to talk to the ranchers, and said, "You folks have been basically managing this property for the last 80 or 100 years. What would you like to see from the federal government in terms of being able to manage this pasture over the next few decades?"

The invitation was there, and she went. She sat down at a meeting with the community and talked about what they would like to see. There was an agreement that whatever happened, the community should benefit from the project. There was an agreement made, but this was not formalized at the time, unfortunately. There was an agreement that the committee would have some control over management of the pasture and the research money that was going to be spent in that pasture. They could bring people in, perhaps university students in the summertime, and assign them to do research. The community and the people living in the community would benefit from taking some of that money that was going to be spent on the project.

It was a unique pilot project, and that is probably the best way to label it. It was based around co-operation between the government and the local community. It would provide a benefit to the local community. There was going to be good long-term management. The government had decided it was going to trust the people who had managed that environment for so long that they could continue to do it in an effective way.

Points of Order

It has been a very different situation in the two years since the current government was elected. Basically, all elements of community control have been thrown out. It is interesting. There have been top Environment Canada officials come out to the community to tour around in a cavalcade of vehicles, yet they have refused to stop and talk to the local people. They came out, drove around, and took a look at the pasture land, but they would not stop to talk to the locals about what they might want to see or provisions for the future management of the pasture. They have basically come back to the community and said, "Here are the provisions we are laying out for you over the next few decades if you want to have access to this pasture." They have told them the way they think the ground will be managed.

In my part of the world, every time that either an environmental organization or the government has come in to take over land that ranchers have managed, it has usually taken about 30 years to learn how to manage it. Interestingly, they typically end up managing it in the way the ranchers did in order to be successful. They removed any funding control from the local community. Basically, there is no commitment at all in any fashion to that. Certainly, any research that has taken place has been removed from the local community and will come out somewhere, maybe out of some environmental group that the government favours or a university somewhere, but the local community is not going to benefit.

• (1250)

The Liberals basically have set up a management system where the ranchers are the servants or slaves of government.

The only interest from Environment Canada seems to be in completely controlling the situation rather than co-operating. There has been a big loss to one small community, the small community of Consul in my riding. If that is how one small community has been approached, can we extrapolate that into how the bill will approach and deal with small communities across the country? I think we can.

Bill C-69 is 400 pages. As I mentioned, it is not so much concerned about improving the environment as it is about basically controlling the economy, controlling the environment, and trying to have the government tell people across the rest of the country how it is going to manage their affairs and the resources in their part of the world.

Now we have time allocation. That is the biggest insult in some time. We have a 400-page bill and now we are told we have two hours to debate it. The Liberals are rushing the bill through. Clearly, if people read this and see what the provisions are, the Liberals know they will get concerns. They are getting concerns from both ends of the spectrum. We know that. No one sees this as being adequate and the government, in its usual commitment to mediocrity, probably thinks that is okay.

In the past, we have had the highest standards in the world on energy development. When I drive through my riding and I see the energy development going on there, the wells that are being drilled, the environmental standards are extremely high. I would invite anybody to come out, walk onto one of those well sites and try to find any place where there has been any kind of a spill or pollution. People would have difficulty finding that because of our high standards. They have been high in the past as well. We are

environmentally responsible. In the world in which I live, there is more wildlife now than there has ever been and the air is cleaner than it has ever been. We believe we did a good job of managing environmental issues around resource development, and that needs to be continued.

I want to talk specifically about the approval process around Bill C-69. I am trying to run through this quickly and it is only one part of the stream. People may get confused. If they do, it would not be the least bit surprising because it has taken a lot of people a lot of time to even try to figure out what the approval process looks like.

There is a preplanning section to the projects of 180 days. The minister would have the discretion to designate how that would proceed. We do not know how limited the minister's discretion will be because it is not in the bill. The minister can extend that process by 90 days before it goes to cabinet. The cabinet can extend that process indefinitely. Then it goes to an impact assessment of 300 days and two different streams, a short one and a long one. With both of them, we do not have any clarity right now about how that will be determined. With the short ones, the agency will handle it.

All major projects will end up in this long stream of a 450-day commitment. All life cycle regulatory projects will go through that one. That 450 days starts when a panel is appointed, not from the beginning of the application, and it will stop when the minister gets the report.

The short or long process can be extended 90 days and the cabinet can extend those timelines indefinitely. The minister will have the authority to ask for any information along this whole cycle and then the minister can come back and say that he or she needs new information, and a whole new process needs to happen. That is just one small part of one stream of the bill and the approval process that the Liberal will put in place.

As the minister pointed out to us, all of these decisions are political decisions. These decisions should be made based on science, based on whether it will impact the environment in the area. The government is clearly saying that it wants every one of those decisions to be political and it is happy to manage them. We know what will happen, and that is the economy in my part of the world, the economy in western Canada, will be severely impacted. It will do nothing to protect the environment beyond what has already been done.

• (1255)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. I want to talk to him about Bill C-69. The government says it is putting this assessment process in place to rebuild public trust in environmental assessments. I would like to know what the member thinks about the consultation period being shortened. What impact will that have? He talked about small communities. The government says it wants to restore trust and transparency, but it is reducing the time spent on consultation. Reading the bill, we can plainly see that the goal is not establishing public trust.

I would like to hear the member's thoughts.

*Points of Order**[English]*

Mr. David Anderson: Mr. Speaker, I would agree with the hon. member, particularly with her final statement. We do not believe that this is about establishing trust.

We tried to put together a diagram on how this process, its impact assessment panel and processes would work. It is virtually impossible to work our way through that. Certainly, within that, the government is trying to limit time. At the same time, it is expanding standing, as mentioned earlier. It is expanding the standing to anyone who feels he or she has any sort of contribution to make. It will make it impossible.

I think the member for Lakeland said that if the government expanded it to everyone, it basically would make consultation meaningless. That is true. We have seen that in the past where people flooded the system. They do not have any intention of actually dealing honestly and fairly with the application process. They just want to try to stop it, so they try to bog it down so it cannot work.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative party as a whole has lost touch with Canadians. The Conservatives do not quite understand what we are proposing.

Today, if we want to advance the exportation of energy while being sensitive to the issues of our environment, we need to put in place a process that will allow us to build energy export markets abroad. When we look at the legislation, in good part it is building that social contract or whatever one might want to call it.

My question is based on this. This government has demonstrated it understands the indigenous factor, the environmental factor, and the importance of exporting our energy. We actually got agreements. Does the member believe that under our system we have been successful in getting a pipeline to tidewaters? The Conservatives, in their 10 years, failed miserably at doing that?

Mr. David Anderson: Mr. Speaker, I do not know why the hon. member continues to spew these falsehoods. He already addressed them earlier. It is just ridiculous. I do not know if he is delusional or is trying to mislead Canadians deliberately. The reality is that the Liberal government has failed at every point on this file.

He talks about the Conservatives losing touch with Canadians. We were not dancing and prancing across India last week. When we talk about building markets, the Liberals failed to do that. They managed to finish up the European free trade agreement because we had it 99.9% done. However, they almost lost it because of their mismanagement and incompetence. They turned around and divided everyone.

They divided indigenous communities across the country because they refused to hold the leaders accountable for the money they spent. We had put that transparency in place.

Everywhere the Liberals go they divide communities and do not keep their promises. Canadians are well aware of that. If anyone has lost touch with Canadians, it is the government.

● (1300)

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what the federal Liberals are doing is replicating exactly what they did in Ontario, by making it a purely political decision on whether a project can go forward. They were using an element of their political fortune, or electoral fortune, in some cases, to determine whether a project would go through.

Given the fact that this entity is going to have the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission folded into it, what is the potential threat to the nuclear industry should this go ahead?

Mr. David Anderson: Mr. Speaker, I talked a little about the kind of bureaucratic morass those people were putting in place to try to stop energy approvals. Nuclear needs to be an important part of that mix in the future. We do not hear much talk about it from the other benches. However, at every point that each of these agencies is involved, the government has made it more and more difficult for projects to move ahead.

My colleagues talked earlier about certainty, how investors needed to have certainty. I think it is deliberate that the government is creating uncertainty right through the process. It knows full well that investors will not invest in Canada, whether it is energy projects, nuclear projects, or other projects across the country.

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Pickering—Uxbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Winnipeg South.

It is my pleasure to rise in the House today to speak to Bill C-69, an act to enact the impact assessment act and the Canadian energy regulator act, to amend the Navigation Protection Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts.

Canadians understand that protecting our environment and growing our economy is not an either/or proposition. With hundreds of major resource projects worth over \$500 billion in investment planned across Canada over the next 10 years, we need to ensure that better rules are in place so good projects that balance the need for economic growth and environmental protection can go forward.

Bill C-69 would fulfill that objective. It would also fulfill our goal of one project, one review. The review process would be streamlined and would make the process more predictable, timely, and clear, while ensuring stakeholders would be engaged effectively and potential issues with project proposals would be identified up front. These better rules would increase regulatory certainty and clarity, encouraging investment in Canada's natural resources sector.

Points of Order

After a decade that saw the erosion of public trust in our regulatory bodies, Canadians can be assured that we are putting in place better rules to protect our environment, fish, and waterways, with the goal of rebuilding that public trust. I am proud to say that decisions will be guided by science, evidence, and indigenous traditional knowledge. Impact assessment will also consider how projects are consistent with our environmental obligations and climate change commitments, including the Paris agreement on climate change.

A single agency, the impact assessment agency of Canada, would lead all impact assessments for major projects, with the goal of ensuring the approach would be consistent and efficient. Canadians can expect that under our new framework, projects will be held to a high standard and we will protect our environment and build healthy communities.

I am sure all members of the House would agree and recognize that building new and efficient infrastructure systems is necessary in a modern economy. We need bridges and other works to travel, to get goods to market, and to grow our economy. However, these projects need to be built in a way that allows Canadians to continue to travel and enjoy our waterways, and to be safe while doing it.

Canadians travel through our country's vast network of oceans, lakes, rivers and canals for commercial and recreational purposes.

It is important to note that navigable waters also play a critical role for indigenous peoples in the exercise of their rights. The free and unobstructed passage over navigable waters has long been recognized in law and has been one of the foundations of our country.

In 2014, the Navigation Protection Act introduced by the previous government drastically cut back navigation protections by establishing a short list of waters in a schedule to the legislation to focus protection on waterways that were heavily used near large population centres and which had a significant commercial use.

New works on waters not on the legislative schedule, including large dams, do not require any approval under the existing Navigation Protection Act, even though they may create a significant interference to navigation.

Obstructions on navigable waters outside the schedule do not receive protection under the existing legislation. The only recourse for Canadians who have navigation concerns about projects on navigable waters outside of this list is to take the matter to the courts. The Navigation Protection Act reduces transparency and makes it harder to know about proposals for works before they were constructed.

We have heard loud and clear from Canadians that this is not enough protection for their right to navigate our lakes, rivers, and canals. This is why we spent over a year consulting on changes to the Navigation Protection Act to better understand the kinds of navigation protections that Canadians and indigenous peoples were seeking.

During this comprehensive and informative consultation, we heard that Canadians wanted further navigation protections on more waterways, more information about projects that could affect

navigation, more opportunities for their navigation concerns to be heard and resolved without going to court, and more clarity on the definition of "navigable water".

● (1305)

We also heard from indigenous peoples that they want a greater role in protecting navigation in their territories. We heard from industry and provincial representatives, who said they want clear and predictable regulations.

We have listened to these concerns and we have acted. This is why the Canadian navigable waters act would deliver on all of this. First, it would restore navigation protection on all navigable waters in Canada by using modern safeguards. Major works, like dams, would require an approval on any navigable water. Minor works, like small cottage docks, would need to meet the requirements set out by an order in the act on any navigable water. All other work on unscheduled waters would be subject to mandatory notification and consultation requirements, and a new dispute resolution process that could require approvals where concerns remain unresolved. Canadians would no longer have to turn to the courts to resolve these types of issues.

All other works on scheduled waters would also be subject to notification and consultation requirements, but would always require an approval. Owners would not have the choice of using the dispute resolution process because they are proposing to build on waters identified as being vulnerable to impacts on navigation and of the utmost importance to Canadians.

The government is committed to open, accessible, and transparent processes. For the first time, a comprehensive definition of a navigable water would be included in the act. This new, broader definition does not return to the canoe test, which is unworkable in today's context, but actually creates a modern definition to identify the navigable waters that require the protection of the new act.

A strengthened crown-indigenous relationship is at the heart of the proposed approach. The Canadian navigable waters act would require the consideration of indigenous rights and knowledge, and create new opportunities for indigenous peoples to partner with Canada in the administration of navigation protections in their territories and jurisdictions.

Through the Canadian navigable waters act, the government is proposing modern protections for the right of Canadians to navigate on every navigable water in Canada. This protection would be stronger than ever before.

Before building any work on any navigable water, owners of works would have to satisfy the requirements of the navigation legislation. Under the new Canadian navigable waters act, these requirements would be tailored to take into account the many types of works and the many types of navigation that exist in Canada today.

Points of Order

The new Canadian navigable waters act and Bill C-69 is smart legislation, designed to deliver navigation protections where they are needed, to give indigenous peoples and communities a say in what is built in their territories, and to make expectations clear for owners of works. Bill C-69 and the new Canadian navigable waters act gets it right. That is why I am proud to support its passage through the House.

• (1310)

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague across the aisle for her comments on navigable waters. I am glad she brought this up, because I can remember when the Conservative government was in power, the frustrations the municipalities, farmers, and people had with dealing with navigable waters.

A good example is, if they wanted to replace a simple culvert they would have to submit to navigable waters. Three or four months later, with no reply, the costs went through the roof. Therefore, when it came to replacing a simple culvert, which should have been a \$4,000 or \$5,000 bill, it turned into a \$40,000 or \$50,000 bill. I want to know if the government is going to reimburse all those municipalities for all the time and delays and costs involved in putting this back into place.

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell: Mr. Speaker, actually, I spent nearly 10 years in municipal government, and I can assure the member and the House that what municipal governments and people across the country want are clear and consistent rules in order to plan the process for their municipality and for their community.

What the previous government did was essentially gut legislation, leaving people, municipalities, and stakeholders across the country trying to guess what the Conservatives would or would not approve. This provides consistency and clear rules that everyone can follow to ensure the protection of our environment.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I perhaps have a different perspective on what this legislation would do. Contrary to what the member is asserting, the Navigation Protection Act does not trigger an environmental assessment. If we look at the effects within federal jurisdiction, guess what is missing in the list: the Navigation Protection Act.

We also have to note that in the bill gone is the list, even the short list, that the Conservatives created of rivers and lakes. It is up to individual citizens who care about their environment to beg to have their lake or river added. We were disappointed when the Liberal majority on committee decided to stick with the evisceration of that law by the Conservatives. Clearly the government has decided the same. This has been completely watered down. Gone is even the word "water".

There is no guarantee of protection for indigenous peoples in the bill. I need only give the case of oil sands activities in the north and dam approvals. There is absolutely no consideration in the bill of indigenous peoples who will lose access to marshes and so forth where they practice their traditional practices. There is no guarantee in the bill that in the future they will be looked after.

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately that is simply untrue. Under the previous legislation, indigenous peoples did not have a voice at the table. In fact, the change with this bill

would ensure that indigenous peoples' concerns are part of the process. An assessment has to be done including indigenous peoples, their traditional knowledge, and the impacts that might affect their communities.

This bill would make those necessary changes that the hon. member is speaking about. The bill would ensure transparency and openness for communities so they do not find out, after the fact when construction begins, about a project. There are opportunities for communities to speak up, raise concerns, and ask questions at the beginning, not after something is already built. This legislation would allow for that public input, versus the previous act, which basically acted in secrecy until the damage was already done.

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask my hon. colleague to go back to the creation of the single agency, the impact assessment agency of Canada. I am wondering if she could expand a bit on how having this single agency will streamline processes, reduce costs, and increase efficiency, as well as build trust.

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell: Mr. Speaker, what we have heard for the last number of years when consulting with stakeholders and provinces and territories is that Canadians want a one-approach type process. We all know that in order for good projects to move forward there has to be trust and by limiting regulation, by doing everything up front and having questions and concerns addressed up front, it helps to reduce regulations and it helps to get rid of duplication in provincial and local regulatory processes.

• (1315)

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary for Status of Women, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on Bill C-69, an act to enact the impact assessment act and the Canadian energy regulator act, to amend the Navigation Protection Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts. This important piece of legislation fulfills some of our earliest campaign promises from the 2015 election: restore credibility to environmental assessments, modernize and rebuild trust in the National Energy Board, conduct a wholesale review of the previous government's amendments to the Fisheries Act and the elimination of the Navigable Waters Protection Act with the intent to restore lost protections and incorporate more modern safeguards.

Points of Order

We made this commitment because we recognized that the economy and the environment go hand in hand. By putting in place better rules that protect our environment, fish, and waterways, by rebuilding public trust and respect for indigenous rights, and by strengthening our economy, these new rules will ensure good projects can go ahead and create new jobs and economic opportunities for the middle class. They provide clarity and consistency when it comes to impact assessments by creating a single agency, the impact assessment agency of Canada, which will lead all impact assessments for major projects. It will draw on the lessons learned through other agencies, such as the National Energy Board, the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, and offshore boards.

The Minister of Environment and cabinet will have final say over decisions. Our government prioritizes accountability on issues of national interest, and this will allow Canadians to hold our government to account on decisions of importance. The manner in which these decisions are made will be vastly improved by this legislation. Decisions will be made based on science and evidence, not politics, like the previous government's process. We will create more publicly available data to allow Canadians to be informed and involved in these decisions. We are expanding the scope of these reviews to assess their impacts on health, society, and the economy. As the Parliamentary Secretary for Status of Women, I am pleased to see that we will be conducting gender-based analysis as part and parcel of these assessments as well.

We will advance Canada's commitment to reconciliation by recognizing indigenous rights and working in partnership from the start with indigenous communities across the country. We will integrate traditional knowledge into the process, and promote active participation from indigenous communities to ensure their voices are heard.

We will maintain a professional approach to these reviews by creating a predictable, streamlined process. Shorter legislated timelines for the project review phase will be rigorously managed to keep the process on track. Our goal, as the previous speaker mentioned, will be one project, one review.

The bill also seeks to amend the navigable waters act. Water is an issue of utmost importance to me. Lake Winnipeg is one of my home province's most important and treasured resources, and I am incredibly pleased to see this bill recognize and prioritize the importance of water. The Canadian navigable waters act would restore navigation protection for every navigable waterway in Canada. Changes to the Fisheries Act will add important new safeguards for our fisheries, including measures to rebuild damaged fish stocks and restore degraded habitat, ensuring that our fisheries and environment are protected for future generations.

This is not our first effort to protect water in this country. The historic investments we made with the oceans protection plan is a testament to our commitment to this essential natural resource. Canada has the longest coastline in the world. Our coasts support traditional indigenous and coastal community livelihoods, attract tourism, and enable the export and import of goods overseas. They are home to an abundance of Canadian fisheries, and play a key role in strengthening the economy and growing our middle class. That is why our government launched the oceans protection plan, the OPP. It

is a historic \$1.5 billion investment that will create a world-leading marine safety system, restore and protect Canada's marine ecosystems, and strengthen partnerships with indigenous communities.

● (1320)

Similarly, I am proud of the investment we are making in protecting and rehabilitating the water in the Great Lakes. The Government of Canada is committed to protecting fresh water through science, action, and collaboration with Canadian and American partners and, importantly, indigenous peoples. This includes the freshwater resources of the Lake Winnipeg basin. Budget 2017 allocated \$70.5 million over five years to protect Canada's freshwater resources, including the Lake Winnipeg basin at \$25.7 million and the Great Lakes at \$44.8 million.

Through the \$25.7 million allocated to protecting freshwater quality in Lake Winnipeg and its basin, Environment and Climate Change Canada will continue to support research, as well as provide financial support aimed at reducing nutrients, enhancing collaboration, and supporting enhanced engagement of indigenous peoples on freshwater issues in Lake Winnipeg and its basin.

I am extremely proud of the legislation we are debating before the House today. When we first came to office, we knew we had to act swiftly on this file, and did so by implementing the interim principles, offering a glimpse of our vision, and ensuring that projects could continue to be assessed. Now, after thorough consultation with the public and stakeholders, 14 months all told, and the parliamentary input of two committees, we are moving forward with the next steps.

Bill C-69 would ensure that the economy and the environment can both continue to thrive and that good middle-class jobs are created in our resource sector. We are providing clarity and certainty for development projects and ensuring that our natural treasures will be protected for generations to come.

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there are two glaring issues here today. One is that my colleague referred to extensive consultation, yet here in the House we have had two hours of debate on this very extensive omnibus bill, 370 pages, and the government chose to invoke closure on a bill of this magnitude. That is very unfortunate. I wonder if my colleague could comment as to how he can square that circle.

Second, he spoke at length about his pride and how the government has protected and is protecting our water. Just last week, we had 50 million litres of raw sewage dumped from Quebec City into the St. Lawrence River. I wonder if he has seen the aerial photos of that beautiful scene. In 2015, it was eight billion litres of raw sewage from Montreal. How can the member stand here and say that he is proud of his government's record in protecting the water, one of our most precious resources?

Points of Order

Mr. Terry Duguid: Mr. Speaker, to reiterate, we had 14 months of consultation with indigenous people, environmental groups, industry, and others because we wanted to get this right. We know that the previous government undermined confidence in the system, and I think we have the balance right.

I was the environment commissioner for my home province of Manitoba, and I made my living by doing environmental assessments. I know that the folks in my home province would agree that we have achieved the right balance in the bill: clarity for business as well as protecting the environment, the environment and the economy going hand in hand, as our environment minister likes to say.

To the second issue, we have \$180 billion of infrastructure money that we are going to be spending. We are going to be attacking the sewage treatment issue from coast to coast to coast. We know it is an issue, partially because the previous government starved our municipalities of funds.

● (1325)

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this is a hard debate for us on the B.C. coast because we have a government that is now indicating, by repairing the legislation two years into its term, that it concedes that the legislation was completely inadequate to review the Kinder Morgan pipeline, which has serious risks for jobs that already exist on the B.C. coast. The trade-off is 50 permanent jobs offered by the pipeline for British Columbia by Kinder Morgan.

Particularly in the area of oil spill response, the previous environmental review and National Energy Board review blocked evidence about whether bitumen spilled in the marine environment would sink or float. The National Energy Board found that hearing such evidence would be prejudicial to Kinder Morgan.

Is the government now willing to redo that part of the environmental review to make sure that Bill C-69 is applied to protecting marine environment in the likely event of a bitumen spill in the Salish Sea?

Mr. Terry Duguid: Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member knows full well that we introduced interim principles, which we used to assess the Kinder Morgan pipeline project. Additional consultation efforts were made with indigenous people, environmental groups, and the industry itself. We felt, and I think the nation felt, that it would not be fair to start from square one.

From now on, any project that comes before us would be subject to this new legislation, which we hope the House will pass in due course. As well, I think the hon. member knows that an additional \$1.5 billion will be spent on the oceans protection plan to ensure that our coastlines are protected in perpetuity.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is hard to put forward a brief question when we have an omnibus bill in front of us: three different bills, 350 pages. My heart is breaking over this. The Liberals promised no more omnibus bills, no time allocations, and to fix environmental assessment. Today, they score zero on all three promises.

To the point made by my friend from Nanaimo—Ladysmith, my quick question to the hon. parliamentary secretary is whether he can

point me to any evidence, because there is none but I do not want to give away the answer, that the government reviewed the bitumen and diluent science and how they behave in marine environments.

Mr. Terry Duguid: Mr. Speaker, we are investing record amounts of money in science, and I am sure issues like that have been and will continue to be studied. I once again point to the oceans protection plan and the \$1.5 billion, a record investment in protecting our ocean environment.

I think the hon. member will be pleased with some of the things that are going to be in the budget this afternoon.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with my colleague from Provencher.

I want to start by reading a couple of quotes about the response to the Liberals' new Bill C-69:

In reality, it's unlikely that any major project would proceed under the new rules.... [It] contains a good deal of political posturing and seems to lean to the side of attempting to please the most extreme critics.... [It puts] the wants of a small number ahead of what is best for Canada's economy as a whole.

That came from the research team at GMP FirstEnergy.

Here is a second quote:

By diminishing independent, quasi-judicial regulatory processes for expert tribunals, cabinet risks drifting further into the dangerous political shoals where science and economics are eclipsed by the darker forces of opportunism and favouritism.

This is by a former National Energy Board chair and Jack Mintz, who is president's fellow at the University of Calgary's school of public policy.

These are very esteemed people who have researched the energy sector, and they are telling us what Canada is facing when it comes to the changes the Liberals have brought forward. It strikes me how disingenuous the Liberals are about the impacts of this bill, or how much they really do not understand the impacts these changes would have on the energy sector.

There was a good example earlier today, when the Minister of Natural Resources said that the only reason energy east did not go forward was that TransCanada abandoned energy east when the price of oil dropped.

I am pretty sure that companies do not base multi-billion dollar projects on what the price of oil was on Thursday. They are going to be making a long-term, major investment into that piece of infrastructure. TransCanada walked away from energy east because of the changes and regulatory burdens the Liberals put on it, and the downstream emissions, unprecedented. No other industry in the country has to deal with those types of regulations. How can we expect a company to be putting those types of things into its decisions?

Points of Order

The same thing is happening with Trans Mountain. Our colleagues across the way kept talking about all the wonderful pipelines they have built that are going to tidewater. I would like to remind them that not one single inch of pipeline that they profess to have approved has been built. I suspect that Trans Mountain is a long way from getting a shovel in the ground.

I think the Liberals are waiting for Kinder Morgan to just walk away in pure frustration. Then, once again, they can say, just as they did with TransCanada and energy east, that it was not them but a business decision the company made. It was a decision based on Liberal ideology and regulations that make it literally impossible for a major piece of infrastructure to get built in this country.

That is certainly the case with Bill C-69, an omnibus bill, as many of my colleagues have shown, that has more than 400 pages. I would argue, as a Canadian, that this bill would have an incredibly profound impact on Canadians across the country.

We are no longer on the verge of being an energy superpower that develops its natural resources under the most stringent environmental stewardship in the world. We are now becoming a non-factor. Under these regulations, there is no capital investor in the world who looks at Canada as a place open to do business. In fact, investors look at Canada as a place where they are not welcome. There is no clear line to success for an infrastructure project.

What really bothers me is that Bill C-69 would open the door for non-Canadians to have an influence on Canada's natural resource sector and our future, whatever that may be under these new regulations. A portion of Bill C-69 allows non-Canadians to have an influence on Canadian infrastructure projects. Let us think about that for a minute.

Under the previous Conservative regime, we made sure that anybody who wanted to have intervenor status on a project had a very good reason to be there, and would be impacted in some way by this project. By eliminating those rules, we are now going to open wide the doors for anyone to influence these decisions.

This could include extreme anti-oil activists, who would now have a seat at the table. It could also include energy companies in the United States, which would benefit a great deal from crippling Canada's energy sector. They are also going to have a seat at the table.

• (1330)

Therefore, these people who are trying to negatively impact Canada's economy would have the same standing as those energy companies, pipeline companies, and first nations who want our energy sector to succeed. Who are the Liberals going to be listening to when they are making these decisions?

We have seen the impact of these activists across the country, and they have been doing this through subterfuge. However, now they could not only be blocking roads, highways, mining operations, and drilling operations, but they would be invited to the table to help the Liberals make these decisions. I find it extremely disconcerting that they would have an active role in defining who we are as Canadians when it comes to our natural resource sector.

How is it possibly going to make this process shorter or those timelines definitive, when the Minister of Environment and Climate Change could invite a countless number of witnesses to provide testimony? Also, as it is written in black and white in the bill, as much as the Liberals would like to deny it, throughout the process the minister would have the ability to stop this process multiple times at every single stage, and it stops the clock. Therefore, these comments about 45 days, 185 days, 300 days, 475 days, are a bunch of bunk. The minister could stop any process indefinitely and as many times as she wants.

Let us talk about another aspect of that. Time and again today our colleagues across the floor have said that this is going to be a science-based decision process. They would take it out of the hands of politics. How can the Liberals say that with a straight face when, again, in Bill C-69, it says, in black and white, that the Minister of Environment and Climate Change would have the sole responsibility of deciding if a project is in the public interest? She alone would decide if a project moves from the assessment stage on to the main study stage. How can the Liberals possibly say that this is science based? It is not. There is political influence at every single stage.

How can proponents or investors possibly make the decision to invest billions of dollars in a project when they know that one person would decide if their project is worthwhile? It would not matter how many studies were done. It would not matter how much support there was from communities, first nations, or businesses. It would not matter what kinds of environmental studies were done or what science was there. It would come down to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, who has been extremely vocal about her position on Canada's natural resource sector. She wants the gas and oil production, mining operations, and LNG projects to absolutely cease. She does not want those things. She wants to be a non-carbon-based economy, despite the demand for oil and gas increasing over the next 50 to 100 years. The oil would be coming from somewhere, but our Minister of Environment and Climate Change is saying as long as it does not come from us, and we are paying the price.

Let us talk about the price we are paying, even before the bill makes it through to legislation. More than \$50 billion in capital has left Canada. Hundreds of thousands of energy jobs have been lost. I will put it into a perspective that I think every Canadian can understand. I talked about the price of oil a few minutes ago. It is at \$60 a barrel, or maybe \$57 a barrel, which is for West Texas Intermediate. Canadian crude is being sold at half that, at \$30 a barrel. As a result, we sell our oil to the United States because we do not have international market access, because pipelines are not being built, and they will never be built under this proposed legislation. The United States buys our oil and sells it at a premium. That is a hospital being built every week and a school being built every day in the United States instead of Canada, and we are subsidizing it because of these decisions of the Liberal government.

It is absolutely wrong. We will fight it in every single way.

Points of Order

• (1335)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member across the way is completely wrong. The argument he presents is that we are exporting oil to the United States, which then sells it abroad, because we do not have the markets.

The current government is the one that actually got the job done. The Harper government, over 10 years, did not build even an inch of pipeline to tidewater. As a direct result of that, we do not have the market that we could have had if Harper had gotten the job done in the first place. Rather, by recognizing the importance of indigenous people, the environment, and energy needs, we were able to get a pipeline approval, which is something Harper could not do.

When we talk about this debate, members have to know we are doing something right here, because we have NDP members saying we are not going far enough. They want more. Then we have the Conservatives saying that we have gone too far. We listen to Canadians. The Prime Minister responds to what Canadians have to say. We are in touch with what the people have to say.

Why does the member believe that the Harper government was more successful at tidewater when in fact they did not get an inch of pipeline there?

Mr. John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, I love the member's imaginative memory. In fact, the Conservatives had 17 pipelines built. I love how they put that part in there about "to tidewater". Well, let us look back. The Liberals have not had one new pipeline approved to tidewater. Not one has done their construction.

Let us be clear. The one we did approve was northern gateway. It would have gotten our oil to the Asian market, which would have gotten us off the United States as our one customer. The Liberals denied that pipeline. The other that was going to benefit our getting to the European market was energy east. They also made sure that did not happen.

In their fairy tale imagination, they have done all these wonderful things to ensure we get oil into pipelines, yet not one centimetre has been built under the current government.

• (1340)

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the debate continues. All the Conservatives and Liberals care about is whose bill can fast-track pipelines faster.

It is my understanding that in Bill C-69 we are supposed to be reviewing processes that are going to address climate change, protect the environment, address transboundary rivers, and the interests, concerns, and rights of indigenous peoples. Somewhere along the way I guess we have the idea of where both those parties think this bill should go.

The member is complaining that the government is leaving the ultimate decision on approval of a project to a political level, the Minister of Environment. My recollection is that the law, as it is right now, was changed by the Conservatives so that it was no longer the review panel of the National Energy Board but was at a political level. Is the member's concern simply that it is assigned to the Minister of Environment and not the Minister of Natural Resources?

Mr. John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, my colleague has to understand the difference in terms of what was in place before. There was never a political decision made on any pipeline approval that was there. It was based strictly on the National Energy Board, which is a non-partisan, arm's length decision process. That is how those decisions were made.

However, let us understand what would be in place now with Bill C-69. At every single step of the way, there would be an opportunity for political interference from the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, where she could step in and ask for a delay, stop the clock, or even ask for an entire new study to be done. That is significantly different from the quasi-judicial system we had under the National Energy Board that ensured we had the best record in the world when it came to environmental standards for natural resource development.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member talked about evidence-based science. Would he agree with me that the Liberals only agree with evidence-based science as long as it agrees with their ideology?

Mr. John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, I completely agree, except in this case I do not think there is any room in Bill C-69 for any science-based decision-making. It is quite clear that there would be one person making the decision moving forward on any infrastructure project when it comes to our natural resources. That is mining, LNG, oil and gas, and 7% of our economy is based on these sectors. One person only would be making the decision, not based on any science, environmental stewardship, reports, or analysis. It would be the minister who decides if a project is in the public interest or not.

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague, the member for Foothills for his most inspiring, factual, and authentic speech.

Bill C-69, part 2, is the part I want to expand on a bit further. It is the part of the bill that replaces the National Energy Board and proposes a Canadian energy regulator. The entire process is supposed to increase clarity, predictability, and transparency. However, it fails on all three counts.

Of course this does not come as much of a surprise since the Liberal government has an outstanding record when it comes to breaking its campaign promises. We have seen numerous commitments, both big and small, meet untimely ends before ever achieving the goals set forth by the Liberals. Bill C-69 offers the same failing formula. The Liberal platform claims to "make environmental assessments credible again." For one to make that promise, one has to start with the premise that the entire environmental assessment process had lost credibility somewhere along the way.

We recognize that there are always room for improvements to be made to existing processes, ways of doing things more simply and more effectively. However, when I look back over these last two years of so-called Liberal improvements, I wonder how much differently things would look if the Liberals were intentionally trying to sabotage the process. It's probably not much. I do not think it could get much worse.

Points of Order

Far from making the process more credible, the Liberals have mismanaged this file to such an extent that nothing can get built in this country. In particular, the Liberals have pushed the view that by building social licence, somehow all of the roadblocks to responsible resource development will disappear. In reality, attempts to improve social trust and build social licence have not increased resource or national infrastructure development.

Before I go any further, I want to turn back the clock to consider what was being said about Canada's environmental review process several years ago. Before the lack of leadership that we are witnessing today, Canada had long been recognized internationally and by experts as the most responsible and transparent producer of oil and gas. A 2014 WorleyParsons report compared the environmental assessment processes and policies around oil and gas development across the globe. When it came to environmental assessments, the report concluded:

The results of the current review re-emphasized that Canada's [Environmental Assessment] Processes are among the best in the world. Canada [has] state of the art guidelines for consultation, [traditional knowledge], and cumulative effects assessment. Canadian practitioners are among the leaders in the areas of Indigenous involvement, and social and health impact assessment. Canada has the existing frameworks, the global sharing of best practices, the government institutions and the capable people to make improvements to [environmental assessment] for the benefit of the country and for the benefit of the environment, communities and the economy.

It goes on to state:

In summary, the review found that [environmental assessment] cannot be everything to everyone. In Canada, however, it is a state of the art, global best practice, with real opportunities for public input, transparency in both process and outcomes, and appeal processes involving independent scientists, stakeholders...and courts

That was in 2014. Looking back at 2014, Canada was considered a world leader in environmental assessment. We had the most stringent standards and most rigorous review process in the world. As I said earlier, no system is perfect, and just like with any other statute or regulation, there are always sections that could be improved. The regulatory system tries to strike a balance between projects and the environment, between predictability and social factors. It is not a perfect system. However, it is far better than the regime we are going to have under the imposition of Bill C-69. Instead of making the system better, the Liberals have simply made it worse. Under the Liberal government, the environmental assessment system lacks clarity, predictability, and transparency.

Let us look at what Bill C-69 does to clarity. The changes proposed in the bill would make the regulatory process more unclear. This does not serve anyone, whether we are talking about investors looking to participate in responsible resource development or Canadians who care deeply about this process. What is proposed is a move away from science-based decision-making processes.

• (1345)

For example, references to sustainability, identity, and gender-based analysis are difficult to quantify in a standardized test. This is, much like a great deal of Liberal policy, more of a virtue-signalling smokescreen to give the illusion of modernization to a bill that ultimately takes Canada backwards.

Furthermore, the proposed legislation makes a point of treating major and minor projects differently, but it provides no clear list of

criteria which would make a project either a minor project or a major project. Leaving so much to guesswork is just plain irresponsible.

That leads me to my next point. Predictability will suffer under this legislation. The Liberals claim that Bill C-69 creates concrete timelines for review, saying that the process will take 450 days for major projects and 300 days for minor projects. However, the timer only begins when the Governor in Council determines that the applicant has submitted a complete application, which seems to be an entirely discretionary process. According to the proposed legislation at this time, that will be the criteria to set the clock in motion. Furthermore, the process may be stopped at a number of different points to add additional studies or submissions. Finally, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change may extend the timeline indefinitely with repeat orders.

The Liberals call the system more predictable. It is not more predictable. It is more uncertain. It is a process where the outcome rests entirely in the hands of the minister, one minister, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change. She will be the sole individual deciding which projects will go forward in the national interest. It seems that rather than making the process more open and democratic, the Liberals' proposed legislation has concentrated power in the minister's office. This does not lend itself to predictability in any way, shape, or form.

One of the difficulties that Canada faces is a decline in major capital investments in energy. The decline has occurred since the Liberals were elected in 2015 and it is directly related to the regulatory uncertainty created as a result of their poor leadership in this area. We are bound to see this sad trend continue as the Liberals try once again to fix a system that worked better before they took their tool box out. This again is a solution in search of a problem.

Energy investment has to be a priority. We are a natural resource country. These investments are directly and indirectly responsible for employment and revenue for all three levels of government, yet in just two short years, which actually seem very long, energy investment in Canada is lower than any other two-year period in the last 70 years. Ensuring a stable, predictable process has to be a priority in order to attract these essential investments.

Let us talk about transparency as well. Bill C-69 claims to change the framework of indigenous consultation. However, in reality, all it does is codify something that already exists. The practices are already in place which allow for indigenous consultation.

A significant change in the regulatory process would be the elimination of the standing test. This will affect the predictability of the process, as any individual would be able to challenge the process, whether or not they have a connection to the project. Under the proposed new regulations this would include non-Canadians. Bill C-69 would allow Canadian decisions made about Canadian resources in Canada to potentially be influenced by non-Canadians. That is not right.

Points of Order

The Liberal government talks about the importance of restoring public trust to the regulatory system, but allowing non-Canadians or foreign special interest groups to influence the outcome of Canadian energy projects does not inspire trust in the proposed new system. It will not inspire trust from potential applicants that are seeking to develop our resources further.

Bill C-69 is not clear, predictable, or transparent. It adds vague criteria to the process, more uncertainty to the process, and eliminates a standing test from the process. The Liberals are just adding more burden to the already heavily regulated energy sector, and the industry has taken notice. That is why we have seen, as I mentioned earlier, that investment in the energy sector over the last two years has been lower than any two-year period in the previous 70 years.

The Liberals took the existing Canadian system and managed to change it into a system which is discouraging capital investment in our country. Those capital dollars are now flowing into the United States, funding projects there. The United States has a competitive advantage over Canada, in terms of regulatory and tax regimes and access to markets. Investors are putting their dollars into the U.S. market, which is fast becoming a world leader in energy.

● (1350)

If Bill C-69 becomes law, Canada will continue its downward trend in global competitiveness rankings. Both foreign and domestic investors will find other countries for their investments.

While the bill certainly leaves much to be desired, I want to conclude on a positive note. The new process under the proposed Canadian energy regulator will not apply to projects already approved under the National Energy Board. That means the already approved energy projects which are in our national interest will go ahead. I hope that the Liberal government will make sure to follow through on its promise and build the Trans Mountain pipeline. Get it done.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member for Provencher and the member for Foothills both talked about the social licence and the need to have society at the table when we are having discussions around pipelines, yet the previous government had selective hearing and really did not listen to society, did not listen to indigenous people, did not listen to provinces and territories, did not listen to municipalities. What has changed?

Mr. Ted Falk: Mr. Speaker, the member is asking about social licence and what has changed.

The previous Conservative government always had social responsibility built into its policies. We listened to the stakeholders. We provided a forum for stakeholders, a forum for indigenous communities to get involved in the process whenever natural resource development projects were being proposed.

When it comes to social licence, I am thinking of the Canada summer jobs program and the values test which the Liberal government is subjecting every single Canadian to sign onto to get government funding. Is that his idea of social responsibility, to get Canadians to compromise their beliefs, conscience, and positions on social issues? Is that his idea of social responsibility?

● (1355)

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I agree with my colleague that this is a terrible bill that will certainly guarantee that no major projects ever get built. However, there is one good thing about the bill and that is the government talks about the need to protect people's navigable rights. The Sombra ferry in my riding has lost its navigable rights because the Coast Guard in its icebreaking operation crushed the border crossing causeway.

Would my colleague agree that it is the government's responsibility to restore the navigable rights to the Sombra ferry?

Mr. Ted Falk: Mr. Speaker, the member's question raises a very important issue. The government has not taken up its corporate responsibility in fixing a port that was damaged by the federal government's vessels. This has created a lack of opportunity now and it will be ongoing for the next season for cross-border trade between Canada and the U.S. I am glad that the member has spoken up for her constituents and is concerned about economic activity, concerned about the businesses that are going to be facing extreme hardship because the government refuses to live up to its obligations.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I would remind my hon. friend from Provencher that the State of Washington was allowed to intervene in the National Energy Board process relating to Kinder Morgan and we have on occasion international reasons that intervenors come from other jurisdictions. That is as it should be. What worries me about the bill is the time limits are even shorter and I do not know how much access intervenors will actually have, for instance, to be able to cross-examine witnesses.

I did want to take up with the member foreign influence over Canadian decisions. For me, nothing is more terrifying than the Canada-China investment treaty which in secret gives the People's Republic of China the right to challenge any decision, municipal, provincial, or federal. That was put through by the Harper cabinet in secret. I wonder if the member wants to comment.

Mr. Ted Falk: Mr. Speaker, I always appreciate the member's deep concern for the environment and her thoughtful presentations. Her thoughtful question raises the whole issue of Chinese investment in Canada.

I want to point out that the government has a dismal track record when allowing the Chinese government to invest in Canadian companies, like Cedar Tree, for example. The rent payments of our seniors in British Columbia will now be going to fund a Chinese government. That is totally irresponsible. We have to be very careful that we do proper vetting of any opportunities we are going to consider of having Chinese investors here in Canada.

Statements by Members

Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, later today the finance minister will present the 2018 budget. So far in their budgets, we have seen the Liberals run massive deficits, waste billions of dollars on pet projects, and rack up our national debt. Our growth here in Canada lags behind that of the United States. The member talked about the capital that is leaving not just Alberta and Saskatchewan but Canada. It is one thing for them to rack up the national debt when growth is dragging and yet capital is coming into Canada, investment is wanted in Canada, but that is not happening now. There is \$15 billion of lost investment.

Could the member expand on that thought and the negative impacts this has on growing an economy?

Mr. Ted Falk: Mr. Speaker, my colleague raised a very important issue of investment in Canada. Later on today we are going to see a budget presented by the Liberal government. It will be very interesting to see what kind of schemes the Liberals come up with.

I recently had a meeting with representatives from the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers. They said that they are not looking at Canada as a place where they will park investment money. The uncertainty around the regulatory environment here is just too great for them to make that kind of commitment in Canada. This means that our resource-trained people who are experts in the field in resource development in oil and gas and mining will be out of work. They will be looking for work.

• (1400)

The Speaker: Hon. members, I was informed that there was a technical problem with the bells in the Confederation Building today, where no chimes were sounded. I understand that members nonetheless were able to make it to the chamber and vote.

[Translation]

If a vote needs to be called before the problem is resolved, I would ask members to take all necessary steps to make sure they are aware when votes are taking place.

[English]

I regret any inconvenience this may cause hon. members. I thank you for your continued co-operation and patience as we address the problem.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

CANADA CHILD BENEFIT

Mr. Darshan Singh Kang (Calgary Skyview, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize a government program that has positively touched the lives of constituents in my riding. I have seen first-hand how the Canada child benefit program helps families of all classes, cultures, and incomes in their goal of raising healthy children.

I am pleased to say that my riding of Calgary Skyview has the highest number of Canada child benefit recipients at 20,670. Thanks

to this program, families in Calgary Skyview are receiving an average of \$145,611,000 in government funding per year.

Today, on budget day, where there is a focus on the economy, women, and middle-class families, I am proud to say that the Canada child benefit has had a positive impact in my riding. Children are the future of Canada, and it is important that parents have the financial ability to help them succeed in their lives. By adding an average of \$6,800 to the pockets of Canadian families each year, the government has laid out the foundation for parents and children to thrive.

I urge the government to continue the positive momentum towards improving the lives of Canadians

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WILLIAM OSLER HEALTH SYSTEM

Mr. Raj Grewal (Brampton East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week I got to meet a constituent of mine in Sarabha, Punjab. Dr. Gurjit Bajwa travelled to my father's village in Punjab as part of a seven-member team from William Osler Health System in Brampton. They held three eye camps, a diabetes camp, and provided free medical coverage to people in my father's village in Punjab. How cool of a story is that? Constituents from my riding of Brampton East went back to where my father's story started, to provide free medical coverage in a rural community.

They also signed on to agreements for new research opportunities. Doctors also made a plan to ensure that people in Punjab have the awareness of diabetes, which is a big problem in that region.

This is another great example of effective and sustainable international partnerships that play critical roles in advancing our respective health care systems.

I ask members to join me in congratulating Dr. Gurjit Bajwa and his entire team from William Osler.

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TROY BLACK

Mr. Len Webber (Calgary Confederation, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is with great shock and sorrow that I rise to mark the sudden and unexpected death of Troy Black of Calgary. In the middle of a Mexican vacation with his wife Lindsay, he required life-saving blood transfusions to save his life. Sadly, there was not enough of a supply, and we lost a good man to eventual cardiac arrest at the age of 34.

I came to know Troy well as the former president of my provincial riding association. The son of former Alberta MLA Patricia Nelson, Troy was well known and an active member of our community. It is my hope that his passing serves as a lasting reminder to us that thousands of Canadians depend on blood donors to stay alive.

As a blood donor, I encourage others to please donate. We do not know who our blood goes to, but Troy is proof that it could be someone we know very well.

On behalf of our entire community, I want to pass along our deepest condolences to Pat, Lindsay, and the Troy Black family.

Statements by Members

●(1405)

*[Translation]***WORLD INTERFAITH HARMONY WEEK**

Mr. Frank Baylis (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the first week of February is World Interfaith Harmony Week. This United Nations initiative recognizes the importance of respect between religions.

[English]

It is wonderful to see that interfaith groups across Canada observe this week by putting on activities bringing people together. They are groups such as Interfaith Harmony Halifax, Interfaith Grand River, the Edmonton Interfaith Centre, as well as the interfaith councils of Calgary, Surrey and Canada. Our initiative, the Canadian interfaith open house weekend, saw dozens of religious spaces open their doors to their neighbours.

[Translation]

I commend the religious groups that welcomed their fellow citizens, and the participants who took the time to get to know their neighbours.

[English]

In this world of seemingly never-ending conflicts, it is truly heartwarming to see Canadians promoting religious harmony.

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*[Translation]***RÉJEANNE ST-PIERRE**

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to tell you about the founder of the Arvida's IGA Mellon, Ms. Réjeanne St-Pierre, a woman from my riding.

Recently, this food pioneer in the Saguenay—Lac-St-Jean area was recognized as a “great builder”, a prestigious award given out by IGA owners.

Ms. St-Pierre, the second woman in Quebec to own an IGA store, started her career in 1962 as a stock clerk in the fruit and vegetable department. She worked her way up the ladder and 20 years later founded what would become the IGA Faubourg Sagamie in Arvida.

Bold, passionate, and determined are some of the words that describe this woman whose extraordinary journey continues to inspire entrepreneurs across the province, including her two children who today are following in her footsteps as owners of two IGA stores in Lac-St-Jean.

I pay tribute today to Réjeanne St-Pierre, by encouraging the next generation to carry the torch and follow in her footsteps. She is an inspiration and a role model—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Sudbury.

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*[English]***ACCOMPLISHED BLACK CANADIAN WOMEN AWARD**

Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Sudbury, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I speak in this House about Dr. Remi Ogundimu. Dr.

Ogundimu spent her formative years in Nigeria, and served in rural Nigeria as a medical officer for the National Youth Service Corps. Later, she moved with her family to my riding of Sudbury, under the Ontario under-served areas program, where she worked as a pediatrician, a much-needed specialty.

Remi's insatiable desire to contribute keeps her involved as a member of various institutions. She is very passionate in giving a hand up to help black women and youth. She seizes every opportunity to be involved in activities and projects that will contribute to the advancement of young black youth. In May 2016, she received one of the 100 Accomplished Black Canadian Women inaugural awards. I thank Dr. Ogundimu for her contributions and all her hard work.

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CANADIAN SCHOOL COUNSELLING WEEK

Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, February 5 marked the launch of the first-ever Canadian School Counselling Week. Each year, the week will provide a great opportunity for Canadians to recognize and highlight the tremendous contributions that school counsellors make to the personal, social, and educational well-being of students. I am proud to say that Ariel Haubrich, a constituent of mine, is the president of the school counsellors chapter of the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association. The CCPA is a national association providing access to exclusive educational programs, certifications, and professional development, and provides direct contact with professional peers and specialty groups.

As many young people throughout this country try to find their way in this world and struggle with mental health issues and learning disabilities, the need for counsellors is growing. We all know that nothing is as important to us as the well-being of our children. Therefore, on behalf of my honoured colleagues and of parents all across Canada, I would like to take this opportunity to thank school counsellors and the CCPA for the care and guidance that they provide to our children.

*Statements by Members***SRI LANKA**

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Scarborough—Rouge Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during my visit to Sri Lanka in January, I met with many Tamil mothers whose loved ones surrendered to the Sri Lankan army during the last weeks of the war. These mothers and other family members are on a quest for answers and in desperate search to find their truth. Their stories are heart-wrenching. They have protested for over a year in the sweltering heat and dust, in makeshift tents on main roads in the north and east of the island. The Sri Lankan government has failed to give even the simplest of demands from the mothers, including a call to release the names of the missing persons. As Canadians, we hear their call for truth and justice.

Today, at the United Nations Human Rights Council, our Minister of Foreign Affairs called on the Sri Lankan government to undertake a process of accountability that will have the confidence of the victims of this war, including the families of the disappeared. We stand in solidarity with those who are seeking justice and accountability in Sri Lanka, and with the heroic mothers who continue to inspire and motivate us.

* * *

• (1410)

GENDER EQUITY

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know we are all looking forward to hearing the Minister of Finance deliver federal budget 2018 later this afternoon, with the anticipated focus on gender equity and increasing women's participation in the workforce.

Recently in my riding of Davenport, I met with artists, creators, and other members of cultural industries. What came out of it was the need to focus on the lack of female representation and diverse female representation on the boards of artistic and cultural organizations, as well as the need to significantly increase the number of female artistic directors across Canada. I am pleased that the heritage committee has agreed to study this issue, and I look forward to its recommendations.

I am proud of our Prime Minister and our cabinet for their leadership on gender equity, and for ensuring a gender lens in every dimension of the work we are undertaking on behalf of all Canadians. As the Secretary General recently said, "Societies are better when there is full equality in girls' access to education and in women and girls' access to the labour markets, with equal work and equal pay and equal participation in the different institutions of the civil and political society."

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RARE DISEASE DAY

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Rare Disease Day is recognized on February 29, the rarest day of all, as it only happens every four years. This year, we will not be able to do it.

It is a fitting day for rare diseases that affect one in 12 Canadians. With over 6,000 rare diseases identified so far, many more are affected or at risk but remain undiagnosed or unaware that they have

one. Of those, 75% are children, and 30% of victims will die before their fifth birthday.

These statistics hit very close to home. My own family is affected by a rare disease called Alport syndrome, a genetic condition that leads to deafness and eventually kidney failure. I know the helplessness and financial hardship that parents can feel when facing an incurable condition affecting their children.

In light of this year's theme, which is research, I want to thank researchers for their efforts toward finding a cure for the rarest of diseases and disorders. Rare disease research contributes to improved diagnostics, treatments, and cures, as well as improved health and social care for patients and their families.

I invite all members to join me in recognizing Rare Disease Day and standing with those affected and their families.

* * *

HMCS SACKVILLE

Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as Canada's oldest warship and the only remaining flower-class corvette, HMCS *Sackville* is an important part of Royal Canadian Navy history. Declared a national historic site in 1988, it serves as a naval memorial, honouring Canadian sailors who died in the Battle of the Atlantic, and a museum ship that hosts thousands of visitors at Halifax harbour each year.

This past January, our government announced its contribution on behalf of all Canadians toward preserving HMCS *Sackville* and this important part of Canadian history. The non-profit Canadian Naval Memorial Trust will receive a contribution of up to \$3.5 million to undertake critical repairs to the ship. This contribution will ensure the preservation of HMCS *Sackville* for the next decade. We are proud of our women and men serving in our Royal Canadian Navy, and our government is proud to honour their service, past, present, and future.

* * *

[Translation]

CLINTON RITCHIE

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is Black History Month and I am pleased to acknowledge the contribution of a remarkable person from the black community of Châteauguay—Lacolle, who recently passed away. Clinton Ritchie was one of the founders and the former president of the Horizon de Châteauguay community association.

[English]

Twelve years ago, Clinton and the founding members had a vision that every girl and boy from our black community should have the opportunity to excel in their education and reach their full potential. Clinton's widow, Patricia, is continuing his legacy, which I know will bear fruit for decades to come.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

We also miss Clinton very much because of his contagious cheerfulness and his ability to bring people from all backgrounds together.

[English]

I am proud to take part in the recognition of the tremendous contributions of black Canadians in this Black History Month.

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CANADA SUMMER JOBS PROGRAM

Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to read a quote, "...I want all of you to stay angry to make sure that no government in the future...[allows] a Canadian's fundamental rights to be violated." Who said that? The Prime Minister did. Canadians are incredibly angry at the government's new values test for organizations that apply to the Canada summer jobs program.

Several organizations in my riding recently submitted their applications and explained in detail why they could not sign the new required attestation. These were reasonable and fair explanations. Now these organizations are being told that their applications are incomplete and that they need to resubmit them with the attestation signed.

The Prime Minister cannot pick and choose which charter rights he wants to stand up for. Freedom of belief and opinion is guaranteed by the charter, and the Prime Minister needs to recognize this. I am calling on the government to do the right thing and give all Canadian organizations the ability and opportunity to hire a student for the summer.

* * *

● (1415)

BLACK WOMEN IN CANADA

Ms. Kamal Khera (Brampton West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this Black History Month, I am proud to highlight stories of strength, courage, and vision of black women in Canada. Throughout Canada's history, there have been numerous black women who have made a lasting impact on our society. From Viola Desmond and Jean Augustine, to my outstanding seatmate, the member for Whitby, these black women have served as role models for young black women all across Canada.

Recently I had the opportunity to hear from black women from my riding of Brampton West on what Black History Month means to them. I heard from Pastor Winnie Manu on the barriers she has faced as a black woman, but I also heard from Abi Ajibolade on the hope she sees for the future in the eyes of her young daughters. These women, along with young, black, and dynamic women, such as Candice and Paige from the Brampton West Youth Council, continue to inspire me and many in our community.

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INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Tina Fontaine was a 15-year-old girl from the Sagkeeng

First Nation. She was a daughter, a niece, a sister, a girl who had her whole life in front of her. However, like so many indigenous women and girls it came to a tragic end. Like so many indigenous people there has been no justice for Tina Fontaine.

As has been said, Tina was let down by many: social services, the child welfare system, the police, and finally the justice system.

The injustice faced by Tina Fontaine, like Colten Boushie, has shaken up our country. Their killings have mobilized many. They have made it clear that there is no reconciliation without justice, that racism is alive and well in Canada, and that racism kills. Enough is enough. There must be fundamental change when it comes to the systems that target indigenous people and push people to the edge.

Today we call for love for Tina, for justice for Tina, for justice for Colten. We call on the federal government to commit to fundamental change so no indigenous woman and no indigenous man goes missing or are murdered ever again.

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2018 WINTER PARALYMPICS

Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in 10 short days, Canada's Paralympic athletes will go for gold in Pyeongchang.

Among the 55 Canadian Athletes is Corbyn Smith from the small village of Monkton, Ontario. Monkton may be a small town in terms of population but it is big in community spirit.

That community spirit was on display this past weekend as local residents and service clubs decorated the main street with Canadian flags and maple leaf banners to celebrate their own and to wish him well as he competes in Pyeongchang with his teammates. As a member of Canada's Paralympic hockey team, Corbyn will be fighting to bring home Canada's first sledge hockey gold medal since 2006.

Our athletes have trained for years to become the best in the world. In the weeks to come, they will bring home the medals to prove it.

I wish Corbyn and all our Canadian athletes in Pyeongchang good luck. They make all of us proud to be Canadian.

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THE BREADWINNER

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today as chair of the Canada-Afghanistan Parliamentary Friendship Group and as the member of Parliament for Vaughan—Woodbridge, a riding with a proud and entrepreneurial Afghan Canadian diaspora, to recognize *The Breadwinner*, a Canadian co-produced and Oscar-nominated film.

[Translation]

This film is based on the book by Canadian author Deborah Ellis. It tells the story of a young Afghan woman who must disguise herself as a boy to support her family.

Oral Questions

[English]

Showing the effects of war on ordinary people, *The Breadwinner* is reflective of strong women everywhere, including in Afghanistan, who defy circumstance and find courage through adversity.

● (1420)

[Translation]

Our government is determined to promote gender equality and empower women. We are also determined to protect the rights of women, in particular the most vulnerable.

[English]

Let us congratulate *The Breadwinner* for celebrating female self-empowerment and for raising awareness of the fight for gender equality.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as we have already said, this invitation should never have been sent. As soon as we realized that it had, the invitation was withdrawn.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we have already said, this invitation should never have been sent. As soon as we realized that it had, the invitation was withdrawn.

Canada's national security and law enforcement agencies are non-partisan, highly competent, and very effective. We have faith in them to protect Canada and Canadians. They continue to work very hard to serve and protect the interests of Canadians.

[English]

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the question was whether any one of the members of the delegation had the right to invite guests without those names being submitted to the PMO. I would like an answer to that question.

Normally the worst the Prime Minister could do on a foreign trip would be to accomplish nothing. However, the Prime Minister has taken failure to a new level. In fact, he has left our relations with India worse off than before he left.

The briefing to media on the Jaspal Atwal affair included the theory, which was advanced by a national security official, that India was somehow complicit in organizing this invitation. Does the Prime Minister agree with those allegations?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is disappointing that the opposition does not recognize the importance of the Canada-India relationship.

India's growing economy offers significant opportunities to strengthen Canada's middle class. We welcomed over \$1 billion in investments between Canadian and Indian companies, which will

lead to the creation of more than 5,800 good, well-paying middle-class jobs for Canadians.

These investments will grow Canada's economy, encourage innovation and entrepreneurship, and increase collaboration. We know that it is the deep ties that unite Canada and India that help create these high-quality—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I would remind hon. colleagues, including the member for Dufferin—Caledon, of the rule in Standing Order 16 against interrupting when another member is speaking.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a senior security official made the allegation that the Government of India was somehow complicit or involved in the Jaspal Atwal affair, that somehow it was motivated to embarrass the Prime Minister and Canada by colluding to have him at the official events the Prime Minister was attending.

A senior security official made those allegations. Does the Prime Minister agree or disavow those allegations?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, unlike the previous government, we respect the non-partisan nature of the public service, especially those who serve in our national security agencies. We trust and listen to the advice and actions that they take, that they will be in the national interest, and that they will be impartial.

All Canadians can be proud, and should be proud, of the non-partisan work our national security agencies carry out on a daily basis.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, will the Prime Minister tell the House whether anyone in his office arranged, organized or participated in the media briefing provided to reporters that included the allegation that the Government of India was somehow involved in his embarrassing blunder in India?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can understand where the opposition finds this difficult. For 10 years it used the professional public service for partisan ends. It torqued the public service every possible way it could. It does not understand that our professional, non-partisan public service does high-quality work. When one of our top diplomats and security officials says something to Canadians, it is because they know it to be true.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

● (1425)

The Speaker: Order, please. Members may have noticed before that sometimes they hear things in here they do not like, but they do not have to react and they should wait until they have the floor before they speak. That includes the hon. member for Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, who knows the rules well and has the ability to restrain himself. I am sure the hon. member for Edmonton West will want to join him.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, could the Prime Minister assure Canadians that no other individuals with links to extremist or terrorist organizations were at any of the official events in India while he was there?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in this country we take very seriously the responsibility of keeping Canadians safe, of countering violent extremism, and of fighting against terrorism. I can assure the member opposite, and indeed all Canadians, that our national security agencies and our police agencies do everything necessary to keep all Canadians safe at all times.

* * *

[Translation]

TAXATION

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on Friday, during the Prime Minister's disastrous trip, the #taxfairness coalition left him a gift, Alain Deneault's book, *Canada - A New Tax Haven*. It should help him to understand how his government is just as complicit on tax havens as his predecessors were.

This complicity also causes the government to allow the Canada Revenue Agency to conduct cost-benefit analyses when deciding whether to enforce the law. It is not worth going after a big company like KPMG, which has the means to defend itself, but small taxpayers who do not have the means to defend themselves get hit hard.

Will today's budget finally put an end to this two-tiered justice system?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, we are combatting tax evasion and investing nearly \$1 billion to give the CRA the tools it needs.

The CRA now has a team in charge of dealing with offshore non-compliance. We adopted the global standard for the automatic exchange of information in order to automatically exchange information held by non-residents with OECD partners.

As far as offshore compliance is concerned, as of December 31, 2017, the CRA had audited more than 1,000 taxpayers and launched investigations into more than 40 cases.

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): That is my point exactly, Mr. Speaker. Those are small taxpayers he is talking about. This government is letting the big fish, like KPMG, get away. It is not going after the rich and powerful precisely because they are rich and powerful.

Here is another example of this government's complicity with the rich and powerful. It does not require American Internet giants to charge the same sales tax that our Canadian companies have to charge, thus giving American companies a significant competitive advantage over Canadian companies. The Amazons of this world have an advantage over Canadian stores like Simons.

Will the budget put an end to that nonsense once and for all?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we have said many times, we are not going to raise taxes on Canadians, even though the NDP is asking us to do so. We are not going to raise taxes on taxpayers. That is a promise that we made and that we are going to keep. Canadians are already paying enough taxes, so we are not going to raise them. It is the NDP that wants to raise taxes. We are not going to do that.

[English]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Jaspal Atwal, a convicted political assassin, was given an all-access pass to the Prime Minister's India trip because he was useful to local Liberal politics. When this debacle became an international incident, the government doubled down, using a senior civil servant, and now the Prime Minister, to spin a conspiracy theory that somehow the Indian government was trying to make the Liberals look bad.

What was the Prime Minister thinking, putting the interests of the Liberal machine ahead of national security, international relations, and Canada's reputation?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have been saying, this invitation never should have been sent. As soon as it came to our attention, it was withdrawn.

Canada's national security agencies and police services are non-partisan and both highly competent and effective. We trust them to promote and protect Canadian security. They continue to do an excellent job in serving and protecting the interests of Canadians.

• (1430)

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yes, we do trust them to put the interests of Canada ahead of protecting the Prime Minister's political interest. The fact is that he has met numerous times with Mr. Atwal. Why? Because he is useful to political insider politics in the Liberal Party. However, he is also accused of trying to beat Ujjal Dosanjh to death with an iron pipe. What is this? *Fargo*? I served with Mr. Dosanjh in Parliament.

It is incumbent upon all parliamentarians across political lines to put the interests of our nation ahead of partisan pork-barrel politics. Does the Prime Minister not understand that principle?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said many times, this individual never should have been invited. As soon as we found out that he was, that invitation was rescinded. The member responsible for the invitation has taken full responsibility, and I will be following up with that member later this afternoon.

The Speaker: I would encourage the hon. member for Windsor West to restrain himself.

The hon. member for Richmond—Arthabaska.

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last Tuesday, a known terrorist convicted of attempted murder had his picture taken with the Prime Minister's wife and the Minister of Infrastructure.

Oral Questions

Wednesday evening, this criminal was invited to dine with the Prime Minister. The next day, the Prime Minister told us that the invitation had been extended by the High Commission at the request of a Liberal MP. Now, out of the blue, we learn that the Prime Minister's national security advisor tried to lay the blame on the Indian government.

If what the Prime Minister is saying is true, can he provide the House with proof of the Indian government's attack?

[*English*]

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it has been well explained in this House and elsewhere that the invitation that had been extended should not have been extended, and when that became known to the government, the invitation was in fact rescinded.

With respect to the work of our security personnel, we rely upon them, and we respect them for their careful, precise, and thoughtful advice and information. We treasure very much the work of our police and our security officials.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, we can no longer believe the Prime Minister after the family trip he took to India with 19 MPs and ministers, at the taxpayer's expense no less.

He is refusing to take responsibility and is shifting the blame onto everyone else. However, coming up with a conspiracy theory that involves an international ally to save face following his complete lack of judgment simply defies belief.

Does the Prime Minister have any proof? If so, he must table it here in the House.

[*English*]

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the accusations and the insinuations coming from the opposition are simply and utterly false. The facts of the matter are that we rely upon our security personnel in our police forces and in all of our security agencies to supply impartial, professional, and independent information and advice. That is exactly what they have done.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the accusation is that the Indian government conspired so that the convicted terrorist and Liberal insider, Jaspal Atwal, would dine with the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister just said that is true, that he trusts his national security adviser, and that is in fact true.

Before the Prime Minister destroys our relationship with our ally, the government and country of India, will he please tell this House what proof he has of that allegation?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member, both today and yesterday, has provided her interpretation of events. In fact, her insinuations and her accusations are false.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, can the Prime Minister tell me what part of this is false? Was there a briefing arranged by the PMO with the media? Is that a lie? Was that briefing done by the national security adviser, Daniel Jean? Is that a lie? Was the Indian government complicit in conspiring so that there

was a terrorist in India at the same time as the Prime Minister so that they could hang out together? Which one of those three things is a lie?

● (1435)

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows that issues in relation to national security are not discussed on the floor of the House of Commons. Otherwise, the interests of the country can be compromised.

The fact of the matter is that we rely on our security officials to provide independent, impartial advice to the government and information to the country. They have performed their jobs in every respect in this matter exactly as they should have performed them.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is really quite astounding that today the Prime Minister of Canada confirmed that the claims are true that the Indian government conspired on the Atwal affair. He said that in the House today. Media reports reveal that the Indian government actually asked Canada to review the invitation list ahead of time, but the Prime Minister's Office said no.

Can the minister confirm that they refused to collaborate with the Indian government ahead of this trip?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in fact there were elaborate efforts made consistently throughout all of the preparations and the trip itself, by the RCMP, by CSIS, and by all of the appropriate agencies in Global Affairs and the Government of Canada, to make sure that every precise detail of the relationship between Canada and India was properly performed and exercised in every respect.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the only elaborate efforts made are the elaborate efforts to cover up the disastrous trip of the Prime Minister to use a national security adviser to spin the media on a conspiracy theory against our friends in the Indian government. We learned that they wanted to actually collaborate with Canada on security, but they refused, and now the Prime Minister is blaming India by saying what his national security adviser said was true.

Will the Prime Minister or the minister apologize to our friends in India for this scandalous accusation?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at the end of the visit, I am pleased to note that the Prime Minister of India said that the talks with the Canadian Prime Minister were very fruitful. Our discussions focused on closer India-Canada co-operation in various sectors, including investment, trade, energy, and stronger people-to-people relations. There were six MOUs, 22 new initiatives, \$1 billion in investment, and 5,800 jobs identified.

*Oral Questions***STATUS OF WOMEN**

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal budget is a golden opportunity for the current government to show real action on women's equality. Over the last two years we have heard many fine words, but sadly, very little investment in true gender equality. Immediate funding is needed this year for pay equity, for child care, and for domestic violence shelters. This is long overdue and would have the biggest impact on the lives of women.

Will the budget spend on concrete actions now, not just talk, to truly help women in this country get ahead?

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of Status of Women, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when we invest in women, we strengthen the economy for everyone. This has supported our work since we formed government two years ago. It was at the heart of our work when we introduced the Canada child benefit plan, lifting 300,000 Canadian kids out of poverty. It is why the national housing strategy devotes a minimum of 25% of the \$40 billion promised to support women and girls. It is why we introduced \$7 billion for child care, so that families across the country can continue to look after their needs.

We all look forward to the Minister of Finance introducing the budget later today.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CHILD CARE

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government claims to want to help women get back to work by creating an incentive for parental leave. That is all well and good, but once the leave is over, child care outside of Quebec is so expensive that many parents, especially women, have to make the difficult choice between pursuing a career or staying at home. There is a simple solution, however, one that the NDP has been calling for quite some time now: a universal, affordable child care program.

When is it going to happen?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, anyone who takes gender equality seriously knows that high-quality, affordable day care services are essential, so we know just how important day care services are, not only for parents, but also for children, and particularly children from more vulnerable families. Back in 2016, we announced our plan to create up to 40,000 spaces in educational daycare centres across the country by 2028. We want better, more affordable child care for Canadians.

* * *

●(1440)

[*English*]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the public safety minister claims Canada's security agencies did their job on the Prime Minister's disastrous India trip. The fact is our security experts were not allowed to do their job because the PMO did not show the guest list to the RCMP or CSIS for screening. Now we know that India's security agencies did ask to see the guest list, where they

would have detected the notorious, convicted, attempted assassin, but were refused access.

It is time for the minister and the Prime Minister to explain this unacceptable security failure.

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in fact the security problem was identified. As soon as it was identified, the invitation was rescinded. That action was taken by the Government of Canada, as is appropriate.

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is not good enough. The PMO should have known. The minister should have known. The RCMP and CSIS certainly did know that the hotel where the PM's cocktail party was held, the hotel at which the convicted attempted assassin posed for pictures with the Prime Minister's wife and others, was the site of a major terror attack in 2008 that left one Canadian dead.

Why did the Prime Minister choose to disregard the assistance India offered and then push a conspiracy theory that has undermined relations with India?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again I say with absolute certainty that the Canadian security and police authorities performed their jobs in all of these circumstances exactly as they should have performed them. They provide independent, impartial, professional, non-partisan advice and information to the Government of Canada and the people of Canada, and that is exactly what has happened in this case.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, apparently the circus lives on. The show we got in India is not over. This government claims to be transparent, but, as we can see, it is getting entangled in its own web.

Yesterday, we learned through the media that India had asked for the guest list for the Prime Minister's gala and that the Canadian government refused to provide it.

I would like to hear from the Prime Minister whether India made the request and how the government responded.

Oral Questions

[English]

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the arrangements with respect to the Prime Minister's mission to India were very carefully prepared not only by the Department of Global Affairs but also with the assistance of CSIS and the RCMP. They took all the necessary steps to ensure the security of the mission. The officials with respect to the Prime Minister's Office, once they had identified the presence of a particular individual, took the steps to rescind his invitation.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there are not enough buses in Ottawa for the Prime Minister and his backroom executives to throw people under. They have thrown the non-partisan national security adviser under the bus by having him float a conspiracy theory that the Indian government was responsible for trying to undermine India-Canada relations. Let us be honest. The Prime Minister did this to justify his disastrous trip to India, but more than that, they pushed this to the media without a single shred of evidence.

Will the Prime Minister provide the evidence, if it even exists, that supports this laughable conspiracy theory?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when security officials, police officials, and representatives of our security and intelligence agencies provide information and offer advice either to the government or on occasion to the public, they perform their functions in a truly impartial and independent manner and they do so in the national interests of Canada, not in the interests of any political party on any side of the House.

* * *

[Translation]

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, at a time when the vast majority of our constituents are concerned about mobility problems and fighting greenhouse gases, there is general consensus that a high-frequency train is needed for the Quebec City-Windsor corridor. The people of Trois-Rivières have been waiting 25 years for passenger rail service to return and the minister has all the studies he needs to make a decision.

Can he tell us whether he views passenger rail service as an investment for our regions or, like the Conservatives, does he view it as an unnecessary expense?

●(1445)

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as my colleague knows, passenger rail service is very important to this government. As he also knows, we are looking at the possibility of a high-frequency train for the Quebec City-Windsor corridor.

We set \$3.3 million aside in budget 2016. The study is not yet complete. It is a very thorough study. When we have the results, we will share them with everyone.

[English]

SENIORS

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canada has more seniors now than youth age 15 and under. By 2036, one in every four residents will be a senior, yet when the Liberals came into power, they got rid of the seniors minister. Is it not time to have a national seniors strategy to fill the gaps too many seniors fall through? What better than a dedicated minister to work full time on their behalf? Seniors deserve more than a small increase to their GIS. They deserve a full-time advocate. When will the government act?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to say that we have a government that is entirely dedicated to the welfare of our seniors. We started in 2016 with an increase in the guaranteed income supplement of up to \$1,000 per year, benefiting almost a million vulnerable seniors. We have put back to 65 years old the age of eligibility for old age security, which is going to prevent 100,000 vulnerable seniors from falling into misery. We have enhanced the Canada pension plan, which will benefit generations of seniors.

We are going to continue to work very hard to advance the welfare of our seniors.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Stephen Fuhr (Kelowna—Lake Country, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada's new defence policy emphasizes NATO's importance to Canada and recognizes that joint intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance is essential to NATO. In response to today's security environment, NATO has significantly increased the use of its AWACS fleet, specifically in central and eastern Europe, where Canada leads a multinational NATO mission based in Latvia.

Could the Minister of National Defence update the House on the government's position with regard to the NATO AWACS program?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Kelowna—Lake Country for his former service as a CF-18 fighter pilot in the Royal Canadian Air Force.

I was proud to announce our government's decision to rejoin NATO's AWACS program at the NATO defence ministers' meeting earlier this month. This decision to rejoin the program after the Conservative government abruptly withdrew in 2011 is a sign of our government's strong commitment to the NATO alliance. We understand that in order to be strong and secure at home, we must be engaged in the world.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, earlier in question period the Prime Minister confirmed that he agrees with the national security adviser who advanced a conspiracy theory that it was the Government of India that conspired against the Government of Canada to embarrass the Prime Minister on his trip to India.

Oral Questions

The Prime Minister also said that the member for Surrey Centre extended an invitation to a convicted attempted murderer. Is he saying that the member for Surrey Centre is complicit with the Indian government in conspiring against the Government of Canada?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister indicated that particular member extended an invitation that never should have been extended and when the fact of that invitation became known to the Government of Canada and particularly the Prime Minister's Office, that invitation was rescinded, as it should have been.

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have two theories here. The first is that the member for Surrey Centre acted alone and issued an inappropriate invitation for which he will be having a very stern meeting with the Prime Minister. The other theory, which has been advanced by the national security adviser, is that this was a vast Indian conspiracy set out to embarrass the Prime Minister.

Which one of those theories advanced by the Liberal government is a lie?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it has been said repeatedly and accurately that the invitation should never have been extended. Once that invitation became known it was rescinded by the Government of Canada.

We have also made the point very clearly that our national security and intelligence and police agencies perform their functions in a completely non-partisan and impartial manner, and always in the best interests of Canada.

* * *

● (1450)

FOREIGN INVESTMENT

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last February, we warned the government that putting our senior care facilities in the hands of Anbang, a company with murky Chinese ownership, was dangerously naive. Wall Street even had concerns about it but the government just blindly went ahead and did it. What has happened? Anbang has collapsed, the chairman was arrested, and our senior care facilities are now in the hands of communist China. We warned the Prime Minister and our fears have come true.

Does the minister believe that it is appropriate that our senior care homes across British Columbia are owned by communist China?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the Cedar Tree acquisition, the legally binding commitments remain in place with regard to jobs, not to close or repurpose any of the existing residences, to support expansion, which is very important, and also to abide by provincial and health regulations. We are going to make sure that these commitments are honoured.

Hon. Alice Wong (Richmond Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last year, the Liberals approved the sale of dozens of B.C. retirement homes to the China-based Anbang Insurance Group. On Friday, we

learned that officials in Beijing had assumed control of Anbang's assets, including Canadian seniors' homes.

Does the minister really think that this is an acceptable situation?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, any decision we make goes through a rigorous and robust process under the Investment Canada Act.

We have been very clear that the legally binding commitments remain in place around jobs and making sure that we maintain a high number of jobs in Canada, not to close or repurpose any of the existing residences, and to support expansion. I also want to take this opportunity to highlight that the particular acquisition must abide by provincial and health regulations, which is very important for the senior residents.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last Friday, the Chinese government took over insurance giant Anbang, citing serious corruption and incompetence. This is the same company that the Liberal government allowed to take over British Columbia's largest retirement home provider.

Decisions about the care of Canadian seniors are now being made offshore by a foreign government. When the Canada Health Act calls for public administration of our health care system, it does not mean from Beijing.

What is the Minister of Health doing to address this unacceptable situation?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can assure the member opposite that the specific, legally binding commitments around the health regulations will remain intact.

This is something that we took precision around in terms of the Investment Canada Act process. We understand the important concerns raised by the members opposite, but I can assure the member and the House that we always have and always will continue to advance our national interest and do what is in the best interests of all Canadians.

* * *

[Translation]

JUSTICE

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on February 20, the Canadian Judicial Council recommended that Justice Michel Girouard be removed from office.

He has been barred from hearing cases since 2013. In a vast court region like Abitibi—Témiscamingue—Nord-du-Québec, his absence is having major repercussions on public access to justice.

Could the Minister of Justice tell us where we are in the process and whether she is planning to make a recommendation to Parliament this week, so that we can act swiftly to restore access to justice?

[English]

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question being brought up. I did receive, last week, a recommendation from the Canadian Judicial Council that recommended the removal of the judge that was referenced.

I will now consider that recommendation and will proceed in due course. I wanted to thank the inquiry committee and the Canadian Judicial Council for their input in this regard. Anything further would be inappropriate for me to comment on, as this matter may come before the House.

* * *

[Translation]

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will quote a grain farmer who said, "If we can't move our product to market, we can't pay our bills. And we are punished for something out of our control but within the government's".

That is a heartfelt plea from a western grain farmer who is currently unable to sell her product because the Liberals refuse to act. They have the power and the means, but as usual, they are blaming others for their inaction. The Minister of Agriculture is way off track.

When is he going to tell the Minister of Transport to stop punishing grain farmers and get our exports moving again?

• (1455)

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government certainly recognizes the importance of an efficient rail system for transporting grain, and we are working on that issue. That is why I was in contact with CN and CP last month and with CN this morning. We recognize that this is important.

February was a particularly hard month, but the situation is getting better, and I am confident that grain transportation rates will improve over the coming weeks.

[English]

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Conservatives negotiated CETA and TPP because we know the importance of market access for our agricultural sector.

Recently, CN and CP have fulfilled only 38% of the grain commitments. This growing rail backlog has led to lost sales and unreliable exports for our grain producers. The Liberal government is putting critical trade deals at risk, and now Canadian farmers cannot even get their products to port.

Will the agriculture minister get off the bench and take action to ensure our farmers have adequate rail access to get their grain to market?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government recognizes the importance of an efficient and reliable rail system to transport grain for our farmers.

That is why we put Bill C-49 in place, unlike the previous government that did absolutely nothing for 10 years. I have been in touch with CN and CP. I was in touch with CN this morning. The

Oral Questions

month of February was particularly difficult, but at this point I feel that, looking to the future, the grain situation will certainly improve in the months to come.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is great to hear the government once again standing up for the rail lines and not fighting for Canadian farmers.

The Western Grain Elevator Association said that the situation is dire, and that the grain backlog is getting worse not better. The Liberals ignored our advice to pass a separate grain transportation bill. They failed to extend important provisions that were in Conservative legislation that were protecting Canadian farmers. The Liberals have to stop blaming everybody else for their mismanagement and take definite action now.

How much money and how many critical export markets are our farmers going to have to lose before the government stands up and takes action?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, unlike the previous government that did nothing for 10 years, we actually brought forward Bill C-49, which, by the way, that side voted against. It was intended to have fair rail legislation for the movement of grain.

I was speaking to CN this morning and in actual fact, the amount of grain transported at this point in time is only 3% behind the average of the past three years. Last week was particularly bad, but the situation is improving.

* * *

[Translation]

HEALTH

Mr. Ramez Ayoub (Thérèse-De Blainville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, innovation and research are key to improving the lives of people suffering from brain-related illnesses and disorders. Foundations such as Brain Canada, whose offices are in Montreal, are actively working on changing the lives of some 3.6 million Canadians suffering from all kinds of neurological infections.

Can the Minister of Health inform the House of her efforts to support neuroscience research across Canada?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Thérèse-De Blainville for his important question, his work in his riding, and his work on the health committee.

We recently announced, at McGill University, a \$10-million grant to create a pan-Canadian neuroscience platform in partnership with Brain Canada. This platform is a partnership of 15 universities that will facilitate the dissemination of data that support research to advance treatments for Canadians suffering from neurological diseases.

*Oral Questions**[English]***FISHERIES AND OCEANS**

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last week the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans expropriated 25% of the Arctic surf clam quota and awarded a new licence to a consortium of two companies. The president of both companies in that consortium is the brother of the Liberal member for Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook.

Did the fisheries minister know that his Liberal caucus mate's brother was the president of the consortium of companies?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what we did know is that the previous Conservative government began a process in 2014-15 to bring a new entrant into this fishery. However, what we knew, which they did not know, was the importance of including indigenous people in the prosecution of that fishery.

We had an open, public process where we received nine submissions, which were carefully analyzed, that included partnerships between indigenous people and other commercial entities to participate in this lucrative fishery. We chose the best proposal in terms of employment opportunity for indigenous people and we are proud of that.

* * *

● (1500)

*[Translation]***FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canada must put pressure on Syria and Russia to maintain and observe the ceasefire, not just for part of the day, but permanently. To act otherwise is an affront to our humanity.

[English]

The only way to bring peace to the Syrian people is to find a political solution and ensure that those responsible for atrocities are brought to account. Where is Canada in pushing for such a solution?

Mr. Matt DeCoursey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the UN Security Council resolution calling for a ceasefire in Syria to allow humanitarian access must be implemented. We strongly condemn the brutal and targeted attacks against civilians, including in eastern Ghouta. It is vital that all parties respect the ceasefire unconditionally to stop the massacre of civilians and allow the delivery of humanitarian supplies.

The massacre of the people in Syria must end, and Canada will continue to act and add voice on this issue, including funding first responders in eastern Ghouta such as the White Helmets.

* * *

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on January 24, the Minister of Transport was in Israel to finalize the expansion of the Canada-Israel air transport agreement. Many constituents in my riding have greatly benefited by the free travel

back and forth between the two countries, in particular the new Montreal-Tel Aviv route introduced last year.

What were the outcomes of the minister's discussions? Could we see more flights between Canada and Israel?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for this government, offering more choice at lower cost with better service is one of our priorities. That is why I was particularly glad to announce the expansion of the air transport agreement between Israel and Canada. We are adding up to seven more flights on a weekly basis. This is not only good for moving people and goods; it is good for business and it is good for our strong relationship between Canada and Israel.

* * *

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, every accused person is entitled to a robust defence, and defence counsel plays an integral role in Canada's justice system.

Nonetheless, some concerns have been raised about the appointment of John Norris to the Federal Court. What criteria did the Minister of Justice use with respect to this appointment?

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to stand to talk about our robust appointment process and to celebrate the meritorious candidates who I have been able to appoint across the country, some 160 thus far.

In terms of judicial candidates, I take the evaluation of the independent advisory committees that rate as recommended or highly recommended. I take into account considerations from the chief justices in the region, the case law of the individual, and the expertise of the individual. It has resulted in, as I said, 160 fantastic appointments across the country.

* * *

*[Translation]***TAXATION**

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is absurd that the Government of Canada exempts Netflix and rich foreign platforms from taxation. This unfair tax situation will hurt the middle class and has been denounced by the entire cultural industry and the Government of Quebec. To add insult to injury, the Minister of Canadian Heritage refuses to disclose the terms of the agreement with Netflix to the Government of Quebec.

Will the minister finally be transparent, answer requests for information, and put an end to this flagrant injustice?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is a time of upheaval for the television, radio, and media industries. We have been proactive. We reinvested in our television producers and we also recognize that we will need to modernize our laws, which we are doing. The Prime Minister has said so, we made a promise, and we will follow through on it.

We realize that this is a complex situation that requires a comprehensive solution. This means that we must take a comprehensive approach to the taxation of digital platforms instead of a piecemeal one.

* * *

● (1505)

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, right now, Quebec's seasonal workers are in the midst of the annual employment insurance spring gap. Every year, the government stands idly by watching them fall into that gap. In eastern Quebec, however, a coalition of elected representatives, unemployed workers' associations, unions, and businesses has taken shape. I am part of that coalition, a coalition that will not be ignored, a coalition united in demanding two things: emergency measures and an immediate and permanent solution to the problem.

Time is tight and the very survival of our regions is at stake, so will the government commit to adopting concrete measures, measures that actually put food on the table so that no worker, family, or community ever—

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Families, Children and Social Development.

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all Canadians know that the employment insurance system is vitally important to supporting income security and employment status transitions, which can be difficult in communities facing major challenges. Thanks to the important measures we have introduced over the past two years, benefits are now more flexible and generous and service quality is better than in the past 10 years. We will continue working hard to keep that momentum going.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

IMPACT ASSESSMENT ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-69, An Act to enact the Impact Assessment Act and the Canadian Energy Regulator Act, to amend the Navigation Protection Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the environment and the economy go hand in hand. We are going to implement better regulations to protect our environment, fish, and waterways. These regulations will help restore Canadians' confidence and ensure respect for indigenous rights. They will strengthen our economy and encourage investment.

Better regulations will help to protect the environment, ensure that good projects can move forward, and create new jobs and new economic opportunities for the middle class and those working hard to join it.

Government Orders

Better regulations for major projects, such as mining, pipeline, and hydroelectric projects, will help us protect the environment and communities, promote economic growth, and advance the reconciliation process with indigenous peoples.

Previous legislative and regulatory reforms undermined the public's confidence. They were implemented without any regard for science and put our environment, fish, waterways, and communities at risk.

We are working to correct the way we measure the potential impact of major projects, such as mining projects, pipeline projects, and hydroelectric projects. Better rules will help ensure that project reviews are timely and predictable, and will encourage investments in Canada's natural resources sectors.

The environment and the economy go hand in hand. Better rules will help restore trust and help the government better protect the environment. These rules will ensure that good projects can move forward responsibly, transparently, and in a timely manner. These better rules are the result of 14 months of consultation with the provinces, territories, indigenous peoples, businesses, environmental groups, and Canadians across the country.

● (1510)

[*English*]

Over the past 14 months, we have undertaken significant consultations and engagements. This started with the implementation of the interim principles to ensure additional public consultation, consultations with indigenous peoples, and appropriate assessment of greenhouse gas emission impacts. These were all included with respect to all ongoing projects. Then we conducted expert panels and parliamentary committee reviews, which then formed the discussion paper that the government released in the summer. We then conducted additional consultations, which further informed the legislation that was recently introduced into the House of Commons.

Consultations that took place over a period of 14 months with indigenous organizations, environmental organizations, with companies, and with interested Canadians were extensive and exhaustive.

Moving the bill to committee is now the next step in the process. We look forward to hearing from the committee and its further consultations that it will conduct. We are very open to refinements that would improve the legislation.

I am very proud to have been part of the development of this very important legislation. I would thus reiterate that for the government, and I know for Canadians generally, the environment and the economy can and must go hand in hand.

With the legislation, we are putting into place better rules to protect our environment, our fish, and waterways, rules that build public trust and respect indigenous rights, that strengthen our economy and encourage investment. These better rules will protect the environment and ensure that good projects go ahead. They will create new jobs and economic opportunities for the middle class and those working hard to join it.

Government Orders

A few key elements of the bill include the goal of one project, one review. We will streamline the process and coordinate with the provinces and territories to reduce red tape for companies and avoid duplicating efforts in reviewing proposed projects. We are making the process more predictable and more timely to clarify the process, to engage stakeholders effectively, and to identify potential issues with project proposals up front. These better rules will increase regulatory certainty and clarity, encouraging investment in Canada's natural resource sectors.

Our focus is also on better early planning, which will build trust, improve project design, and give companies certainty about what is expected of them in the review process.

Decisions on projects will be guided by scientific evidence and indigenous traditional knowledge. We will increase access to science and evidence, and make easy-to-understand summaries of decisions publicly available.

We will also create a new early engagement phase to ensure the recognition and respect of indigenous people's rights, working in partnership from the very start. We will ensure companies will know then what is required of them and that communities will have their voices heard from the start. There will be a single agency, the impact agency of Canada, which will lead all impact assessments for major projects to ensure the process is consistent and efficient. The agency will work with and draw on the expertise of other bodies like the Canadian energy regulator, currently the National Energy Board, the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, and the offshore boards. Projects will be held to a high standard, because that is what Canadians expect and that is what they deserve.

By recognizing indigenous rights and knowledge in project reviews and working in partnership from the start, we will advance Canada's commitment to reconciliation and to get better project decisions. We will work in partnership with indigenous peoples to ensure their involvement in studying project impacts from the start is recognized and accounted for. Indigenous peoples will have opportunities to participate in implementing new protections for navigation, for fish, and for fish habitat.

We will make project decisions in a transparent way and we will clearly communicate the reasons behind our decisions.

As I indicated, we will increase access to science and evidence, and make easy-to-understand summaries of decisions publicly available. Government scientists will review any studies provided by companies, and independent scientific reviews will be done where there is strong public concern or the results of a study are uncertain. The federal government's chief science adviser will periodically review the methods and integrity of science used in making decisions.

To ensure projects start with the best available science and evidence, we will be proactive in studying and providing information on the state of the environment across Canada. We will do regional and strategic assessments with provinces and territories, indigenous groups, and stakeholders to understand the environmental big picture. This will provide greater clarity for companies and help to inform decision-making.

With better rules for major projects, we can protect our environment and communities, and advance reconciliation with indigenous peoples. Previous reforms to environmental laws and regulations, particularly those brought forward by the Harper government in 2012, eroded public trust, disregarded science, and put our environment, fish, waterways, and communities at risk. We are fixing how we measure the potential impacts of major projects. Better rules will lead to more timely and predictable project reviews and will encourage investment in Canada's natural resource sectors.

The environment and the economy can and must go together. Better rules will restore confidence in the government's ability to protect the environment, all the while ensuring good projects can move ahead in a responsible, timely, and transparent way. These better rules are a product of 14 months of consultations with Canadians. They represent an important step forward to ensure that on a go-forward basis, we can be sure, and Canadians can be sure, the economy and environment will go together.

● (1515)

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I note the parliamentary secretary has said that his government will be open to what he calls "refinements". I am presuming that includes amendments.

Is the government going to allow for a very fulsome review by the committee, including travel, so all those who participated in their two-year consultation, including to the expert panels, have an opportunity to come forward and advise whether they feel this omnibus bill responds to what they have asked for?

Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson: Mr. Speaker, we are moving this bill to the committee precisely so it can engage in robust discussion around the bill and invite witnesses to participate in that conversation. That is an important part of the process. We are very confident in the work that will come forward from the committee, which includes amendments. The committee has been a very thoughtful voice in the context of many of the conversations we have had with respect to environmental matters, and we look forward to receiving its report.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the parliamentary secretary for his speech. I have a question for him about the process.

Government Orders

The government says that we will have a broader, more open, and more inclusive environmental assessment process that will start earlier than planned, from the early stages of consultations. Why then does the government's bill give more power to the minister to ignore the recommendations of the Canadian Environmental Protection Agency? If the government wants to be inclusive in the process and take the time to do things right, why is it imposing a parliamentary gag order and preventing us from having a debate in the House?

[*English*]

Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson: Mr. Speaker, the legislation, as I said in my comments, is the product of extensive consultation over the course of the past 14 months, and reviews that included a number of different papers that were published by a number of different panels. As we move forward, we look forward to the comments the committee will bring forward.

The hon. member needs to look very seriously at the legislation, as I am sure he has done. The discretion provided to the minister is actually not more extensive. It is appropriate in the context of a parliamentary democratic system. However, there are significant measures to enhance transparency, to enhance the integrity of the science, and to enhance the ability of people to actually weigh in on the process to ensure that there is a robust process that goes into forming a decision, that any decisions that are ultimately taken are very much transparent, and that those decisions are publicly available for people to assess and determine whether they think the appropriate decision was taken.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is a habit of the Liberals, I have discovered, to reference the abundant consultation that has taken place as though that directed or influenced their decisions.

I consulted on this particular piece of legislation, which is three bills in one. Bill C-69 is an omnibus bill. I submitted every time a window opened for consultation, and I have looked at the submissions of others. Overwhelmingly, the government was told to repair the environmental assessment process and not to allow it to continue as it had been destroyed under Bill C-38 back in 2012.

In my question for the parliamentary secretary, I want to reference in particular the expert panel on environmental assessment, among many important pieces of advice received by the government. When it empanelled a group of experts and paid for them to travel the country and listen to people, I do not see how anyone could doubt that their recommendations should have had some influence. We have never even seen a report or a response from the minister to the expert panel report on EA, nor the expert panel report on the NEB, both of which one would think would have some reference in this omnibus bill, which deals with both.

Specifically to the parliamentary secretary, I would say that the expert panel on environmental assessment said clearly that whenever federal money was used, there should be a federal review. The expert panel on EA said there should be no role for the National Energy Board, the offshore petroleum boards, or the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission.

However, the legislation before us today, Bill C-69, does not include a trigger when federal money is used. Although it pretends to

have one agency, the impact assessment agency, whenever projects fall under the jurisdiction, for regulatory purposes, of what used to be the National Energy Board, the offshore petroleum boards, or the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, members of the panel must be selected from those agencies, which hardly takes them out of the process.

● (1520)

Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the intervention by the hon. member, but she is just plain wrong.

The recommendations of the expert panel were actually responded to in a very fulsome way in the context of the legislation that was brought through. If the member reads through the recommendations of the expert panel, she would find that to be true.

Obviously, whenever there are expert panels, not everything is accepted. Many of the recommendations were taken out for further consultation. The vast majority of them actually were, in the end, incorporated into the legislation. Some elements were not, and there are obviously very specific reasons for that. If the hon. member wants to sit down and review those, that can certainly be arranged.

This is an enormous step forward, and most, virtually all, of the stakeholders we have talked to over the course of this would say that this is in fact the case.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague opposite just claimed that the minister's role in the new proposed process is limited and discretionary. That is not the case.

Both the minister and the commissioner have the ability to deny a project in the preplanning phase, before it even gets to the impact assessment. There are multiple times at which the so-called timelines can be stopped and extended for as long as the minister or the regulator wishes, and as many times as he or she wishes.

At the very end, in the case approval is given, the minister still has the discretion to ask for further studies and further consultation, which of course is what the B.C. NDP is doing right now, trying to kill the Trans Mountain expansion.

Instead of the Liberals just making these claims based on rhetoric and not actually on the content of the legislation, why do they not listen to experts, including an energy investment bank, Suncor, and other private sector energy proponents who just want to make billions of dollars in investment in the Canadian economy to help the entire country? They are now saying the timelines are not concrete. There is more uncertainty. There is a lack of clarity. They even say that there is an alarming concentration of power in one individual, and that these proposals run counter to all the things the Liberals claim to be doing.

Government Orders

Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson: Mr. Speaker, the legislation responds very much to what we heard from organizations across the country. That includes companies and industry associations. It includes indigenous organizations and indigenous communities. It includes environmental organizations and it includes interested Canadians. We have tried to respond in thoughtful ways to the comments that we heard. Obviously, there were different comments coming from different sectors of society.

The focus for us, as I said during my comments, was to ensure that the environment and the economy go together. At the end of the day, we as an organization and we as a country want to ensure that good projects can proceed, but they need to proceed in an environmentally sustainable way. To the extent that this is not the case, then those projects should not go ahead. Those projects that can go ahead and be done in an environmentally sustainable way should proceed. That is the whole point of this exercise. That is what Canadians told us they want. That is what companies told us they want. That is what environmental organizations told us they want and that is what is reflected in this legislation.

• (1525)

Mr. Wayne Long (Saint John—Rothesay, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when we look at development it has to be socially developable, it has to be economically developable, and it also has to make environmental sense, as the parliamentary secretary has said.

I asked a question earlier in the House of the party across the way that formed the previous government, where they had selective hearing in terms of the social licence that was trying to be gained in order to do development. Could the parliamentary secretary talk about the importance of getting all voices to the table, not having selective hearing, and making sure that what we are doing makes sense for all Canadians?

Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson: Mr. Speaker, there are a number of elements in this piece of legislation that attempt to respond to the concerns that Canadians were expressing about the fact that they felt that they did not have the opportunity to participate in an active way, in the context of many of the reviews that were undertaken after the changes and the gutting of the environmental legislation that was undertaken by the Harper government.

In this legislation, one element of it relates to early engagement to try to identify obstacles to a particular project early in the process so that these could be discussed and addressed before getting further down the road where that becomes much more intractable and much more difficult.

We have also eliminated the test that says one has to have direct involvement in the project in order to participate, because Canadians felt that they wanted the opportunity to be able to have their say. That is an important piece in terms of inclusivity.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am going to have to try to speak really fast because it is hard in 20 minutes to talk about a 360-page bill.

Many will be delighted that after two and a half years the government has finally delivered the campaign promise to bring forward a new federal assessment process. During the 2015 election, the Prime Minister committed that if he became Prime Minister, Kinder Morgan would have to go back to the drawing board, saying

the process needed to be redone. When asked if no means no if indigenous peoples opposed a pipeline, the Prime Minister responded yes. Regardless, the Kinder Morgan pipeline project, the Site C dam, and an LNG project were all approved by the government based on the Harper-eviscerated assessment process.

The Minister of Environment, in tabling Bill C-69, said, “The legislation we are introducing today aims to restore public trust in how the federal government makes decisions about major projects, like mines, pipelines, and hydro dams.” This 366-page omnibus bill includes an environmental assessment law, a revised energy regulation law, and a new law on navigation. Therefore, how well would Bill C-69 actually restore public trust by enshrining a strengthened rules-based process including clearly prescribed rights to participate, and respect for indigenous rights and title?

In most instances, the bill leaves these concerns unanswered, either because the bill is rife with discretionary powers or the fact that significant matters are left to yet-to-be-promulgated regulations or rules. Does the bill respond to the recommendations made by the government’s appointed expert panel? Again, it does so only partially.

Yesterday, a motion on privilege was filed against the minister for her disdain for the rights of parliamentarians to review this bill. Now, after only two hours of debate, the Liberals have moved to impose time allocation. The parliamentary secretary has just said that his government is open to refinements. It is for these reasons that I am issuing a call for expanded opportunity for Canadians, including indigenous peoples, to directly participate in the review of this bill. This can best be met by having the standing committee conduct hearings in communities across this country. The government advised that the law and associated regulations would not be in place until the spring of 2019. This allows ample time for a process enabling Canadians to express their voices and to recommend amendments.

In the time allotted to me, it will be impossible to discuss this massive bill in its entirety. I will therefore touch only on a few key issues in the bill. Would it restore public trust and confidence? Would it create greater legal certainty? Would it prescribe expanded rights of participation by the public in project reviews and government energy policy? Would it enshrine a clear process to assess government policy consistent with the sustainable development 2030 commitments? Finally, would it respect and deliver on the rights and duties to indigenous peoples as prescribed by the UNDRIP?

First, would the bill restore public trust and confidence as the government has alleged? The expert panel struck by the minister to gauge public views on the federal environmental and energy assessment and regulatory regime made a number of recommendations to reform and strengthen the systems. These included replacing the ad hoc review panels with a new quasi-judicial agency and to disallow federal regulatory bodies from participating in the reviews. Both recommendations were ignored.

Government Orders

While the bill would provide for the appointment of an independent impact assessment agency, review panels would still continue to be appointed on an ad hoc basis and could still include representatives of the Canadian energy regulator and the Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador offshore boards.

The bill does expand the factors to be considered by a panel if an assessment proceeds, and that is a big if, including cumulative impacts, contributions to sustainability, impacts to the federal government's obligations on climate change, alternatives, mitigation measures, and impacts to indigenous rights. However, concerns have been raised that little clarity is offered on how these factors are to be considered or weighted. It is noteworthy that the list of factors the minister must consider in deciding if a project is in the public interest is far shorter than those considered by a panel.

Does the bill introduce greater legal certainty? A vast array of duties and powers remains discretionary.

For these and other reasons, I share the views expressed by many, including CELA lawyer, Richard Lindgren, "that the new [environmental assessment] process will not restore public trust or ensure credible, participatory and science-based decision-making." The best description one can ascribe to Bill C-69 is that it offers a framework for project assessment processes but little certainty for when a federal project is assessed or approved. This observation appears supported by a number of legal experts.

I fully concur with the views expressed by law professor Martin Olszynski from the University of Calgary, who said:

● (1530)

my approach to this legislation—and the basis for one of my main criticisms of it—is to consider what it actually says and requires, not what the current government says it will do as a matter of policy. In my view, environmental law should be written with a view towards potential future governments that may be hostile to environmental concerns. Better rules, in this context, means legislation that would constrain such governments, forcing them to either conform or to - yet again - try to amend the legislation, with all the potential for democratic accountability that comes with that. On this score, much of the legislation introduced last week is wholly inadequate.

A critical determinant to knowing when a project triggers a federal assessment is the project list, yet consultation on the list was only just initiated. Why was it not done over the past two years? Will it include projects excluded by the Conservatives, for example, in situ oil sands operations? Will it include dangerous rail traffic as proposed under my bill, Bill C-304?

While the bill does list some laws that may trigger effects under federal jurisdiction, the responsible ministers still get to decide if an approval or review is even needed. The minister is required only to consider if a project may impact federal lands, have transboundary or transborder impacts, or impact indigenous peoples, health, social or economic matters, not yet established by cabinet.

It should be noted that the minister can allow for the substitution of a provincial assessment regardless if federal powers or duties may be triggered. The majority of the bill extends broad and extensive discretionary powers to the minister of the environment, the new agency, and the cabinet to call for an assessment or not. The minister is not required to call an assessment, even if in her opinion the proposed activity warrants designation due to its adverse effects or

due to public concerns. The power currently in place has rarely ever been utilized. It should be mandatory.

My bill, Bill C-304, to the contrary, imposes a mandatory duty on the minister to call for an assessment where, in her opinion, a project may pose significant risks to environment or health or there are public concerns.

There are far too many discretionary powers to list, but they include the following examples: discretion to decide if an impact assessment is not required even for a designated project; the discretion to decide the scope of factors to be considered; an agency discretion to delegate any part of the impact assessment to other jurisdictions; ministerial discretion to substitute equivalent provincial processes; ministerial discretion to terminate a review panel or remove conditions in an environmental impact assessment decision to revoke or amend the impact decision statement. The minister can even delegate his or her powers, duties, and functions to the agency.

The power to assess regional impacts and strategic assessments also requires greater clarity. The bill provides absolutely no clear triggers for either of those to occur, or any right to trigger them.

The much-touted planning stage sounds remarkably similar to the initial assessment process. There is concern that the new approach is solely reliant on information provided by a project proponent.

Broad concerns have been voiced that the power to approve or reject a project remains vested in the minister or the cabinet, and that while panels can identify adverse effects, they cannot reference any degree of significance. The potential remains for interjection of political considerations to override any of the determinations in the review, including sound science. The minister need only determine that the effects are in the public interest.

With regard to public participation, while the government claims that the bill provides strengthened rights to participate, it is remarkably silent in extending any specific rights, including to present evidence or to cross-examine. The agency must merely "provide an opportunity to the public to participate" in the planning stage and assessment of a project in any regional or strategic assessments. The agency is empowered to decide on participant funding, but there is no similar duty to enable funding for strategic reviews.

Regarding indigenous rights, the bill does require the addition of some indigenous participation in panels and advice. Any assessment must consider impacts on indigenous groups or adverse impacts to indigenous rights. The minister, in making a determination on public interest, must also consider adverse impacts of a project on the rights of indigenous peoples, although they are not stated to serve as a bar to approval.

Government Orders

● (1535)

The minister alleges that the bill provides indigenous peoples with “Early and inclusive opportunities for engagement and participation at every stage, in accordance with a co-developed engagement plan, with the aim of securing free, prior and informed consent..”. However, while the justice minister committed last December to ensuring that all federal laws will be made consistent with the UNDRIP, no such specific reference is found in this bill.

The second part of the bill is with respect to the Canadian energy regulator act. An expert panel was also struck to modernize the National Energy Board, whose recommendations included, among them, a new independent Canadian energy information agency, which does not exist in the bill. There was significant public concern with the decision by the Harper government to shift the decision-making power from the NEB to the cabinet, and from the CEAA to the NEB and the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission.

How well does the proposed new regime deliver on these calls for reform? The answer is perhaps best expressed in the analysis by Calgary energy law expert Professor Nigel Bankes, entitled “Some Things Have Changed but Much Remains the Same”, adding that the tabling of a completely new Canadian energy regulation act rather than mere amendments to the NEB Act “no doubt creates the impression that the new Bill represents a wholesale replacement of the NEB rather than mere tinkering.” His analysis suggests that much of the current regime remains unchanged.

The name of the agency is changed, there are several additional requirements for indigenous appointments, and there is the addition of prescribed factors for the Canadian energy regulator to consider. However, what is noteworthy is that unlike the impact assessment panel members, the Canadian energy regulator is not required to consider climate commitments or cumulative impacts. In fact, there is zero mention of climate in the entire Canadian energy regulatory act. This is doubly concerning, as Bill C-69 allows for unlimited CER appointees to each panel. As with the Harper law, the energy regulator may only recommend.

The CER is empowered to review offshore renewable and power line projects. Concerns have been expressed with a potential conflict of interest, as the Nova Scotia and Newfoundland offshore oil boards will participate in assessments of offshore projects. Interestingly, the power to issue export and import oil and gas licences is shifted from the cabinet to the Minister of Environment. The CER may review designated interprovincial power lines, but no such project has to date ever been designated. Legal experts have raised concerns with the lack of legal certainty if the CER is authorized to deliver on the crown's aboriginal consultation duties.

Finally, on the Navigation Protection Act, while the new law counters views once expressed by the Liberals while in opposition, they do mirror recommendations of the Liberal's majority standing committee on transport to maintain much of the downgrades to the law instituted by the Harper government. Erased are the words “navigable waters protection” from the law.

In many instances, the legal protection of our lakes and rivers is even further weakened or left to be determined by yet to be promulgated regulations. The schedule of lakes and rivers is blank,

shifting the onus to Canadians to even seek the meagre protections offered under the bill. Public notice and right to participate are very limited.

Gone is the once important trigger for a federal assessment where navigable waters may be impacted. I think immediately of the loss of navigation access by indigenous peoples, who practice their traditional harvests in the many lakes, rivers and marshes in northern Alberta, because the approval of dams and oil sands projects are absent consideration and respect for their treaty and aboriginal rights. The bill offers one vague opening for consideration of these rights. However, based on past experience, the likelihood of genuine consideration and respect is small.

In summation, I implore members to support extended standing committee hearings to ensure opportunities to hear Canadians on their views, including recommended amendments to this bill.

● (1540)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, what we have witnessed over the last couple of years is a government that understands and appreciates the importance of indigenous people, our environment, the importance of energy, and bringing those stakeholders together with the goal of building ideas and setting a framework that allows for such things as the pipeline moving forward. I am talking about the transcontinental pipeline in particular. I believe that this legislation has come together after a great deal of effort by the minister in working with Canadians from all regions of the country.

I wonder if the member would provide her thoughts on how important it is to build a consensus and bring forward legislation that the vast majority of Canadians would support.

Ms. Linda Duncan: Madam Speaker, I do not even know where to start. The government believes in consensus, but it cuts off debate of the members in this place. Is that what the Liberals call consensus?

I can only reiterate to that statement the comment that I shared with Professor Martin Olszynski, the law professor from Calgary, in that there is a big difference between what the government is saying the bill would do and what the bill would actually do.

While the Liberals are saying they are according these great increased participatory rights to the public and indigenous people, when we look at the bill, there are no specifics. It is all vague and up to the discretion of the government.

Government Orders

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, it does not often happen in this place, which is a very partisan place, but as leader of the Green Party, I would like to pay tribute to the member for Edmonton Strathcona for her decades of work in the field of environmental law. She does not just stand here as a member of Parliament for her constituents, she is also very knowledgeable.

One of the things that worries me about the proposed legislation is that by making it an omnibus bill and by forcing it through, we will miss the once-in-a-generation chance we have to salvage something useable in the bill. Right now, it would take a lot of amendments and a lot of work to salvage it. I am speaking of the environmental assessment piece, not the other two pieces, because this is omnibus legislation.

We know that in the NEB review of Kinder Morgan, the excuse it used for depriving intervenors of their rights to fully engage and cross-examine witnesses was that there were time limits. I direct the member for Edmonton Strathcona to the fact that the time limits remained, but what was 365 days is now 300 days, and what was 720 days before a panel is now 600 days.

Given her expertise, does the hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona see in the bill guarantees for procedural fairness?

Ms. Linda Duncan: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for her comments. She certainly has been involved in environmental law almost as long as I have. I am just a little more grey.

However, absolutely, we do not see clear procedural fairness. We need only look to the part on public participation, and never before have I seen such a vague prescription of public rights. How the public can participate is totally up to the discretion of the impact panel, which is an ad hoc panel. Therefore, from hearing to hearing, it may vary.

Indeed, the time imposed on the hearing may be used as an excuse. Frankly, if the bill is going to prescribe the rights that the Liberals have promised, then it should be in the bill and it should be prescribed. Everyone who is potentially impacted by a project should have the right to be heard.

• (1545)

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Edmonton Strathcona for her speech and for her deep knowledge and hard work on this subject.

The disappointing fact is that we are cutting off debate of this huge bill of 360 pages after a couple of hours. I hope I get the chance to speak on it later.

I would like to give the member more time to talk about the expert panels that the government sent across the country to work on this topic, what they reported on, and what they recommended that is not in the bill. Could the member comment on what is missing here?

Ms. Linda Duncan: Madam Speaker, that was a part I skipped over, thinking that I was going to run out of time.

In addition to the call by the expert panel, again appointed by the government, for a new independent Canadian energy information

agency, the Liberals chose not to establish it. It was considered to be very important so that everyone could have access to a neutral base of information on energy. The panel recommended a Canadian energy transmission commission to replace the NEB, with decisions rendered separately by a group of hearing commissioners. We do not have that. Also, it was recommended to have real and substantive participation by indigenous people in full accord with indigenous rights, aboriginal and treaty rights and title, in every aspect of energy regulation. Well, those clear rights are not extended. Again, as I mentioned, there is no clear reference to the UNDRIP.

I believe that the justice minister last November or December committed that she would ensure every law coming forward will specifically reference the UNDRIP. Here is the government's opportunity. It is not here.

A radical increase in the scale and scope of stakeholder engagement was recommended by the expert panel. We do not see that greater transparency in decision-making to restore public confidence. Well, I guess we will wait and see the answer to that.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have a question for my colleague from Edmonton Strathcona, and I congratulate her for her excellent work, careful analysis, and knowledge of this file.

This is an extremely vague bill. Let us say that we give the government the benefit of the doubt and that the environmental assessment process is truly fair, public, accessible, inclusive, and respectful of first nations. For the time being, we have no idea which projects the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency would study, just like we have no idea what criteria are used to determine whether a project should be assessed.

What good is having a solid agency when no projects are assessed and the minister can do what she wants in the end anyway?

[*English*]

Ms. Linda Duncan: That is the great unknown, Madam Speaker.

It is reprehensible that the government spent over two years consulting on the development of a bill the major premise of which is the review of projects and not to have developed in consultation with all stakeholders that project list.

The government has tabled this bill and we are supposed to comment on whether or not we think it is adequate when it comes to a review of pipelines, a review of major dams, a review of LNG projects, a review of the cumulative impact of many oil sands projects on first nations to access marshes and the loss of their traditional hunting rights.

We have no idea what the government is going to include. In many ways the government should hold back the bill until Canadians can see what the bill would apply to.

Government Orders

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am wondering if the member could give a clear indication of her party's position with respect to supporting Rachel Notley's attempts to get approval for the Trans Mountain pipeline.

Ms. Linda Duncan: Madam Speaker, as a proud constituent of the Premier of Alberta, and I am very proud that she is my constituent as well, I fully commend her for standing up for Albertans in the same way I commend the Premier of British Columbia for standing up for his constituents. What we are waiting for is the federal government to stand up for Canadians.

• (1550)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, this is an omnibus bill. The hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona devoted most of her time speaking about the all-important impact assessment. Briefly, what does she think will need to be done to improve the sections that deal with the NEB and navigable waters?

Ms. Linda Duncan: Madam Speaker, it is impossible to make a brief comment on that.

I have bent over backwards to try to see what people have said about the bill and to try to cover a bit of their comments. I have just touched the tip of the iceberg of concerns that people have with the bill. I am looking forward to giving opportunities to people from north to south and east to west across this country to tell us how we can amend the bill so as to strengthen it to genuinely deliver a better bill.

Mr. David Yurdiga (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Madam Speaker, today I will be speaking to Bill C-69, an act to enact the impact assessment act and the Canadian energy regulator act, to amend the Navigation Protection Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts.

The natural resource sector has brought tremendous wealth to my riding, all of Alberta, and Canada. The oil sands alone have brought \$7.4 billion to the Canadian economy outside of Alberta: \$3.9 billion to Ontario, \$1.3 billion to British Columbia, \$1.2 billion to Quebec, \$330 million to Newfoundland, \$143 million to Manitoba, \$142 million to Saskatchewan, \$96.7 million to Nova Scotia, \$50.8 million to New Brunswick, \$11.4 million to the Northwest Territories, \$6.3 million to Prince Edward Island, and \$1.6 million to Yukon. These figures include everything from specially made work gloves to satellites monitoring emissions. What the figures do not include are the equalization payments, which have long relied on collecting billions from Albertans working in the energy sector to be divided among have-not provinces.

When I was first elected, anyone across the country that was willing to work could find a job in Alberta. For those willing to work hard, often more than 40 hours a week, they could support a family, send their kids to post-secondary education, and still have money to save for the future. Small businesses across Alberta were also booming from the economic activities that the industry brought into almost every town and county in the province. That is not the case today. An oil crash later, a provincial government change, and a federal government change have all Alberta reeling.

The global price of oil is out of control, but what many Canadians do not know is we do not receive market rates for our oil. What is often reported is the North American benchmark, West Texas Intermediate. Our oil is traded as Alberta's Western Canada Select. As of yesterday, the difference between the two prices was \$34.74 per barrel. Pipelines can help close those gaps in prices. The more access we have to markets other than the United States, the better the deal we can strike. Instead of supporting the building of these pipelines, the Liberal government has introduced regulation after regulation, which is crippling the industry and deterring investment.

Today, we are talking about the newest blow the Liberal government has struck against the west and our oil industry. It would rob the National Energy Board of most of its power and create the Canadian energy regulator.

The National Energy Board has served as a world-class regulator for the natural resource sector since its creation in 1959. Since then, it has reviewed and approved many major energy projects in Canada. Over the last decade, the NEB has approved pipelines that Alberta desperately needs, which has made it a target for political interference.

When the Liberals took power, the natural resources minister's mandate letter called on him to modernize the National Energy Board to ensure that its composition reflected regional views and had sufficient expertise in the field, such as environmental science, community development, and indigenous traditional knowledge.

While the government believes Bill C-69 will complete his mandate, I would like to cover how the bill will drive investment out of Canada.

One of the changes the bill would bring is the establishment of timelines. The government claims there would be timelines of 450 days for major projects and 300 days for minor projects, respectively, pursuant to proposed subsections 183(4) and 214(4). While many Conservatives are in favour of timelines for projects, the devil is in the details. The application process can be dragged out and will not be considered in the timelines. The lead commissioner will be given the ability to exclude time in the process. Last, and most important, the minister can approve or deny an application before it even gets to the assessment phase. We only have to look at the cancelled northern gateway pipeline to see that the government has no problem putting national interests on hold and dismissing a pipeline for political reasons.

• (1555)

I am also concerned about the changes to the NEB standing text. Currently, individuals and organizations directly affected by the projects or capable of providing valuable knowledge are heard by the National Energy Board. The new rules will allow anyone to participate and be heard. This will ensure that groups who oppose all energy projects across Canada will be given a bigger voice. Groups outside of Canada will be given a voice as well, and they do not have our best interests at heart.

The Budget

I can only imagine what our global competitors think of our legislation. It gives them an opportunity to fund groups that will oppose every project that has the ability to threaten their market share. To think that this will not occur in the future is foolish and short-sighted.

This is an attempt to fix a problem that did not exist. During the review of the Enbridge line 9B reversal and line 9 capacity expansion project, only eight of the 177 applications to participate were denied. I encourage Canadians to take a look at some of the denied submissions. One individual said that a spill from a pipeline, even far away from her home, is an insult to her sense of the holy.

While this example may come up a couple of times today, I think it is important to show that our National Energy Board is not trying to silence individuals and organizations, but is just applying common sense to the process. We need more common sense in government, not less.

Over the last three years, we have seen less and less investment in our natural resources because of the Liberal government's policies. From the carbon tax to the inclusion of upstream emissions to the National Energy Board review, it appears that the government wants to repeal investment in the resource sector.

According to the *Financial Post*, in February, Suncor CEO Steve Williams told financial analysts that Suncor is actively discussing Canada's lack of competitiveness with various levels of government here because "other jurisdictions are doing much more to attract business, so Canada needs to do much more to up its game".

Members need to consider that if we keep our resources in the ground, like David Suzuki wants, we are not saving the environment; we are just moving the resource development to other countries around the world that have lower safety standards and lower environmental protection. I believe that if resources are needed, it is better that they come from here and not from a human rights abuser or a dictator or a country with very low environmental standards.

I know that many members of Parliament have voted for and will continue to vote for regulations of every type. What they need to consider before voting on the bill is that we are part of a global market. Right now we are competing with countries across the world to sell our goods and attract investment.

We only need to look across the border to see a government intent on bringing in billions of dollars of investment and the jobs that come with it. Since taking office, the Trump administration has given the energy industry a tremendous amount of confidence to invest by cutting regulations and taxes.

Future natural resources jobs in my riding, in Alberta, and across Canada are at stake if this bill passes. That is why my Conservative colleagues and I stand against this bill.

The Speaker: The member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake may be finding it a bit noisy in here at the moment. I wonder if he might prefer to resume his speech when the House next debates this topic. I know members are getting ready for the budget. I think that is what he would like to do.

● (1600)

Order, please. I must remind our guests in the galleries that applause is not permitted from people in the galleries, unfortunately. Those are the rules. They may hear members on the floor applauding, but those in the galleries are not permitted to applaud or make other noises.

● (1605)

It being 4:07 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of ways and means proceedings, Motion No. 19, concerning the budget presentation.

* * *

[*Translation*]

THE BUDGET

FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF MINISTER OF FINANCE

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.) moved:

That this House approve in general the budgetary policy of the government.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to table the budget documents for 2018, including the notices of ways and means motions.

The details of the measure are included in these documents and I am requesting that an order of the day be designated for consideration of these motions. I also wish to announce that the government will introduce legislation to implement the measures in this budget.

[*English*]

Last week I spent some time with a couple of grade six classes from Rose Avenue Junior Public School in downtown Toronto. It is an extraordinary school. More than 85% of the students have English as their second language. They are bright, curious, and hard-working.

When they had the chance to ask me about today's budget, well, they would have made all members of the House proud. These 10 and 11-year-old students wanted to know what our government was doing for indigenous peoples. They asked about science and discovery, about supporting seniors, protecting nature, increasing immigration, and helping the homeless. They even asked me about Canada-U.S. relations. What impressed me most was how forward-looking each of the questions were.

[*Translation*]

The children at Rose Avenue School and at schools all across the country care about the future. They understand that the decisions we make today will transform the world that they will grow up in.

● (1610)

[*English*]

They are looking at us to make good decisions, smart decisions, so they can have a better opportunity to follow their dreams, find good jobs, and give back to their community.

The Budget

This budget is all about that. It is a plan that puts people first. It invests in the things that matter most to Canadians. It builds on their hard work and it keeps us squarely focused on their future.

Budget 2018 is also a plan that respects the choice that Canadians made a little over two years ago. At that time, Canadians had the opportunity to stay the course. They could stick with a government that favoured cuts and a set of failed policies that produced stubborn unemployment and the worst decade of economic growth since the Great Depression, or they could choose a more ambitious and confident approach.

Canadians chose the latter. They put their trust in a new government, because they knew that we put our trust in them. We took that trust, balanced it with sound fiscal management that includes a declining debt-to-GDP ratio, and gave Canadians the tools they need to succeed.

[*Translation*]

Starting with raising taxes on the wealthiest, so we could lower them for the middle class.

After that, we introduced the Canada child benefit, to put more money in the pockets of low- and middle-income parents every month to help with the cost of raising kids. This summer, two years ahead of schedule, we will ensure that the benefit increases along with the cost of living. The Canada child benefit means that on average, families get \$6,800 a year, tax-free, for books, hockey lessons or warm clothes for winter. It means that today, about 300,000 fewer children live below the poverty line, down 40% from what it was in 2013.

[*English*]

To help Canadians feel more confident about their future, we strengthened the Canada pension plan to help workers today and for generations to come.

Thanks to the trust that Canadians placed in us, we are able to help 900,000 seniors, through increases to the guaranteed income supplement. We helped students get ahead with increases to Canada student grants. We cut taxes for small businesses, while ensuring the wealthiest paid their fair share.

We are helping more people find a safe and affordable place to call home with the first-ever national housing strategy. We are working with the provinces, territories, and cities to ensure a stable housing market.

We are giving more children the best possible start in life through investments in early learning and child care. We now have agreements in place with nine provinces and territories to help create more of the high-quality affordable child care spaces we know Canadian families need, tailored to their local realities.

We think about the fact that the vast majority of single moms receiving the Canada child benefit make less than \$60,000 a year and now get an average of about \$9,000 in total benefits, tax free, each year.

Over the last year, we have really seen these investments pay off. The Canadian economy is doing remarkably well. Over the last two years, hard-working Canadians have created nearly 600,000 new

jobs, most of them full time. Unemployment rates are near the lowest we have seen them in 40 years. Our plan is working because Canadians are working.

[*Translation*]

Today, Canada leads all the other G7 countries in economic growth and Canadians are feeling confident about the future, whether their plan is to pay down debt, save for a first home, or go back to school to train for a new job.

That is why we are able to invest in the things that matter to Canadians, while making steady improvements to our bottom line.

• (1615)

[*English*]

We know there are challenges in the immediate term and we are responding to those challenges. We know businesses are concerned about the outcome of NAFTA talks and tax changes in the United States. We will be vigilant in ensuring that Canada remains a great place to invest, create jobs, and do business. We will do this in a responsible way, carefully, letting evidence and not emotion guide our decisions.

At the same time, we need to stay focused on our long-term goal of building an economy that works for everyone. With a strong and growing economy in place, we believe that now is the right time to focus on the deeper challenges that hold our economy and our people back. That means ensuring that every Canadian has a real and fair chance to work, to contribute to our economy, and to succeed. It is important not just as a matter of fairness, but as a way to ensure Canada's long-term growth.

For the first time in our history, there are now more Canadians aged 65 and older than there are people under the age of 15. That presents a real challenge. As seniors leave the workforce, we need to think about who will fill the gap. We believe that Canada's future success rests on ensuring that every Canadian has an opportunity to work and to earn a good living from that work. That includes Canada's talented, ambitious, and hard-working women.

I would like to tell a story about one such woman. Her name is Joan. I met Joan a few weeks ago at Algonquin College.

Encouraged by her daughter, Joan went back to school after raising her family. When she first enrolled in school, she thought that she was going to study event planning. However, when she got there, she changed her mind because she wanted to pursue a trade. She now wanted to become an apprentice plumber. Joan did not start off seeing herself in the trades, and she would be the first person to say that her choice took some of her friends by surprise, but she also felt it was her true calling. It is work that she is good at, it is work that she wants to do, and she has never looked back.

The Budget

I mention Joan because it is people like her who have the courage to try new things, to forge new paths, and make our economy strong and guarantee its future.

Over the last 40 years, the rising number of women participating in our workforce has accounted for about a third of our economic growth. That means a better standard of living for all Canadians, thanks to the hard work of women like Joan who entered or re-entered the workforce.

[Translation]

Thanks to these women and their contribution to the economy, family incomes are now higher, fewer children live in poverty, and all Canadians are better off.

[English]

At the same time, for as much progress as we have seen, there continue to be persistent barriers that hold too many women back. A few weeks ago, the Prime Minister issued a challenge to the world's business leaders to hire, promote, and retain more women. As he said, it is not just the right thing to do. It is the smart thing to do.

We just need to do the math. On average, women earn just 69 cents for every dollar earned by men, even though about three-quarters of young women have a post-secondary certificate or degree. Even women who graduate from high-demand fields like science, technology, engineering, and math earn about \$9,000 less per year than their male peers. It is an important issue that we need to get at. It is not right, and it is not smart, either.

We know that diversity in the workforce boosts productivity and profitability, and studies have shown that increasing gender diversity alone leads to more growth. According to the Centre for International Governance Innovation, a 1% increase in gender diversity means about 3.5% bump in revenue for those companies that actively seek to hire more women. The results are even better when women are in leadership positions. When women hold leadership positions, companies see stronger financial results, more innovation, and more effective decision-making at the board level.

I can tell the hon. members from personal experience that our cabinet is stronger, our government is stronger, and Canadians are better served because half of the cabinet ministers we have, the people around the table, are strong, intelligent, and effective women.

That is why the House has passed amendments that would require federally incorporated corporations to make annual disclosures about the diversity of their senior management teams and boards of directors. We need to think about what equality can mean for Canada.

The McKinsey Global Institute estimates that by taking steps to advance women's equality, such as employing more women in technology and boosting women's participation in the workforce, Canada could add about \$150 billion to its economy by 2026. RBC estimates that if Canada had a completely equal representation of women and men in our workforce, we could have increased the size of the economy by 4% last year. When I draft budgets, I fight for every decimal point of growth. Even reaching half that goal, boosting our economy by 2%, would be hugely significant. It would

mean more middle-class jobs, and more Canadians who have money to pay their bills or save for retirement.

● (1620)

[Translation]

What are we going to do about it, then? How are we going to make sure that more women and girls can be self-reliant and help their families, while helping to grow our economy?

[English]

First, we can do this by making progress when it comes to equal pay for work of equal value. In this budget, the government is taking a historic and meaningful step by moving forward with proactive pay equity legislation in federally regulated sectors. We know that we cannot make this necessary change happen for all Canadian women overnight. What we can do is lead by example, trying to encourage all employers to reflect on the way in which work done by women has been too often undervalued, take action to close the gender wage gap, and improve their business prospects.

Second, we need to recognize that some of this gap is due to the fact that child care and caregiving duties in general fall disproportionately on women. In this budget, we are offering a "use it or lose it" incentive to encourage both parents in a two-parent family to share equally in the work of raising their children. With the EI parental sharing benefit, two-parent families who agree to share parental leave could receive an additional five weeks of leave, making it easier for women to return to work sooner, if they so choose. When that precious time runs out, we know that families need greater access to affordable, quality child care, which is why we have already invested more than \$7.5 billion in early learning and child care, which would create up to 40,000 new subsidized spaces over the next three years while making existing spaces more affordable.

[Translation]

Third, we need to do more to support greater numbers of women in management and leadership positions.

[English]

We are answering the call from members of the Canada-United States Council for Advancement of Women Entrepreneurs and Business Leaders and taking a comprehensive approach to helping women entrepreneurs so that they can scale up their businesses, create jobs, and access the mentorship and the capital they need to take their businesses to the next level.

The Budget

Finally, we know that we cannot push for equality without confronting some difficult truths. Movements like #MeToo and #TimesUp have shed light on disturbing situations and behaviours that too often go unreported. To better support those who have been victims of sexual harassment in the workplace, we will boost legal aid funding across the country so that victims can better understand their rights and get the help they need.

I would like to add that the work we are doing to increase the participation of women in our economy and our society can be seen across our entire budget. No budget decision was taken without being informed by what we call gender-based analysis plus, and I want to thank the Minister of Status of Women for her help in making this possible.

We believe firmly that this must not be a one-time event. It must be how all future budgets are made. We will be seeking to introduce new legislation to make this a permanent part of the federal budget-making process, and we are going to make status of women a full department of the Government of Canada.

• (1625)

[*Translation*]

With this budget, we are doubling down on our plan to invest in the middle class and in people working hard to join it. We will do that by strengthening the programs that make the biggest difference in people's lives and by making those benefits easier to get.

[*English*]

That includes the new Canada workers benefit, a strengthened, more accessible, and more generous replacement for the working income tax benefit.

The Canada workers benefit will allow low-income workers to take home more money while they work, encouraging more people to join and stay in the workforce and offering real help to more than two million Canadians.

At the same time, we will make it easier for people to access the benefit that they deserve. By making this benefit more generous and by automatically giving the benefit to all those that qualify, we will help lift about 70,000 more Canadians out of poverty.

As I mentioned earlier, we have taken steps to strengthen the Canada child benefit, so that the benefits it delivers keep pace with the cost of living. We are also continuing to make investments that will help people in times of change, whether they are entering the workforce for the first time, retraining for a new job, or planning for retirement.

We are making additional investments in our ambitious innovation and skills plan, including targeted help for women in the trades like Joan, and for newcomer women looking to find meaningful work.

We are also taking steps to ensure that our tax system is fair for all Canadians.

We cannot have an economy that works for everyone if everyone does not pay their fair share. That is why we gave the Canada Revenue Agency \$1 billion in our first budgets to crack down on tax cheats and offshore tax havens. With every dollar we invest, we expect \$5 in recovered revenue.

It is about fairness.

We are also making sure that the small business tax rate—on track to fall to 9%, the lowest among G7 countries—is available only to small businesses that want to invest, grow, and create more jobs. We are changing the rules for the top 2% or 3% of private corporations, because the wealthiest Canadians should not be able to use private corporations to pay less tax than the middle class.

By making smart investments today, the kind that give more people a real and fair chance at success, we can build a forward-looking economy for Canada, one that responds to the needs of a changing world, and one that will give the young students at Rose Avenue Public School a real chance to grow and to shine in jobs they are qualified for and excited to have.

As the Perimeter Institute's Neil Turok says, it's our "curiosity, courage, creativity and a collaborative spirit" that lead us to innovate. That pushes us to create the new technologies that improve our daily lives, make us healthier, drive our economy, and move our country forward.

To foster that spirit of innovation and help build the new industries and jobs that our economy will rely on in future years, we will make significant new investments in Canada's scientists and researchers to make sure that they have the funding and support required to do their work.

The fundamental science review, led by Dr. David Naylor and engineered by our minister of science, told us that to advance Canadian businesses and Canada's long-term competitiveness, we need to invest in the people behind the big new ideas. That is exactly what we are doing in this budget. Budget 2018 represents the single largest investment in fundamental and discovery research in Canadian history.

More than that, we will make sure that the new money for research supports the next generation of researchers so that we can build a science community that looks more like Canada—more diverse, with a greater number of women.

Our government also believes the most important way in which our future needs to be better than our past has to do with the relationship between Canada and indigenous peoples. Together, we are working to improve the quality of life for first nations, Inuit, and Métis nations people in Canada. This budget invests in new tools to help nations rebuild and to accelerate self-determination and self-government based on recognition of indigenous rights so our shared future is one where indigenous peoples are in control of their own destiny, making their own decisions about their future.

The Budget

To that end, we are making new investments that will accelerate work to deliver clean, safe drinking water to more indigenous communities, ahead of schedule. We have already lifted 52 long-term boil water advisories and we are on track to have all others eliminated by March 2021.

We are making investments that will help create better opportunities for indigenous peoples to find and keep good, well-paying jobs; that will build more safe and affordable housing in first nations, Inuit, and Métis nations communities; and that will give better child and family service support, with a special focus on prevention, so that indigenous children are not taken from their families and their communities.

To further the important work of reconciliation, we are also investing in the Gord Downie and Chanie Wenjack Fund to promote cross-cultural dialogue and create places and spaces dedicated to reconciliation so that more Canadians can be a part of building a new and better relationship with indigenous peoples.

● (1630)

[Translation]

As the Prime Minister has said many times, when it comes to renewing the relationship between Canada and indigenous peoples, we have a responsibility to do better and to do more. This budget will help us live up to that responsibility, for the benefit of indigenous women, men, and children, and all Canadians.

[English]

Today's budget is for all Canadians across our country. To bring people and communities together, we will increase funding for multiculturalism, provide new funding to ensure the success of black Canadians, and consult on a new national anti-racism approach to combat discrimination in our country.

To help more people find an affordable place to call home, we are working on innovative solutions, such as the rental construction financing initiative that will build an additional 14,000 new rental units across the country.

To safeguard Canadians' privacy and protect both our digital economy and our country, we are making an investment of over \$750 million in cybersecurity.

To help families and communities being devastated by the opioid crisis, we will make investments of \$230 million, including additional emergency funding for provinces and territories so that people can access evidence-based treatment services and get the help they need.

[Translation]

To help workers in seasonal industries like fishing and tourism, we will work to address the "black hole" in employment insurance benefits, helping families make ends meet until the new work season begins.

[English]

Together with our provincial partners, we will protect forestry jobs by stopping the invasive spread of spruce budworm in Atlantic Canada.

Across the country, we will make new investments to support safe and accessible small craft harbours, which are essential to Canada's fisheries industry and coastal communities.

● (1635)

[Translation]

The Government of Canada will do more to support our official language minority communities and ensure the dynamism and vitality of the Canadian Francophonie.

[English]

We will create jobs in regions and rural communities across Canada and provide tailored support for women entrepreneurs through investments in our regional development agencies, such as ACOA, the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CanNor, FedDev, FedNor, and Western Economic Diversification.

● (1640)

[Translation]

We will also do more to help vulnerable people around the world by making the largest new investments in international assistance in more than a decade, including greater support for the world's women and girls, through Canada's feminist international assistance policy.

[English]

There are challenges in our country. Today, at least one in 10 Canadians cannot afford the prescription drugs that they need, and every year over one million Canadians are forced to give up food and heat in order to afford their medicines. To address this, we have created an advisory council on the implementation of national pharmacare to be headed by Dr. Eric Hoskins. His team will have a mandate to study, evaluate, and ultimately recommend options on a path forward on pharmacare that puts Canadians first.

Finally, this budget recognizes something that every Canadian understands, which is that our quality of life and our present and future prosperity are deeply connected to the environment in which we live. The extraordinary beauty of Canada's parks, nature, and wild spaces are essential to our identity as Canadians.

For my family, it was the chance to witness first-hand the majestic beauty of Canada's north. We have all had experiences like these, whether it is camping with our families or going for a quiet hike alone in the woods. How many of us have gone ice fishing with our friends, learned to swim at the end of a dock in a freezing cold lake, watched our kids skip rocks on the shore, or play in the leaves on a breezy fall day? These are the experiences that help to define us as Canadians.

The Budget

When we encouraged Canadians to visit our national parks last year, they responded by the millions. Some parks were so busy they had to turn people away. We saw how popular our free admissions program was, and that is why we decided to make Canada's national parks permanently free.

Unlike past governments, we know that Canadians deserve more than just good enough when it comes to protecting the land that we love, so we are helping to deliver one of the largest commitments to conservation in Canada's history with an investment of \$1.3 billion to conserve more land and waters, preserve biodiversity, and protect wildlife in our country. This will include a \$500 million investment from the federal government to create a new \$1 billion nature fund in partnership with corporate, not-for-profit, provincial, territorial, and other partners.

Canada is one of the most beautiful places on earth and it is up to all of us to help keep it that way.

[Translation]

Over the last several months, as I travelled the country in preparation for this budget, I had the opportunity to meet with Canadians and hear their stories, stories of hardships and frustration, but also stories of generosity and hope. I am inspired by those stories, and I am inspired to do even more to help the next generation break free from the barriers that have held us back for too long.

[English]

In my life, I am proud to have two young women and two young men who call me dad. I was home alone a few weekends ago and I noticed a new poster hanging over one of my daughter's beds. In bold handwritten lettering there was a quote from Malala that said, "We cannot all succeed when half of us are held back."

For me, it was a blinding flash of the obvious. She gets it. The next generation gets it. The children at Rose Avenue Junior Public School get it too. It is time for the rest of us to catch up.

Before I got into politics, I worked in the private sector. I have opportunities now, as Minister of Finance, to meet regularly with Canada's top business leaders and CEOs. There is not one leader out there who would stand for anything that arbitrarily would hold back half the people in their organization. It just does not make sense, yet as a society, we allow it to happen, not arbitrarily but systemically.

That changes today with this budget built for all Canadians. With this budget, we are tackling the challenge of equality head-on, asking tough questions, and beginning to provide important solutions. We are taking steps to track our progress, so our government and all future governments may be held accountable for that progress, progress that I look forward to making in collaboration with all members of the House, including the members of the finance committee, and with our colleagues in the Senate.

There really is no turning back. The head of the International Monetary Fund, Christine Lagarde, said, "Equal pay and better economic opportunities for women" were "an economic no-brainer." Our government agrees.

We will continue to work hard to show Canada and the world how good we can be, how fair we can be, and how smart we can be. We will all be better off because of it.

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while the Liberals were celebrating and trying to lead Canadians to believe that today is a big day, I had the opportunity to—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. I encourage members to limit their applause.

Mr. Alain Rayes: Mr. Speaker, we will see whether they still feel like celebrating at the end of the question.

Unfortunately, while Canadians were listening to this budget and this speech, they were thinking about a prime minister and 19 MPs and ministers who went on vacation to India last week at taxpayers' expense. They were thinking about a prime minister who took an illegal holiday on the Aga Khan's private island. They were thinking about a prime minister, a government, and a finance minister who are recklessly squandering money.

What we see when we look at this budget is that there are hardly any measures to lower taxes for Canadians. The government is throwing Canadians only a few crumbs, despite the fact that it did not keep its promise to cap deficits at \$10 billion in the first two years. The government made a formal commitment to balance the budget by 2019. The Prime Minister said it over and over during the 2015 election campaign. However, today, we are seeing that this year's deficit will be three times higher than it was supposed to be. Rather than a \$6-billion deficit, the government is going to run an \$18-billion deficit.

I would like to make one final point. While we are in the midst of tough negotiations with our neighbours to the south, and while the administration south of the border is lowering taxes to stimulate the economy, this 367-page document has absolutely nothing to say and makes no financial provisions in the event that NAFTA negotiations fail.

My question is simple: in light of everything I just said, in light of the Prime Minister's promise during the election campaign to return to a balanced budget by next year, can the Minister of Finance or the Prime Minister confirm to Canadians that every effort will be made to ensure that, as of next year, our children and grandchildren will not be left to pay for the finance minister and Prime Minister's reckless spending for the next 30 years or more?

The Budget

•(1645)

Hon. Bill Morneau: Mr. Speaker, a very important discussion took place in this country two years ago. We had two choices: invest in Canadians or make cuts, for austerity. We explained that it was very important to invest in the future for Canadians. What did we do? We invested in the Canada child benefit, and helped nine out of ten families who now have more money in their pockets, for themselves and for the future. What happened? Our economy is growing. We found a solution, it is true. When we invest in Canadians, our economy does well. That is where we are today, with 600,000 new jobs in Canada.

The economy works when Canadians are working. That is a fact. We are staying the course with a fiscally responsible agenda for one simple reason: if we invest in Canadian families and the middle class, Canadians will be better off.

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, 25 years ago, the Liberals promised to create a national pharmacare program. Thirteen years later, in 2006, they had not even gotten started on it. I find them hard to understand.

[English]

Back in October, four months ago, we tabled a motion to ask the government to start negotiating with the provinces and territories to implement a national medicare program. The Liberals voted against it. Now they are proposing an advisory council on pharmacare, but they have not committed a single dollar to this program or this council. I try not to be cynical, but the Liberals make it very hard not to do so. How can we have that without any commitment going in that direction, knowing that we only have a council and another study? I will remind members that the Standing Committee on Health has been studying this for months now, and we have countless other studies that show the path. How can we know that this Liberal promise of a national pharmacare program is at least worth more than the paper that this ultimate report will be printed on?

•(1650)

Hon. Bill Morneau: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to hear that the member opposite recognizes, as the government recognizes, that we need to consider how we can ensure all Canadians have access to pharmaceuticals. This is an important issue we need to deal with. The reason we are moving forward with an advisory committee, led by Dr. Eric Hoskins, is we know that we need to get this right. The responsible approach to dealing with this issue is to do it for the long term to make sure Canadians can see the benefits of a health care system that works in all the ways it should work. We are going to do this responsibly. We are going to study the issue and get it right.

What I can say is this is a government that has followed through on our promises. We promised the Canada child benefit. We promised a national housing strategy. Now we are examining, so we can get it right, pharmacare for the long-term future of Canada.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I see a budget that is good for bankers, Bay Street, bondholders, and bureaucrats. There is \$175 billion in interest debt payments alone for the time span of this budget. If we look at the numbers carefully at the back of the budget, if we add crown corporation debt and the national debt, it is \$1 trillion by 2019.

I ask the Minister of Finance, when will the budget be balanced?

Hon. Bill Morneau: Mr. Speaker, I think it is really important to consider the frame of this. What we have done is we have shown that when we invest in Canadians, when we have confidence in Canadians, we can see real impacts. That is exactly what we did.

Let us consider the context here. In Canada we have the lowest net debt-to-GDP in the G7 countries. Better yet, what we are showing is a declining net debt-to-GDP over the course of five years. Therefore, we are able to make investments in Canadians, get Canadians working, grow the economy, and do it in a fiscally responsible way. That is exactly what we promised Canadians we would do. We know that having confidence in Canadians is much more important than making cuts that would only serve to reduce the number of jobs that Canadians have. That is our approach.

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance has tasked the minister in Premier Kathleen Wynne's government who headed up the largest ministry in the province of Ontario with proposing the largest new federal program in decades, something that could cost upward of \$20 billion a year. How can he have confidence that this is not going to result in the same fiscal mess federally that we now see in the province of Ontario?

Hon. Bill Morneau: Mr. Speaker, I think we should look at actual outcomes to consider what this government has done.

What we did was two years ago we said that we should make investments in Canadians. We said that we should have confidence in Canadians because that would allow us to grow the economy. That is exactly what happened. We have the highest growth rate among the G7 countries, the lowest unemployment rates in 40 years. That is where we find ourselves.

As we look forward toward pharmacare, what we are going to do is very carefully analyze how we can best deliver access to pharmaceuticals for all Canadians. We know that our system right now presents some Canadians with a good situation and others with a challenging situation. The advisory committee will be tasked with figuring out how we can move forward to get this right. Like everything else we have done, we are going to do it responsibly, and make a real and long-term difference for Canadians.

The Speaker: I would ask the hon. member for Edmonton Manning and the hon. member for St. Albert—Edmonton not to be interrupting when someone else has the floor.

The Budget

Resuming debate, the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the budget shows just how much the Liberal government has failed to deliver the very basics of good governance for Canadians.

•(1655)

[*Translation*]

For nearly three years now, the Prime Minister has been failing to walk the talk.

[*English*]

Expecting that Canadians' tax dollars, which they have worked hard to earn, and gave to the government, and the government took, should actually provide some meaningful help for them and their families or communities is not too much to ask. It is the absolute minimum that the government, with all of its loud promises, should be able to deliver, and yet we see all its failures. In fact, never has a politician boasted so much and spent so much, and achieved so little.

Pardon us on this side of the House if we do not share the enthusiasm and confidence in a minister from Kathleen Wynne's government being able to do anything for the people of Canada.

[*Translation*]

When I conclude my remarks tomorrow, we will look at the government's dismal track record and put forward a Conservative vision that prioritizes people over government.

[*English*]

The real way to show confidence in Canadians is to put people before government. Until then, until tomorrow, I move:

That the debate be now adjourned.

(Motion agreed to)

The Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 83(2), the motion is deemed adopted and the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m.

(The House adjourned at 4:56 p.m.)

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