



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

House of Commons Debates

VOLUME 148 • NUMBER 376 • 1st SESSION • 42nd PARLIAMENT

OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Friday, February 1, 2019

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, February 1, 2019

The House met at 10 a.m.

[English]

Prayer

• (1005)

[English]

HOUSE OF COMMONS

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I invite the House to take note that today we are using the wooden mace.

[Translation]

It serves as a reminder of the fire that took the lives of seven people and destroyed the original Parliament buildings the night of February 3, 1916.

[English]

Among the items destroyed in that fire was the old mace. The wooden copy that we see here today was subsequently made and used temporarily until the current one was given to us by the United Kingdom in 1917.

[Translation]

Since the House is not in session on Sunday, the anniversary of the fire, the wooden mace is being used today in remembrance of the events that occurred 103 years ago.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

WRECKED, ABANDONED OR HAZARDOUS VESSELS ACT

Hon. Bardish Chagger (for the Minister of Transport) moved the second reading of, and concurrence in, amendments made by the Senate to Bill C-64, An Act respecting wrecks, abandoned, dilapidated or hazardous vessels and salvage operations.

Mr. Nick Whalen (St. John's East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be in our new House of Commons today. I used to sit to the left of the Speaker, but since this chamber is a little bigger, I now get to sit to his right.

I am excited to see the wooden mace here today, because it brings things full circle with respect to the old and the new within this place.

I am pleased to speak on the subject of Bill C-64, an act respecting wrecks, abandoned, dilapidated or hazardous vessels and salvage operations, legislation that will help protect and preserve Canada's marine ecosystems and make our waterways safer.

A year ago, the proposed bill was carefully studied by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities. The committee heard from over 20 witnesses from the marine industry, indigenous groups, civil society, as well as other orders of government. The government has the goal of working in partnership with these key stakeholders to support the implementation of measures contained within the act.

I am delighted with the committee's work and collaboration in adopting six amendments, including an amendment put forward by a member of the opposition. Several important amendments were made to protect and preserve the rights of owners of found wrecks, as well as the rights of salvors. For example, one of the elements of Bill C-64 would require that a public notice be posted for a minimum of 30 days to indicate that a wreck has been reported. The receiver of wreck would have to wait out the notification period before taking any action on a wreck. Should other efforts to identify or contact the owner fail, the public notice increases the chance of finding the rightful owner and ensures the owner has an opportunity to come forward and claim his or her wreck.

I am also grateful for the work undertaken by the transport and communications committee in the other place. Before us today is the amendment proposed in the other place, which is meant to ensure that heritage wreck regulation-making powers extend to the wrecks of Canadian and foreign military vessels and aircraft, non-commercial governmental vessels and mineral rights exploration vessels. This was an important addition, and one that will add to the core reason for the bill's existence, namely, to protect and preserve Canada's marine ecosystems and make our waterways safer.

The bill underwent meticulous study by way of debate in both chambers. I would like to thank the members of each for their diligence and thoroughness.

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While the vast majority of vessel owners in Canada act responsibly and dispose of their vessels properly, some owners see abandonment as a low-cost, low-risk option for dilapidated vessels. This creates a serious problem for our waterways, posing safety, environmental, economic and social risks.

Proper remediation of these vessels can be complex and costly. Up to now, the financial burden has often fallen to Canadian taxpayers. With this legislation, the federal government will have more authority to prevent the hazards caused by abandoned and wrecked vessels, rather than the job of dealing with the risks that these vessels pose after an incident has already occurred.

Bill C-64 addresses the issue of abandoned, wrecked and hazardous vessels in a comprehensive way and seeks to fill the gaps in the existing federal legislative framework.

The federal government has had limited authority to address problem vessels for far too long. Until now, authorities were limited in addressing many of the harmful impacts of problem vessels, such as pollution discharge and obstruction to navigation. The legislation addresses the vessel itself and would increase the government's ability to take proactive action. In short, the legislation actually has some teeth. The federal government will be able to direct owners to fix problems with their dilapidated or hazardous vessels. If they do not, the federal government will do so, making owners liable for costs and expenses.

The bill would prohibit not only abandonment but also leaving the vessel adrift for more than 48 hours without working to secure it, or leaving vessels in very poor condition in the same area for more than 60 consecutive days without consent.

Bill C-64 would put in place an enforcement framework, establishing strong regulatory offences and penalties to punish non-compliance.

Enforcement of this new legislation will be shared between the Department of Transport, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and the Canadian Coast Guard. To support the effective implementation of the legislation, the Canadian Coast Guard is developing a national inventory and a risk-assessment methodology to allow us to understand the extent of the issue nationally and to help prioritize a response to problem vessels based on the risks they pose. This builds on the strengths and distinct roles, mandates and capacities already existing within each department.

• (1010)

Bill C-64 also consolidates existing provisions that deal with wrecks and salvage into a single act by incorporating the existing Canada Shipping Act, 2001, provisions that pertain to the International Convention on Salvage in 1989 as well as the functional role of the receiver of wreck. Owners of vessels that are 300 gross tons or larger would also now be required to have wreck insurance or other financial banking to cover the cost related to their removal if they become a hazardous wreck.

Bill C-64 is but one piece of a national strategy to address abandoned and wrecked vessels. Other measures of this strategy include two short-term funding programs to support communities in assessing and removing abandoned or wrecked vessels, the establishment of long-term owner finance funds to address problem

vessels, the enhancement of owner identification, as well as initiatives to increase awareness of the new legislation and of vessel recycling and design.

By ensuring that vessel owners are held liable for locating, marking and, if necessary, removing any wreck that poses a hazard resulting from a marine casualty, Canada would meet its obligations under the Nairobi International Convention on the Removal of Wrecks, 2007, once it becomes a party to that convention. When a car reaches the end of its useful life, we do not accept owners leaving it by the side of the road for someone else to deal with, and so it should not be acceptable with vessels on water.

I will conclude by reiterating that the broader strategy aims to ensure that all causes and pathways of irresponsible vessel management are addressed. Our coasts and waterways are symbolic of Canadian life and culture, which is certainly no more true than in my province of Newfoundland. The measures contained within the proposed wrecked, abandoned or hazardous vessels act would help prevent and reduce the number of abandoned, dilapidated and wrecked vessels in Canadian waters for the benefit of future generations.

Our waterways should not and cannot be treated as junkyards for vessels that have reached their end of life or have been abandoned by irresponsible owners. Our coasts and waterways are the common heritage of all Canadians, and they are crucially important to our environment, communities, economy and our way of life. Therefore, I encourage all members to support Bill C-64, which will go a long way in protecting these resources.

With respect to my own riding of St. John's East, I do have a number of small craft harbours and a number former ports within the riding. Certainly, this issue of abandoned vessels has been a problem. I receive complaints almost every winter about people leaving their vessels unattended in the small craft harbour of Tappers Cove in Torbay.

As well, our government has been instrumental in helping the small craft harbour in Bauline remove a number of dilapidated and abandoned vessels that accumulated on its slipway. This is extremely dangerous to the infrastructure. It is dangerous to people who also use the slipways in the small craft harbour port facilities for their own recreational or commercial use.

Also, it is expensive to the small craft harbours, which are often staffed in my end of the world by volunteers. These are people who give their time to make their communities safer and more economically vibrant. They do not necessarily have the wherewithal or financial means to address the port's problems regarding wrecked or abandoned vessels themselves. However, we are very encouraged by what has already been done. The small craft harbour port authorities in my riding are very happy with our taking this additional step.

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I would like to thank and congratulate one of my colleagues from Nova Scotia who is now the Minister of Rural Economic Development. She has really been a champion on this issue, pushing to make sure that the issue of abandoned vessels is addressed not only in her neck of the woods in rural Nova Scotia but throughout the waterways of our country, because it has become a real and substantial problem.

In addition to the two ports that I mentioned, there are also issues in Flatrock, Pouch Cove, Portugal Cove—St. Philip's, and when it was within the framework of the federal review and federal authority, the small craft harbour Quidi Vidi. However, this proposed legislation would even help in situations like the small craft harbour in Quidi Vidi. Even though it is not a federally designated port, the vessels that are moored, tied and used there would still be governed by the legislation. Therefore, there will be an opportunity for the non-federally funded small craft harbours to help us in making sure that those ports are not burdened by derelict and abandoned vessels.

Again, I would encourage all members of the House to support the twice-amended bill and to see it enacted so that our waterways can be safer in the 2019 shipping, fishing and recreational use seasons.

• (1015)

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Newfoundland and I have shared values with respect to coastal communities and the importance of dealing with derelict vessels. I do have some concerns.

The former member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith, Sheila Malcolmson, who is the new MLA for Nanaimo, raised several issues at transport committee. She brought 13 recommendations forward that were developed by coastal communities with Islands Trust, with local governments and with first nations. They were all brought forward based on models that are working in other jurisdictions around the world, such as Washington state. The Liberal government turned down 12 of those 13 recommendations. These recommendations were all embedded in the member's Bill C-352, which the government refused to allow a vote on.

It is kind of ironic, because that bill replicated the bill put forward by the former member for Cowichan—Nanaimo, Jean Crowder, which the Prime Minister supported when he was in opposition, as did the Minister of Transport and the President of the Treasury Board. They all voted in support of Jean Crowder's bill, yet they turned around and denied 12 of the 13 recommendations put forward by the former member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith, with no explanation. The Liberals have fast-tracked a bill that has huge holes in it.

Maybe the member could explain why some members of the Liberal cabinet voted for a bill in 2015, and now in this session of Parliament, are denying the same amendments brought forward in that bill. They denied the right of a member of Parliament to advance important and comprehensive solutions that were developed by coastal communities like his. As someone from a coastal community, one would think he would want to make sure that coastal community voices were embedded in this legislation and were not missed.

Mr. Nick Whalen: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Courtenay—Alberni for bringing the concerns of his party, his region and also those of Ms. Malcolmson to the House.

I would like to thank Ms. Malcolmson for all the wonderful work she did here, including at transport committee. It was very thorough work. She proposed a number of amendments. One was accepted and 12 were not. I am sure, now that she is a member of the governing party in British Columbia, she will see that there are difficulties associated with governing. It is much easier to propose things and claim that they will be workable, but once on the government side, a member has to make sure that the interests of all stakeholders, not just hers, are taken into account.

In this particular instance, the government has listened. Amendments from the Senate have been accepted. Amendments from parties at transport committee were accepted, including one from Ms. Malcolmson. The bill is sound. It addresses the problems in a structured way that aligns with the strategy that has been proposed. I highlighted a number of other strategic measures that have been taken in connection with abandoned and dilapidated vessels that address the points in a comprehensive way. That is not to say that better is not always possible.

I thank the member for his comments. They are interesting and thought-provoking. I think at this point, the government has done an excellent job finding the right balance between the interests of all stakeholders in a workable fashion.

If Ms. Malcolmson is interested in doing something in British Columbia, she now has the opportunity with the government there.

Mr. Terry Beech (Burnaby North—Seymour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I first came across this issue in my previous role as the parliamentary secretary for fisheries and oceans. I had an opportunity to meet with all members of the Capital Regional District on Vancouver Island. They represent mayors and councillors from all around the region. They had the opportunity to ask questions or talk about concerns on any issue they wanted, and every single person took a turn talking about this issue.

I am excited that this legislation has finally come to the House and will be heading back, hopefully, to the Senate.

I had a town hall in my own riding in Deep Cove, and I thought maybe a few dozen people would show up. We completely filled the library in Deep Cove Elementary School.

One of the biggest differences between the NDP position versus the position the government has taken is that the NDP wants taxpayers to pay for these cleanups, whereas our provisions focus on the polluter paying. We have strengthened the polluter paying in a lot of our provisions in a lot of our legislation. I would like to hear what the member has to say about those specific measures.

• (1020)

Mr. Nick Whalen: Mr. Speaker, I also had a round table in my riding regarding small craft harbours. About 140 people brought their concerns not only with respect to abandoned and derelict vessels but with respect to port safety in general. It is a serious issue and concern.

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As I previously said, people are happy that we are taking this issue head on. We are providing the means and teeth and authority while also respecting the interests of vessel owners to receive adequate notice so that they can protect their interests. In general, it is our sense that this legislation has been well received, notwithstanding some of the comments that may have been made by the other side that other things should have been in the legislation. We also believe in Newfoundland and Labrador that the legislation meets the needs of Canadians in coastal communities.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to see Bill C-64 back before the House. I would only have wished that the government saw a way to accept all the Senate amendments, only for the reason that we want to make sure that this bill comes into force as soon as possible.

Residents throughout Saanich—Gulf Islands have had town hall meetings. We had a community meeting just last week. Representatives from Transport Canada were there. They said that they have the budget. They are raring to go. We have derelict vessels that need cleaning up. We have a lot more money.

I would have also rather seen some improvements in this bill, but I want it brought into force as soon as possible. It should have been before Christmas, but we are where we are now. My only question is whether we can make sure that in the regulation phase we seek to ensure that every single vessel carries insurance. That is one way to make sure that we know which vessels are in our waters and if there is money to clean them up.

Mr. Nick Whalen: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, the leader of the Green Party, for her very thoughtful consideration of this topic.

As we have heard now from two opposition parties, they are keen to see more in the bill than what we have, but they also want to see that it gets through the House and is enacted and implemented. There are provisions in the bill, perhaps not as strong as the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands would like to see, regarding insurance. I know that in the mining industry, the requirement that people have bonds for any future environmental impact of their work is an extremely important aspect of any improvement for the development of those mines. However, we still have historical mining operations throughout the country, including in Newfoundland and Labrador, certainly in Labrador, where proper financial protections and bonds associated with future cleanups are not as strong as they could be.

This gets us to a good place, I believe, with respect to abandoned vessels. Could it be stronger? Certainly the enforcement mechanisms and the financing available to small craft harbours and other ports for the removal of vessels probably could always be a little bit more, but this is something that really goes into budget considerations and budget asks at budget time.

I know that we were successful in a previous budget in getting an extra \$250 million to small craft harbours. It was not A-based funding. I am sure that would have been the preference of the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, but it was funding that allowed for the cleanup of these ports, making them safer, improving the infrastructure, and in certain cases, having the removal of vessels. We would obviously like to see more of that ourselves.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):

Mr. Speaker, I recognize the value of the legislation. We talk about our ocean shores of the Atlantic, Pacific and the Arctic. One of the things in Manitoba, on Lake Winnipeg and so forth, is that there are a number of abandonment issues within the province. I know firsthand the issues on a small lake, Pelican Lake in southern Manitoba, where we have seen small boats.

I like the analogy the member referred to that after one is done with one's car, one does not just leave it on a highway. It is also important to recognize the responsibility of boat owners or craft owners in the smaller lakes and rivers in our communities. Could the hon. member provide a quick comment?

• (1025)

Mr. Nick Whalen: Mr. Speaker, of course, when we talk about coast to coast to coast in Newfoundland, sometimes we think that they are just the three coasts on the island. There is another coast for Labrador. We have coasts all the way along our navigable waters in the St. Lawrence. We have coasts in Winnipeg, on the west coast and in the Arctic. This legislation makes sure that there is a mechanism to make sure that all the navigable waters are protected with regard to abandoned and derelict vessels.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very thankful for the opportunity to speak to the government's response to the Senate amendments to Bill C-64, an act respecting wrecks, abandoned, dilapidated or hazardous vessels and salvage operations. I am very pleased that the government has agreed to accept these amendments and incorporate them into this bill.

The issue of ocean war graves is one that needs to be addressed. I will be discussing the amendments in more detail in a few minutes, but I would like to review how we have come to this place.

Being from Saskatchewan, I have to acknowledge that the issue of wrecked and abandoned vessels is not one I am overly familiar with. I meet with constituents all the time, respond to their letters and emails, and host town halls throughout my riding of Yorkton—Melville, and I can honestly say that not once has this issue ever been raised by one of my constituents. However, the issue of wrecked and abandoned vessels is an extremely important issue for many members of Parliament and their constituents who represent and live in coastal ridings, and it is important to all of Canada because of the lakes and rivers, as the member mentioned, across our country and the incredible privilege we all have of enjoying our coastlines.

The issue of wrecked and abandoned vessels is an important issue, and Bill C-64 was considered so important that it was expedited through second reading so that the House of Commons Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities could immediately study it.

As a country, we need to protect our coasts from the harmful impact of wrecked or abandoned vessels, both large and small, as well as protect Canadian taxpayers from the negative impact and cost of wrecked, abandoned and derelict vessels. That said, at this time, I would like to discuss the amendments the Senate made to Bill C-64, which are the substance of the motion we are debating today.

During its study, the members of the transport, infrastructure and communities committee heard from two witnesses who raised the issue of ocean war graves and Canada's lack of protection for them. Ocean war graves are the final resting place of Canadian sailors and merchant mariners who were lost at sea. It was extremely disturbing to me to learn that the final resting place of soldiers and mariners do not have the same protection as land-based military graves. In fact, at present, it is not illegal for divers to enter these sunken vessels and remove artifacts, including human remains. I believe that this is a legislative and regulatory gap that Parliament and the government definitely need to fill.

The two witnesses I referenced were Patrick White, the executive director of Project Naval Distinction, and retired merchant navy captain and Second World War veteran Paul Bender. These witnesses estimated that the remains of approximately 1,200 Canadian sailors and merchant mariners were lying at rest in nine wrecks in Canadian, international and foreign waters and that none of them had been afforded the necessary protection to discourage salvaging and desecration.

Captain Bender and Mr. White made some specific recommendations at committee. The website states the following:

Project Naval Distinction calls on the government and Parliament of Canada to:

1. issue a policy statement affirming the government of Canada's intention to provide legal protection for Canada's ocean war graves and make a formal request to the government of the United Kingdom to protect Canadian ocean war graves in UK waters;
2. use any available legislative and executive powers to provide immediate protection for Canada's ocean war graves, as an intermediate measure until stand-alone legislation can be enacted; and
3. enact stand-alone legislation to provide legal protection for Canada's ocean war graves, ensuring the punishment for desecration is in line with the punishment for desecration of land-based war graves.

I am really pleased to bring to the attention of Canadians, serving members of our armed forces and our veterans community that the member for Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, who serves them as the official opposition's shadow minister for transport, sought amendments to Bill C-64 at the House of Commons transport committee to protect war graves, in line with the witnesses' recommendations.

• (1030)

After learning about the legislative gap on this issue, following a study of Bill C-64, the TRAN committee undertook a short study specifically on the issue of ocean war graves. During the study, Mr. White and Captain Bender were able to provide further testimony on the issue of ocean war graves and the lack of protection for them.

Additionally, during the study, the committee heard from officials from the Departments of National Defence and Transport as well as the Parks Canada Agency on how the Government of Canada might fill this gap. From the study, the committee produced a report called, "Canada's Ocean War Graves", which contained a number of

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recommendations for the government. I would like to highlight two of them.

Recommendation one states:

That the Government of Canada draft new legislation similar to the United Kingdom's Protection of Military Remains Act to protect Canada's ocean war graves.

Recommendation two states:

That the Government of Canada explore all options for using existing legislative and regulatory powers to provide immediate legal protection for ocean war graves, on an interim basis until the bill is passed.

These recommendations, and the report as a whole, were supported by all members of the committee, which clearly demonstrates the broad support this initiative has across party lines, although it has not been mentioned much to this point this morning. In its response to the committee's report, the ministers responsible for national defence, transport and Parks Canada indicated that the government would be open to supporting an amendment to Bill C-64, which would allow for interim protection to be created. However, by the time the government's response was received by the committee, the bill had already passed the House and was under consideration by the Senate.

I am very relieved and pleased that the hon. senators took up this issue. In particular, the Hon. Fabian Manning of Newfoundland and Labrador drafted an amendment to the bill, which was adopted at Senate committee and subsequently supported by the Senate as a whole. This has brought us to the point where we are today.

While I have highlighted the work done on this issue by our colleagues on the House of Commons transport committee, members of the Senate, the government and advocates like Captain Bender and Patrick White, I would be remiss if I did not note the broad support for action on the issue by our public, by Canadians.

An e-petition as well as regular paper petitions generated hundreds of signatures from Canadians across the country who called on the government to act. While the ultimate desire of the petitioners was that stand-alone legislation be enacted to protect Canada's ocean war graves, they also recognized that interim protection was better than no protection at all.

I want to thank the many citizens who volunteered their time to circulate petitions and collect signatures in order to further highlight this issue to the government.

As official opposition deputy shadow minister for veterans affairs, I have many concerns and issues with the Liberal government's treatment of veterans and their issues. This Prime Minister won the hearts and minds of veterans during the last election by placing his hand over his heart and swearing that he would never take veterans to court and that he would provide them with lifelong pensions comparable to the old veterans charter.

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The then minister of justice, who is now the Minister of Veterans Affairs, did revive the *Equitas* court case and reinstated the lawyer who had been removed at the request of the veteran plaintiffs, by the previous Conservative minister of Veterans of Affairs, the member of Parliament for Durham. Today, our veterans know that, in their words, “they were duped”. On top of the betrayal of a public and written promise, the Prime Minister responded to a question by a veteran at his Edmonton town hall, saying that they were asking for more than the government could give.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I would welcome a debate on veterans any day to compare this government to the Harper government. Having said that, we are talking about abandoned vessels. I would ask that the member relate her comments somewhat closely to the legislation before us.

• (1035)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I will leave it to the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville to finish her speech. It seemed to be going in a different direction, but I am sure she will bring it back to the issue of the day. I will leave it with her.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: Mr. Speaker, I am bringing it back. I would like to note that I am talking about veterans issues in regard to ocean war graves, which is the focus of this debate, and yet was not mentioned by the member across the floor. I am definitely returning to this issue in regard to veterans.

The Prime Minister signed off on a huge cash payout to Omar Khadr. He affirmed Veterans Affairs funding going to treat PTSD of an individual who has never served a day in the Canadian military, for PTSD incurred by murdering an off-duty police woman.

The backlog in responses to benefit claims is now over 29,000 cases. As well, providing access to personal service dogs as an option for treatment of mental health and physical injury has been delayed. In addition, it has been very difficult to get the government to focus on the significant issue around the treatment of mefloquine toxicity.

However, I am extremely pleased to say that scientific research has been growing among our allies. Now the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs has agreed to a study of new scientific findings about what our allies are doing on the issue of mefloquine. That is a very good thing.

Veterans are already anticipating validation of the anecdotal findings. The challenge will be to complete the study in time to submit a report and secure a response from the government before the House rises.

I will continue to advocate for Canada's veterans for the services they need and for the benefits they have earned. They deserve this, and Canadians expect it.

Today, on this specific issue, I am pleased to say I support this move by the government. I want to thank the Minister of Transport for allowing his bill to be amended in order to provide Canada's ocean war graves interim protection.

I look forward to the quick passage of the bill and I hope the government will do all in its power to expedite the regulation development process so that the final resting places of our sailors

and merchant mariners lost at sea are protected from desecration. It is these sailors with the Royal Canadian Navy and the mariners of the Merchant Navy who I would like to thank before I end my speech.

I would like to encourage all parliamentarians to come and experience the Battle of the Atlantic parade and commemorative ceremonies on May 5 of this year at the National War Memorial. The struggle between the allied and German forces for control of the Atlantic Ocean during World War II was the war's longest continuous battle. The need to keep the vital flow of men and supplies going between North America and Europe brought the war to Canada's doorstep. U-boats torpedoed ships within the sight of Canada's east coast, and even in the St. Lawrence River.

With Canada's Merchant Navy, the Royal Canadian Navy and the Royal Canadian Air Force playing a key role, the triumph in the Battle of the Atlantic came at a very high price. Nearly 400 allied ships were sunk between January and July of 1942. More than 1,600 Merchant Navy personnel from Canada and Newfoundland were killed.

Most of the 2,000 Royal Canadian Navy officers and men who died during the war were killed in this battle, along with 752 members of the Royal Canadian Air Force. Also, 136 civilians died when the ferry *SS Caribou* was sunk as it crossed from Nova Scotia to Newfoundland.

These brave men, who paid the ultimate sacrifice in the defence of Canada, deserve our thanks for the price they and their loved ones paid. We can honour them today by speaking to this recommendation and supporting these measures, which will provide protection to the final resting places of those who died at sea.

We must remember them.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for her speech. I also want to thank her for talking about veterans and all those working and making the ultimate sacrifice at sea. The NDP will support the Senate's amendments with regard to the protection of ocean war graves in Bill C-64.

I would like to know what my colleague thinks about the fact that the Senate and the Liberals rejected 12 of the 13 amendments proposed by the NDP to improve Bill C-64. The amendments were put forward by my former colleague Sheila Malcolmson, who was denied the right to debate her own bill. She had the collaboration, support and consent of many coastal communities and chambers of commerce, especially in British Columbia. Her bill would have helped improve this bill, which has several flaws. For example, it would have dealt with the thousands of abandoned vessels still polluting our waterways and improved the vessel registration system, so that shipowners could be held liable for abandoned vessels. It would have shifted the financial burden off the shoulders of taxpayers by establishing a fee for vessel registration to cover the disposal cost of vessels.

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I would like to give my colleague a sense of the situation. Seven years ago, the *Kathryn Spirit* was abandoned in my riding, Salaberry—Suroît, by a company that wanted to dismantle it. The company was unable to do that, so it cost Canadian taxpayers \$24 million. Under this bill, that company would have had to pay a fine.

Unfortunately, since there is not enough money earmarked for this and the bill is lacking certain elements, we cannot be sure the federal government would have been able to take responsibility for the vessel.

Does my colleague think the federal government should improve its bill to ensure that the polluter pays principle applies to vessel recycling? That would save taxpayers having to pick up the tab for owners who abandon their vessels on our shorelines.

● (1040)

[*English*]

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: Mr. Speaker, I can resonate with the frustration of the member over the issues around what a particular party sees as a very good recommendation, a good decision for where the government should go and the government chooses not to take that decision. We certainly face that with bringing forward amendments on a number of different bills at committee. We find ourselves stymied because the government has decided to go in a specific direction. I know NDP members are often frustrated when they are not able to bring forward or complete legislation that they would like to see take place. That is the challenge of being in government and being in opposition.

However, the government's oceans protection plan had some good parts to it and, from my perspective, some bad parts, but I do not find this bill emanating from the oceans protection plan objectionable. Obviously it is a very good move.

One bill that is very objectionable to me and to millions of Canadians is the oil tanker moratorium act. The bill is nothing more than another step by the Liberals to attempt to phase out the oil sands. For the Liberals, Venezuelan oil in Quebec is totally fine. Saudi Arabian oil on the east coast is good. However, Canadian oil off of B.C.'s northern coast is not okay. It reflects a double standard when it comes to protecting the environment.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, based on the member's comments, I am inclined to emphasize all the wonderful initiatives that have been taken by the government. There is always room for us to look at other initiatives, such as for our veterans. One of the biggest differences was the reopening of regional veterans offices across the country, offices that the former Harper government had closed.

I will try to be more relevant to the legislation. That was more of a response to the member's comments during her debate.

This is the second piece of legislation. I look at the moratorium as a positive thing. Canadians want us to protect our oceans. Not only have we committed substantial financial resources to do just that, we now have second legislation that looks at the abandonment of watercraft.

Could my colleague comment specifically on how this legislation will move us forward to ensure there is more accountability of the owners of those watercraft that have been abandoned in different areas of our country?

● (1045)

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: Mr. Speaker, with respect to veterans issues, I think veterans would have liked to have heard the government focus on how important it is to protect ocean war graves. I have not heard anything this morning from the Liberals on the subject.

Quite honestly, when it comes to the moratorium on the coast with regard to the vessels that carry oil, the bill is very targeted and does not take into account the thousands of other ships that come into and out of that port, bringing other hazardous products to and from Canada.

Canadians are very aware that this is a targeted move on behalf of the government that will impact the development of the Canadian economy at the expense of other economies.

Mr. Jim Eglinski (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak a bit about the speech that my colleague from Yorkton—Melville brought up.

I am extremely happy that she brought up the ocean war graves issue. It is something that I am very passionately concerned with myself. I want to bring to her attention, and to the attention of the members in the House, that I spent many years in northern British Columbia along the Alaska Highway, where I constantly heard and overheard stories of people robbing our historic World War II crash sites. In fact, I know of an incident, which I followed up on, of a person taking artifacts, including a dead body, from an aircraft.

I want to stress that it is extremely important that we strengthen laws to protect these historic sites and ocean war graves. I am glad the member brought it up.

I wonder if she could talk about the importance of protecting these people who served our great country to protect us and give us the freedoms that we have today. We need to look further and support them in their resting places.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: Mr. Speaker, my colleague's comments address the focus today. Having travelled with the committee all over the country and specifically reaching out to our first nations, indigenous, Métis and Inuit veteran communities, I heard one thing that came up over and over again. It was that a number of veterans who had passed away still did not have recognition with a gravesite marker. If I were the mother of a soldier, I cannot imagine facing a circumstance in which that was not done.

There is that side of it. Then, of course, Canadians are appalled at the thought that we have nothing in place to protect these gravesites where our serving members lost their lives while in service. They are being desecrated by individuals who unfortunately have no respect at all for the fact that these people won them their freedom.

I do agree that we have to move forward on this issue and not be satisfied until we have legislation in place that very specifically and powerfully protects our ocean war graves and other sites.

Government Orders

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my colleague and friend from Yorkton—Melville and I serve on the veterans affairs committee together and we do some important work for veterans, and I thank her for that.

What we have not heard from the Conservatives is a proposal on how they are going to deal with abandoned and derelict vessels. They were in government for 10 years and they left coastal communities vulnerable. The number of derelict and abandoned vessels skyrocketed, with no action from the Harper government.

In fact, John Duncan, who at the time was the MP for Vancouver Island North, noted that we should have something similar to what is in Washington State, which has very robust legislation that deals with the vehicle owner-operator piece to ensure that there is someone to pay for cleanups, yet even though he was in cabinet and sat in government for 10 years, we saw no action. John Weston also brought forward legislation at the time that was never debated here in the House.

Conservatives from coastal communities were not getting support from their own party across this country. I would like to hear a proposal from the Conservatives describing how they are going to deal with this issue. Do they even see this as a serious and important issue for coastal communities?

• (1050)

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: Mr. Speaker, I very much appreciate serving on the veterans affairs committee with my good friend and colleague. However, we have clearly indicated today that we support this part of the bill and we support protecting our coastal waters. I see this as a good move in that there is a responsibility on the part of the government to make sure it is being taken care of in an appropriate way, but not at the expense of Canadian taxpayers.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Before we resume debate, I would like to inform the member for Salaberry—Suroît that I will interrupt her speech in 10 minutes for oral questions. She will have 10 more minutes to complete her speech afterward.

* * *

[*English*]

DIVORCE ACT

BILL C-78—NOTICE OF TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Order 78(1) or 78(2) with respect to the third reading stage of Bill C-78, An Act to amend the Divorce Act, the Family Orders and Agreements Enforcement Assistance Act and the Garnishment, Attachment and Pension Diversion Act and to make consequential amendments to another Act.

Under the provisions of Standing Order 78(3), I give notice that a minister of the Crown will propose at the next sitting a motion to allot a specific number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of proceedings at the said stage.

[*Translation*]

WRECKED, ABANDONED OR HAZARDOUS VESSELS ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion in relation to the amendments made by the Senate to Bill C-64, An Act respecting wrecks, abandoned, dilapidated or hazardous vessels and salvage operations.

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Mr. Speaker, let me state that the NDP will be supporting the Senate amendments, which call on the government to protect ocean graves of heritage value. There is really no opposition to this, unless it poses a threat to the environment or to navigation.

It is important for me to rise in the House to correct a few things about Bill C-64 because abandoned vessels are a nuisance all across the country. The problem has been around for many years and is costing Canadian taxpayers millions of dollars.

The NDP and civil society, especially British Columbia's coastal communities, have been pressuring the government for years now to introduce such a bill. I would like to thank my former colleagues Jean Crowder and Sheila Malcolmson, who was recently elected to her provincial legislature, for their tireless work. Since the last election in 2015, NDP members have delivered more than 80 speeches on Bill C-352.

Bill C-64 does not go far enough. It includes no measures to reduce the accumulation of abandoned ships, create a vessel registration system for accountability purposes, or implement a turn-in program for recycling vessels. All these measures were proposed in Bill C-352 by my former colleague Sheila Malcolmson.

Unfortunately, the Liberals were quick to prevent debate from happening. They called for a secret ballot to determine whether the House could debate that bill. I am not sure how many times that has happened, but it happened again this week. The Liberals get to decide when democracy suits them. In 2017—

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): One moment, please.

I just want to remind hon. members that sound travels really well in this new chamber. It really works well. The engineers did a great job. Unfortunately, even when we whisper, it carries over and it is rather loud, so I want to remind everyone in continuing to talk among yourselves to remember to whisper rather than talk loudly or even talk across the floor.

The hon. member for Salaberry—Suroît.

Government Orders

[Translation]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach: Mr. Speaker, I was saying that my former colleague, Sheila Malcolmson, introduced Bill C-352, which proposed several solutions to the problem of wrecks in coastal areas. That bill never saw the light of day and could not be debated in the House of Commons because the Minister of Transport did not want the bill to be debated. My colleague was nevertheless very humble and wanted to work with the government and the Minister of Transport to make amendments to Bill C-64. The Liberals rejected 12 of the 13 amendments she proposed. When it comes to democracy, the Liberals say they want to do what is in the interest of the public and all Canadians, but we can see that they are not true to their word.

Several hundred vessels are rotting in Canadian waters, from British Columbia to Beauharnois-Salaberry to Newfoundland. In light of the melting of glaciers and the opening up of the Northwest Passage, a bill that protects our coastal communities and manages the dismantling of abandoned vessels is long overdue.

As members know, my riding has not been immune to this scourge. I am pleased to speak in the House, for what I hope is the last time, about the *Kathryn Spirit*, which, after seven years of hard work, has finally been dismantled. It risked compromising the drinking water supply for the people of Beauharnois and also for the people of the greater Montreal area, which is what galvanized everyone.

The Senate amended the bill, but it unfortunately did not talk about the amendments the NDP wanted to propose. The Senate essentially did the same thing as the government did with our amendments. It ignored the amendments that the Liberals had rejected.

However, Bill C-64 also contains some good measures. Any corporation that breaks the law can be prosecuted and ordered to pay a fine of \$100,000 to \$6 million. Those responsible could face additional fines or a maximum prison sentence of three years. Any vessels of 300 gross tonnage and above must have wreck insurance, which should seriously reduce the chances of another situation like that of the *Kathryn Spirit* from happening again.

I would like to remind members of what happened in the case of the *Kathryn Spirit*, an old bulk carrier that was 153 metres long and of 9,261 gross tonnage acquired by Groupe St-Pierre. That vessel was 30 times bigger than the limit set out in this bill. The bulk carrier contained thousands of litres of crude oil and hundreds of kilograms of asbestos, PCBs and other hazardous products.

Over the past seven years, I have spoken to the House on this subject more than 30 times. I have also sent letters and suggested solutions to the Ministers of Transport, Fisheries and Oceans, and Environment. I started while the Conservatives were in power and kept going when the Liberals took office. It took us seven years of hard work, but we finally won, thanks to the collaboration of local residents, the media, successive mayors and my team, which I am very proud of. We never gave up.

If the fines prove to be an effective deterrent, I hope the regulations will ensure that certain problems can be avoided. There was a lot of buck passing between Transport Canada and Fisheries

and Oceans Canada. No one was sure who was responsible for this file. I hope the regulations will enable us to avoid taking action at the last minute and instead take action before disaster strikes. For instance, some work had to be done when the wreck started listing dangerously in 2016, leaning so heavily to one side that government officials thought it might fall all the way over. Four steel cables had to be installed. One even started to fray, causing sparks. There were fears that the ship could go up in flames in 2016.

It is important to ensure that all of the liquids have been pumped out and do not refill the hold. For example, halfway through the summer of 2016, it was discovered that thousands of litres of contaminated water had been left in the holds.

The last thing I want to mention, though not the least because the consequences are serious, is that we need to act according to the polluter pays principle. The Liberal government proclaims that it believes in this principle and hammers that point home when it talks about carbon pricing.

• (1055)

When it came time to choose companies to dismantle the ship, the government chose to give two contracts to the very company that abandoned the ship on the banks of Lake Saint-Louis, in Beauharnois. Groupe St-Pierre, the company that moored the ship, was granted two contracts worth a total of \$20 million. What is wrong with this picture?

Would it be acceptable for the government to pay me to remove my own trash that I leave behind on my own property and in my neighbour's yard? I do not think so.

That is what the government did for Groupe St-Pierre. Jean-René Dufort did a fine job reporting on this on the show *Infoman*.

The irony of Bill C-64 is that the transport minister's program to dismantle abandoned ships will cost \$1.5 million a year over five years. What a joke.

As I just said, the *Kathryn Spirit* alone cost Canadian taxpayers more than \$24 million. The budget set out in Bill C-64 for all abandoned vessels in Canada was blown out of the water by a single ship. That is ridiculous. It is also completely irresponsible of the Liberal government when it knows that there are thousands of wrecks across Canada that must be removed and are waiting to be dismantled. This budget is a drop in the ocean.

It is too bad that the minister rejected almost all of the proposed amendments made by my former colleague Sheila Malcolmson in committee.

I can describe them after question period. I see that my time is up for now.

• (1100)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. member for Salaberry—Suroît will have 11 minutes remaining when we resume debate.

*Statements by Members***STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS***[English]***FAMILY LITERACY DAY**

Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, literacy is very important to me. Last weekend, I had the opportunity to attend the Boys and Girls Club Family Literacy Day in Dartmouth North, where they gave out free books to youth in the community. It is important that we show kids how incredible reading can be, that books can take us away on magical journeys, provide us with knowledge and sometimes make us laugh.

I apologize in advance because I picked up *The Funniest & Grossest Joke Book Ever!* Here goes: “What do you get when you cross a goat with a squid? Billy the Squid. What do you call a pirate droid? Arrr2-D2.” Finally, “What do you call a pig who knows karate? A pork chop.”

As I said, books help us learn and they make us laugh. We can show kids from an early age that reading can be incredible and fun. The adventures and opportunities are endless.

* * *

FOREIGN INTERFERENCE IN ELECTIONS

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister needs to take foreign interference in our elections more seriously. We know that it is a major threat and the Canadian security establishment has already recognized that it took place in the 2015 election. They also confirm it is expected to increase in the 2019 election, yet the Liberals refuse to take steps to ensure that our 2019 election will be free from foreign interference and influence.

As the shadow minister for democratic institutions, I am concerned not only by the lack of detail in the government's most recent proposal, but by its historic refusal to take the steps necessary to protect Canadians, as demonstrated in Bill C-76. On this side of the House, we believe that every vote cast by a Canadian citizen matters. We will continue to fight against any attempt by foreign groups to undermine democracy in this country.

* * *

SYDNEY CALL CENTRE

Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a resilient community in Cape Breton. Through recent tough times they persisted and kept their spirits high. That community is made up of the employees of the Sydney Call Centre. On December 6, just before Christmas, nearly 600 employees were blindsided when they found out they would lose their jobs. Countless volunteers and organizations in Cape Breton quickly came together to fundraise and support these workers at such a tough time, including the Salvation Army, which handed out care baskets, fully equipped with Christmas turkeys, and also helped with bill payments and groceries.

Shortly after Christmas, the new Sydney Call Centre opened and has been hiring the employees back. My thanks to those workers for keeping their heads high and showing how resilient Cape Breton is.

Even in the toughest of times, we can come together as a community to have each other's backs.

I would like to commend the work that all levels of government did, together with the manager of the centre, Todd Riley.

Along with the member for Cape Breton—Canso, we would like to thank the new owner, Anthony Marlowe, for seeing the strong work ethic and the great potential that Cape Breton has to offer.

* * *

● (1105)

*[Translation]***OFFICIAL LANGUAGES**

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the official languages situation in this country is taking a worrisome turn. New Brunswick just cancelled plans to host the Jeux de la Francophonie. Uncertainty about the future of New Brunswick's linguistic duality is just one of many threats facing Canada's official languages.

Other examples, such as the Doug Ford Conservatives' decision to abolish the Office of the French Language Services Commissioner and scrap plans for a Franco-Ontarian university, and uncertainty around the possible abolition of school boards in Quebec, point to an urgent need to take action.

That is why, in honour of the 50th anniversary of the Official Languages Act, the NDP is calling on the Prime Minister to hold a pan-Canadian summit on official languages. I will be presenting a request to the Standing Committee on Official Languages to organize a first ministers' summit to celebrate Canadian bilingualism.

* * *

SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our entrepreneurs and small business owners are the backbone of our economy. Small businesses create good jobs and growth, and they help build our communities.

On January 22, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Small Business and Export Promotion and I had the pleasure of attending a lunch with more than 80 of these exceptional men and women. It was a chance for us to tell them more about how our government is helping SMEs grow. This includes lowering their taxes from 11% to 9%, creating the Canada summer jobs program and investing \$2 billion to support women entrepreneurs.

I want to extend sincere thanks to the Île-Perrot Business Association and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Vaudreuil-Soulanges for making this event possible. I also want to thank the small business owners for participating in the meeting and sharing their ideas with us, so we can do even more to support those who are helping to build our communities of tomorrow.

Statements by Members

[English]

MARY GOUCHIE

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, *hadih* or hello. I rise today to pay tribute to Lheidli T'enneh elder Mary Gouchie.

Mary passed away last Friday at the age of 97. She was at every community event and always had a smile for everyone. She prided herself on being able to figure things out and would tease that she was a scientist, a finance minister, an engineer and a professor, but most of all, Mary understood that our words connect us to our past. Our words and our music are two of the foundations of the human experience. Without them, we have no past. Without them, we have no future, and without them, we have no awareness of who we might be.

Mary was a keeper of the Dakelh language. She was one of the last fluent speakers of the Lheidli dialect and she did everything she could to help preserve the language. Mary had 10 children, 21 grandchildren, 30 great-grandchildren and 11 great-great-grandchildren, but all of Prince George were her family and she will be missed.

[Member spoke in Dakelh and provided the following translation:]

“God be with you.”

* * *

HIGH SCHOOL COACH OF THE YEAR

Mr. Marwan Tabbara (Kitchener South—Hespeler, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we enter the Super Bowl weekend with the New England Patriots versus the Los Angeles Rams, I rise to recognize and congratulate Greg White, a teacher at Jacob Hespeler Secondary School and head coach of the Hespeler Hawks senior football team.

Mr. White is the recipient of this year's Riddell High School Coach of the Year Award. He was nominated by football parents, Jana Papke, Dennis Flaming and Daphne Nuys-Hall. Thanks to local reporter Mark Bryson, an article about Greg White's award appeared in the Waterloo Region Record this past Monday.

Mr. White was involved in starting up Hespeler's football program in 1992. He led the Hawks to their first all-Ontario championship in November, following an undefeated record of 12-0 this past season.

I congratulate Greg White and the Hespeler Hawks.

* * *

CANADA WINTER GAMES

Mr. Churence Rogers (Bonavista—Burin—Trinity, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate the athletes from my riding, many from very small communities, who will be competing in the Canada Winter Games in Red Deer, Alberta, from February 15 to March 3: from Bonavista, Sara Diamond; from Clarendville, Deidre Patey, Jillian Coates, Rachel Dean, Tyler Green and Susan Dean; from Glovertown, Heidi Simpson; from Musgrave Harbour, Roger Head; from New Harbour, Jennifer Pollett; from Northern Bay, Nancy Oliver; from Port Union, Garry Blackmore; and from Red Harbour, Kathy Senior.

They will be competing, coaching and managing our athletes in hockey, cross-country skiing, figure skating, table tennis, badminton, wheelchair basketball and biathlon. I want to express the immense pride of all of our communities. We cannot wait for them to bring home the gold.

On behalf of all of the residents of Bonavista—Burin—Trinity and my entire province, I offer best wishes to Team Newfoundland and Labrador in Red Deer, Alberta.

* * *

● (1110)

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I toured every part of my riding over the winter break and what I discovered was that people are increasingly paying more because of the mistakes of the Prime Minister.

After record investment to create the rapid bus transit system, as we have no rail in the Okanagan, the Prime Minister killed the public transit tax credit. That costs people more to ride the bus. In rural communities like Keremeos, they get hit hard with an ever-increasing carbon tax and they have lost Greyhound service. Merritt has lost one lumber mill and the other is facing pressures, and the Prime Minister could not get a softwood lumber deal done.

Small family wineries are worried because the Prime Minister capitulated and now U.S.A. wines are to be sold in licensed B.C. grocery stores. Local governments that have community benefit agreements with the Trans Mountain pipeline have had to shelve important projects because the Prime Minister has made no progress.

There is a pattern here that all points to people paying more for the ongoing failures of the government and the Prime Minister.

* * *

WINTERLUDE

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon (Kanata—Carleton, Lib.): It is February 1, Mr. Speaker, and we all know what that means: Winterlude starts here in Ottawa.

[Translation]

The opening ceremonies will feature skating on the canal, the pancake breakfast, Ottawa's famous beaver tails, ice sculptures and amazing family-friendly adventures. Many indoor and outdoor activities await, all highlighting Canada's cultural, artistic and culinary diversity.

[English]

While other parts of the country may complain about the cold weather, the tough Canadians in Ottawa celebrate snow and ice. I encourage all of my colleagues, indeed everyone, to make their way to Winterlude and have some family fun.

This year, Winterlude will run until February 18 and will end with amazing family day activities. I invite you, Mr. Speaker, to join all my intrepid constituents of Kanata—Carleton and come have some fun on the ice.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

SMALL BUSINESS WEEK

Mr. Richard Hébert (Lac-Saint-Jean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week was Small Business Week, and I had the opportunity to visit a number of ridings in Quebec to meet with innovative and creative entrepreneurs. I also had the opportunity to welcome the Minister of Tourism, Official Languages and La Francophonie, Mélanie Joly, to my region of Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean.

Tourism operators are SMEs that contribute to the economic development of our regions. The tourism industry accounts for 8,000 jobs in the Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean region.

My region is known as a place where people can get in touch with nature in both winter and summer. Take, for example, the indigenous tourism in the community of Mashteuiatsh, the Zoo sauvage de Saint-Félicien, the Val-Jalbert historic site and the Parc régional des Grandes-Rivières de Maria-Chapdelaine.

I am proud to represent a riding and a region that are well known for their welcoming people and natural beauty. Welcome to blueberry country.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Before we continue, I would like to remind members that they are not to refer to other members of the House by name, only by title or by the name of the member's riding. It is just a little reminder for those who may have forgotten over the Christmas break.

The hon. member for Markham—Unionville.

* * *

[English]

TAXATION

Mr. Bob Saroya (Markham—Unionville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hard-working families in my riding of Markham—Unionville are worried about Justin Trudeau's out-of-control spending that—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I would remind everyone about what I just said. I will say it in English this time. When we are referring to someone in the House, we refer to them by their title, not by their name.

I will let the hon. member continue.

• (1115)

Mr. Bob Saroya: Mr. Speaker, the hard-working families in my riding of Markham—Unionville are worried. They are worried about the Prime Minister's, out-of-control spending, the tax hikes and failure to get things done on the issues that matter most to them.

When people are working to support their families, the last thing they need is someone adding more tax burdens. The last thing they need is a prime minister who does not understand the struggle that regular hard-working Canadians face every day.

The Prime Minister has no problem raising taxes and making everyday life more expensive and more difficult. Make no mistake, he will continue to raise taxes to pay for his mistakes.

Canadians deserve better. They deserve a government that will lower taxes, put people first and make Canadians proud on the world stage once again, a Conservative government.

* * *

CARDIAC ARRHYTHMIA NETWORK OF CANADA

Ms. Kate Young (London West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, February is Heart Month. Heart disease affects approximately 2.4 million Canadian adults and is the second leading cause of death in Canada. That is why organizations such as the Cardiac Arrhythmia Network of Canada, of CANet, are so important.

CANet is based in London and brings together health care professionals, academia, industry, not-for-profit and patient input to support new ideas and groundbreaking research on arrhythmia and related heart conditions.

I recently had the opportunity to visit CANet and see first-hand the work it is doing. Its research and first-of-its-kind technology will have significant impact, not only on Canadians suffering from arrhythmia but also on caregivers and for Canada's health care system at large.

I applaud CANet for its important work and encourage all members in the House to join me in raising awareness on cardiovascular health this month.

* * *

DENE HIGH SCHOOL

Ms. Georgina Jolibois (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, NDP):

[Member spoke in Dene as follows:]

Churchill River k'oldhere, tets'eits'el ts'u dzi zaa k'e dta nonene, ts'en ta k'e hultai, 2016 ta ke ti, take sekui honetteh hu, take chelaku ase teghaldher ni, he tth'i tashd neh net'e, dene daik'edhe neya haraja ni, erih'tis kue ni, dene high s ntelas tu duhu taghe nehe hudher la, t'o, eyi ko hats'i samba k'odheri nedhe, ja ts'i chu Saskatchewan k'eya hi yas, eyi t'a te haidé ba soredi hu, eyi t'a naitsi dene hu ambulance hu eyi fire department, eyi tth'i ba soredi bet's'edé la

du dzine k'e, t'a ba yasti hadé, sekui hodonetteh dene eyi seku, ya hi sekui hodonetteh dene yets'en hel tth'i, hogai ts'i dene horet's'edadi, eyi sekui honetteh dene, sehel hadi u eyi dlat'u sekui dets'aihi, sekui ts'edaihi sekui sot'ulu deltth'i halya, eyi t'at'u beni iga hudher hu hel tth'i s'niye si, t'at'u sekui ts'edariniye tashd ikué ots'i sekui honetteh dene ta benen ts'en nade' la, bekadanelni ha kolé eyi t'ahi honodher t'aghe, dadel hu, sekui hodonetteh ha ha, nidei hu, eyi bel, bi al dathets'i la

eyi duhu dtahot'i, k'odheré nedhe Saskatchewan hots'i ja Federal yenalni la lohot'i a du ha marsi heresi si du yasti si, ma

[Dene text interpreted as follows:]

Oral Questions

Mr. Speaker, on January 22, 2016, two teachers and two young men lost their lives and others were injured when a shooter entered the Dene High School in La Loche. In the three years since that date, both levels of government have honoured their lives, the first responders and worked to move forward from the tragedy in my home town.

Today, I want to recognize the teachers, support staff and community members who saved so many lives. Many teachers have told me privately the things they did to make sure the kids were safe, even when it meant putting themselves in harm's way. I thank them for their quick thinking and commitment to their students. Though many of these teachers have left to take care of their mental well-being, they insisted on staying on to complete the year and help the kids they saved that day.

Their actions have been forgotten by the Saskatchewan and federal governments in the past several years. Therefore, let us now take a moment to thank them for what they did.

* * *

[Translation]

PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, now that the Liberal government is at the end of its term, I thought I would share a story.

Once upon a time there was a Prime Minister who said he was a leader and a champion of the environment, indigenous peoples and veterans. He talked about budgets balancing themselves and how his government would help those who work hard and the middle class. He even said that Canada was back on the international stage. Let us not forget his very colourful trip to India, his relationship with Saudi Arabia, China, and our biggest economic ally, the United States. What a story. What a disaster he created. The sad reality is that after three years, this Prime Minister has done nothing in the interest of Canadians. He cannot be trusted. He broke his promises. After only three years, he is leaving us with an out-of-control, astronomical deficit. Lucky thing we are in a period of economic prosperity.

Speaking of luck, Canadians are indeed lucky. On October 21, they will have the opportunity to choose a real government, a Conservative government with a real responsible Prime Minister, who will give us, Canadians—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. member for Hull—Aylmer.

* * *

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Mr. Greg Fergus (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for the fourth year in a row, I rise in the House to invite all Canadians to celebrate Black History Month. Over the past four years, I have met with dozens of black community groups and hundreds of black educational leaders, teachers, workers and volunteers.

[English]

Whereas we once divided ourselves into narrow interests based on where we or our ancestors came from, more and more we are a woke community that is working together to achieve a common interest: to

be equal and to be treated as equal, equal in business, studies, law, culture, innovation, politics, government and citizenship.

• (1120)

[Translation]

I urge all Canadians to take part in Black History Month events.

[English]

I say this for all black Canadians. Standing still is a luxury we cannot afford. We must get more involved. Representation matters, not only in government but in every nook and cranny of our society. Though each may feel alone, together we will accomplish great things.

[Translation]

Long live Black History Month.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

FINANCE

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, before the election, the Prime Minister said that the budget would balance itself by this year. After the election, we found out that there would be a \$20 billion deficit this year. Before the election, the Prime Minister said that the deficit would be gone by 2019. After the election, we learned that would not happen until 2040. Before the election, the Prime Minister now is promising goodies. After the election, we know that will come with higher taxes.

Will the government tell Canadians before the election how much it will raise taxes after the election?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, before the election, the Conservatives added \$150 billion to Canada's debt. Before the election, the Conservative government failed to generate growth in the country and saw the worse record on practically every economic indicator since the great recession. Before the election, the Conservatives gave tax breaks after tax breaks to the wealthiest.

After the election, we lowered taxes for the middle class with the Canada child benefit. We had higher taxes for the wealthiest 1%. We delivered the best results in the G7 in 2017, the fastest growth, 800,000 jobs.

Oral Questions

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, actually the Conservative government, before the last election, led our country out of the greatest global recession since the 1930s, with the lowest debt, the lowest unemployment and the greatest job growth. As for the debt, those members on the other side said, “spend more, spend faster, build up more debt.” It is a good thing we ignored them and left them with a balanced budget.

We know the growing deficits that the Prime Minister is imposing on Canadians today will lead to higher taxes tomorrow if, God forbid, that party is re-elected. Why will the Liberals not tell the truth about that before the election?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us look at the facts. Canadians have seen their taxes decrease under this government. I am looking at what the OECD came out with last summer. It said that an average Canadian family was getting \$2,000 more in its pocket under this government this year than it was under the previous government.

So focused were the Conservatives on giving tax breaks after tax breaks to the wealthiest Canadians, we took a different approach. Yes, we did invest in science after they left us a deficit in investments in science, infrastructure and in first nations people. We took a different approach. We decided to invest, and the results speak for themselves.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, is that not typical rhetoric from the trust fund Prime Minister?

The Liberals said that mothers who put their kids in hockey or soccer were too rich, so they took away the children's fitness tax credit. They said that students who bought text books or paid for tuition were too rich and therefore should lose their text book and education tax credit. They said that passengers on public transit were too rich and therefore should lose their transit tax credit. However, they protect the family fortune of the Prime Minister. Is that not just a little rich coming from them?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the tax credits the member is referring to failed. They did not work to increase public transit use and they benefited the wealthiest. According to all the studies that have been done on these tax credits, they were ineffective.

The Canada child benefit, on the other hand, is lifting 300,000 kids out of poverty, reducing child poverty by 40%. The member should ask in his riding what a difference it makes to get the Canada child benefit, which is tax-free, more generous and is lifting all these kids out of poverty. It is making a—

• (1125)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Before I go to the next question, which I am sure is going to be an outstanding question and we are going to get an outstanding answer, I would certainly like to hear it. I want to remind everyone how the sound works well in here. Even when members are whispering, it prevents the Speaker from hearing the answer.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this week I took the bus in Ottawa and in Quebec City, in the riding

of the member for Louis-Hébert, and I can assure him that I did not meet any millionaires on the bus.

I do not want to be a killjoy this morning, but, unfortunately, I have two pieces of bad news. First, unfortunately for the Prime Minister, a budget does not balance itself. Second, unfortunately for Canadians, they have been had by the Liberals, who led them to believe that the deficit would be eliminated in 2019. It is not true.

How does the government plan to balance the budget?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the deficit, it is important to remember that the debt-to-GDP ratio continues to shrink. With the investments we have made, there is strong growth in Canada, the strongest among G7 countries in 2017, and 800,000 jobs were created over the past three years.

I would like to clarify something for my colleague with regard to tax credits. I am quoting a CBC article, which did an analysis also based on the Parliamentary Budget Officer's analysis. It stated that the public transit tax credit did practically nothing to increase the use of public transit and that the sports tax credit did practically nothing to increase participation in sports and disproportionately benefited wealthy families, just like splitting—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Order. The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I invite my colleague from Louis-Hébert to take the bus with me next week or in two weeks. He should tell these people on the bus that the CBC said they were freeloaders. Good luck with that.

The reality is that the Liberals spent three years trying to convince Canadians that the budget would balance itself. For three years, they tried to convince Canadians that the budget would be balanced in 2019, which is not the case.

Once again, how does the government plan to return to a balanced budget, as promised?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would be interested to see the families in his riding who actually used the public transit tax credit.

However, I would be happy to visit the riding of Louis-Saint-Laurent with him and to meet the 21,640 children whose parents are receiving \$68 million a year through the Canada child benefit. That is what is changing Canadians' lives.

Oral Questions

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in 2015, the Liberals campaigned on a progressive platform. People expected change, but all they received from the Liberal government is an economy that just does not work for them. Plant closures and precarious work have left many people on shaky ground.

Today Canadians are faced with some of the biggest personal debt in decades, and instead of helping them get through it, the Liberals give billions of dollars away to corporations. How exactly is this a change from the Conservatives?

How can the Prime Minister pat himself on the back while Canadians are struggling to pay their bills?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would submit to the hon. member that—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I just wanted to stop the hon. parliamentary secretary so we can all hear the conversation across the floor between the two hon. members. It really should not be happening. I would remind them not to shout across the floor while a question is being asked or answered.

Mr. Joël Lightbound: Mr. Speaker, I would submit to the hon. member that our focus from day one has been helping the middle class and those working hard to join the middle class.

That is why we lowered taxes for the middle class. That is why we increased the Canada child benefit and made it tax free, lifting 300,000 kids out of poverty. That is why we increased the guaranteed income supplement that is helping close to one million seniors across the country with more money at the end of the month and at the end of the year.

That is the approach we have taken. We have made smart investments to make this society a more just and equal society.

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals just do not get it. Canadians are feeling let down by the Liberal government. They do not want to wait any longer and they should not have to wait for action on things that matter to them.

If the Prime Minister was on the side of Canadians, he would have invested in solutions that people need: housing, universal pharmacare and secure retirement. Instead, like the Conservatives, he chooses to give billions of dollars away to the rich while everyone else struggles.

If the Prime Minister is really proud, how can he stand up when Canadians are \$200 away from bankruptcy?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what the member does not understand is that we have made historic investments in Canadians. We are providing \$187 billion in mobility and connectivity. We are building roads and bridges. We are building community centres. We are giving work to workers. Families and communities are doing better.

We are building a Canada of the 21st century—green, resilient and modern. That is investing in Canadians. That is what we are doing and that is what we will continue to do.

● (1130)

[Translation]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Parliamentary Budget Officer's report confirms what the NDP has been saying all along: buying the Trans Mountain pipeline was not a good decision.

The Liberals overpaid for aging infrastructure that will lose value.

Canadians are facing record debt levels, but instead of helping them, the Liberals chose to take our money and buy an old pipe with it. Unbelievable.

Why do the Liberals always choose to help big business instead of the people who really need help?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, given that 99% of our energy exports go to one single customer, the United States, Canadians understand that now, more than ever, we need to diversify our markets to get a fair price for our resources and create good jobs in Canada.

Our government has full confidence in our energy sector. We will help move the Trans Mountain project forward properly as we protect our environment and hold constructive consultations with indigenous peoples.

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals broke their promise to protect the environment and fight climate change when they bought the Trans Mountain pipeline. What is more, according to Équiterre, every dollar invested in renewable energy will create six to eight times more jobs than a dollar invested in fossil fuels, and yet the Liberals still decided to give billions of dollars of taxpayer money to big oil companies.

Why did the Liberals choose to invest in yesterday's energy instead of investing in the energy of the future?

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the Parliamentary Budget Officer said, the Trans Mountain project could have a very significant impact on the Canadian economy and, as I mentioned, at a time when 99% of our exports are going to the United States, we felt it would be good for the Canadian economy to diversify its markets. I think that Canadians agree, and that is why we are going ahead with the Trans Mountain expansion in a responsible manner.

Oral Questions

[English]

FINANCE

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government's spending is completely out of control, with year after year of massive deficits with absolutely no end in sight. Canadians know that the only way for this Prime Minister to pay for his spending is to raise taxes. Today's deficits are tomorrow's tax hikes. People are struggling to get by under the current government, and they deserve to know how much their taxes will increase. When are the Liberals going to come clean about their plans to raise taxes?

[Translation]

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the opposition member that, on the contrary, when we took office, we lowered taxes for nine million middle-class Canadians.

By raising taxes on the wealthiest 1%, we were able to introduce the most generous benefit, the Canada child benefit. After 10 years of economic short-sightedness, we also made investments in infrastructure and science to lay the groundwork for long-term prosperity in Canada. Our plan is working. We have one of the fastest growing economies in the G7 with 800,000 new jobs, and our deficit and debt relative to the size of our economy are steadily declining.

* * *

[English]

CARBON PRICING

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, many Canadians, including our injured and retired veterans, are \$200 away from not being able to pay their bills each month. The Prime Minister's vast family fortune means he does not have to worry about a few hundred bucks as he introduces a carbon tax that will increase the cost of everything from gas to food to home heating. Government documents reveal that the carbon tax will have to go up. When will the Prime Minister come clean and tell us the final cost of his carbon tax?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to stand up and talk about how we are putting a price on pollution in an affordable way. A family of four in Ontario will get \$307 back, which is more than 810 families pay. We are concerned about affordability.

The Conservative Party, unfortunately, is not. The Conservatives voted against the Canada child benefit. They voted against increasing taxes on the 1% and decreasing them on the middle class. They voted against putting a price on pollution; they believe it should be free to pollute.

We are going to continue to take action that makes life affordable and also take action on climate change.

Mr. Jim Eglinski (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have received over 600 comments regarding the Liberal carbon tax. John wrote me from my riding, saying, "People are losing their homes because of this extra expense and the rebates do not come close to paying for it."

Kenneth commented that he believes a carbon tax is ludicrous and "...that at some point we are going to need a F.L.D. tax—the Fixing Liberal Deficit tax—for all of their misspending...."

When will the Prime Minister stop making Canadians pay for his mistakes?

● (1135)

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say directly to the residents in the member's riding that we are committed to making life affordable. That is why we increased tax on the 1%: so we could reduce it on the middle class. That is why we increased the Canada child benefit: so more families in his riding will have more money and we can raise kids out of poverty. That is why we are also taking action to put a price on pollution, and giving more money back to families so life will be affordable while we tackle the biggest challenge of our generation.

The big question is this. Why does the party opposite not understand that the environment and the economy go together—that we need to tackle climate change and do it in an affordable way?

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, no one believes the Liberal election gimmick of rebating people more money than they have to pay in carbon taxes. It is ridiculous.

Make no mistake, the carbon tax will go up. In fact, the Liberals' own document shows that it could cost the average family of four up to \$5,000 after the election. Why do the Liberals not just come clean and tell the truth for once—that their carbon tax will go up and will cost Canadians more money for the necessities of life, like buying groceries, driving their cars and heating their homes? Why do they not just tell them the truth?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to talk about the truth, but let us be clear: action on climate change is not a gimmick. We need to take action on climate change and we need to do it in an affordable way.

I wish the party opposite would stop misleading Canadians. We can put a price on pollution. We can reduce emissions and we can foster innovation and clean solutions and make life affordable by giving money back. Economists show it. The province of B.C. shows it. If we talk to Canadians, they tell us they want a serious plan to tackle climate change and they want us to make life affordable, and we are doing both.

*Oral Questions***AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY**

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, instead of delivering their promised plan to save jobs in Oshawa, the Liberals have voted three times against Conservative motions to help our General Motors workers. The Prime Minister did not even bother to show up in Oshawa. Instead, he gave in to Donald Trump and signed an agreement without having the steel and aluminum tariffs removed, and now he is raising payroll taxes and forcing a job-killing carbon tax on hard-working Canadian families while giving the biggest emitters a pass and hiding its full cost.

Why do workers in Oshawa have to pay for the mistakes of the Prime Minister with their jobs?

[Translation]

Mr. Rémi Massé (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, General Motors is obviously making a huge mistake by abandoning the workers in Oshawa.

Our government supports auto workers and their families. We have been consistent and clear on this during our meetings with GM, union representatives and our provincial and municipal counterparts.

At the Detroit auto show, the minister talked about commitments with regard to the production facilities in Brampton, Ingersoll, St. Catharines and Windsor.

Our government will always stand up for auto workers.

[English]

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the people of Oshawa know if they are standing up for auto workers. Where are they? They are not standing up in Oshawa or around Ontario anywhere.

We have tax after tax, mistake after mistake. Life has become much more expensive for Canadians, and the Prime Minister and the Liberals have voted against Oshawa and its auto workers.

While he is going around the country campaigning on our tax dollars, Oshawa and Durham region's auto sector is about to lose more than 15,000 jobs as a result of the Prime Minister's inaction.

Enough is enough. Why do auto workers in Oshawa have to pay for the Prime Minister's mistakes with their jobs?

[Translation]

Mr. Rémi Massé (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will take no lessons from the Conservatives when it comes to supporting our auto workers.

During their 10 years in power, the Conservatives were responsible for the loss of 40,000 jobs in the auto sector. Stephen Harper's Conservatives left lapsed funding in the automotive innovation fund and refused to make the changes recommended by the industry and its workers. Through the strategic innovation fund, we are making major investments to support our highly skilled workers and the future of the auto sector.

[English]

HOUSING

Ms. Georgina Jolibois (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are doing nothing to help the homeless in northern Saskatchewan. Scattered Site served a record number of meals last year. Now it is being forced to find a new building to meet the growing demand in La Ronge.

The people who rely on shelters like these are elders, young children, families and students. Meanwhile, the Liberals are all talk and no action. When will the Liberals commit serious and concrete funding to help the homeless in La Ronge?

• (1140)

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, many members of our government are most interested in this issue. We are constructing more affordable homes for all Canadians, and that also means reducing chronic homelessness in our country. One Canadian on the street in the country is one too many.

That is why we are going ahead with our historic plan to reduce homelessness by at least 50% by investing in communities across Canada and by doing this in partnership with many others who have waited for so long for renewed federal leadership and partnership on housing.

Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, news of the Canada housing benefit led the Saskatchewan Party government to end its rental supplement for low-income people. This is a small subsidy that made a big difference to keep people in good homes.

Many living in my riding, like Roberta Fehr, need support to keep their housing affordable. Otherwise, homelessness will become a reality. It is wrong to make people wait until 2020 to have a roof over their heads. Will the Liberal government take action now, not later, to help people like Roberta?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, from day one we have made it very clear that we believe every Canadian has a right to have access to a safe and affordable home. That is why we have invested, since 2016, \$5.7 billion, helping a million families have access to a home. It is so important for themselves, their families and their communities. That is why we are going to invest \$40 billion in the next 10 years for the first-ever historic national housing strategy, which is going to transform the way the Government of Canada is going to be helpful for communities across Canada.

*Oral Questions***NATURAL RESOURCES**

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Parliamentary Budget Officer has reported that the value of the Trans Mountain pipeline has dropped by \$700 million, because the Prime Minister failed to get the project built. That is just the beginning. Every day of delay means fewer jobs for energy workers, and it is costing our economy millions.

When will the Prime Minister stop making Canadians and energy workers pay for his mistakes?

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians understand that we need to reduce our dependence when it comes to exporting our oil to the United States. We need to expand our global markets, and that is exactly what we are focused on. We are moving forward on the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion in the right way, with meaningful consultation with indigenous peoples and at the same time making sure that we are looking after the environment. This is a project that is very important to the Canadian economy, but the only way to move forward on this is to make sure we respect indigenous peoples and we respect our environment.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's lack of leadership on the Trans Mountain pipeline has already cost Canadians \$4.5 billion. Now the Parliamentary Budget Officer has confirmed that if the Prime Minister does not get this project moving, taxpayers will continue to lose up to a billion dollars every single year, yet nine months have gone by and the Liberals still have no plan in place.

When will the Prime Minister stop making Canadians pay for his mistakes?

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the NEP review of marine shipping and its impact on the marine environment is under way, and the NEP is going to report to us on February 22. We have eight teams currently consulting in a meaningful two-way dialogue with indigenous peoples, something we owe indigenous peoples to make sure that their voices are heard and included in the decision-making, something the previous government failed to do. We are moving forward on this project in the right way, making sure it moves forward with proper consultation and looking after the environment.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians can no longer afford to pay for this Prime Minister's pipeline mistakes. The Parliamentary Budget Officer said clearly that the Liberals grossly overpaid for the Trans Mountain pipeline, and every single year construction is delayed costs Canadian taxpayers another \$700 million. Clearly, the Liberals have no intention of ever building this pipeline, which is now in regulatory purgatory.

Will they just finally admit that this Prime Minister is keeping his promise to phase out Canada's oil sector?

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is very disappointing to hear a member from Alberta who does not believe that getting our resources to non-U.S. markets by building pipeline capacity is necessary for jobs in Alberta in our energy sector. We are investing in this project, which is good for the Canadian economy. It is good for Alberta's economy. We owe it to Alberta workers, we owe it to energy sector workers throughout the country, to move forward on this project in the right way, with

meaningful consultation with indigenous communities and at the same time making sure we are reducing the impact on the environment.

• (1145)

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what is extremely disconcerting is a minister from Alberta in the government who is doing nothing to stand up for Alberta's energy sector. What the Parliamentary Budget Officer said is that every year construction is delayed on the Trans Mountain pipeline costs Canadian taxpayers \$700 million. In fact, if it is not built by 2022, the project will no longer be viable at all.

The Liberals have put billions of tax dollars at risk, and by continuing to delay this very important project, Canadian taxpayers are seeing their dollars wasted.

Why is the Prime Minister forcing Canadians to pay for his pipeline mistakes?

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are paying for the failure of a decade of Harper's government, which failed to build a single pipeline to get our resources to non-U.S. global markets. When the Conservatives came into office in 2006, 99% of Alberta oil was sold to one single customer, the United States. When they left in 2015, 99% of Alberta oil was still sold to a single customer, the U.S. That is how they failed to diversify Alberta's oil exports.

We are working hard on this project and at the same time exploring new markets.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian government has allowed companies to shirk their environmental responsibilities for too long. When companies do this, taxpayers end up footing the bill. Yesterday, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled in the Redwater case that companies have a legal obligation to clean up orphan wells, even in bankruptcy. The Liberals have an opportunity to prove that they are putting the interests of Canadians ahead of big money.

Will they amend the legislation to clearly state that companies have a duty to clean up, yes or no?

Oral Questions

Mr. Rémi Massé (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are currently reviewing the Supreme Court's ruling to assess how it might affect our marketplace framework laws and the Canadian economy. Our government understands the importance of effective environmental protection regimes, as well as a sustainable and prosperous energy resource sector. Our bankruptcy laws aim to balance environmental obligations, the ability of Canadian companies to restructure and preserve jobs, and the fair treatment of creditors.

[English]

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, families from coast to coast are struggling with the cost of living, and they should not be on the hook for the cost of cleaning up abandoned oil wells or contaminated mine sites. Yesterday the Supreme Court agreed, saying, “Bankruptcy is not a license to ignore rules”.

For too long, Liberal and Conservative governments have let companies escape their responsibilities. However, the Liberals have a chance to show whose side they are on, Canadians or corporations. Will they allow companies to walk away from their obligations, or will they make sure Canadians do not have to pay the cost?

Mr. Rémi Massé (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government understands the importance of an effective environmental protection regime as well as a sustainable and prosperous energy resource sector. Our insolvency laws are designed to balance environmental obligations, the ability of Canadian companies to restructure and preserve jobs and the fair treatment of creditors.

We are now reviewing the Supreme Court of Canada's decision to assess the potential impact and implications for our marketplace framework, laws and the Canadian economy.

* * *

TRANSPORT

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians saw the disruption of travel for hundreds of thousands of passengers at London Gatwick Airport in December because of a drone incident. We remember an accident in Quebec City between a drone and a plane. Travellers in Toronto are concerned about possible disruptions and incidents involving drones and planes.

Can the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Transport please advise as to what new regulations will do to improve safety related to drones around airports.

• (1150)

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, starting June 1, our new rules will require drone pilots of drones over 250 grams to take an online course in safety and proper handling. Drone pilots will also be required to keep their drones away from airports and to register them.

To all travelling Canadians, we will continue to take concrete measures to keep air travel in Canada safe.

[Translation]

INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what is the problem with having a single tax return for Quebeckers? They are the only Canadians who are required to file two returns. This Liberal government has Canada Revenue Agency employees worried that they will lose their jobs. Our leader said that no job will be lost. Unlike the Liberals, we keep our word.

What do the Liberals have against Quebeckers? Why is the Liberal government saying no to a single tax return in Quebec?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, we see that the Conservatives are playing petty politics making empty promises they have no intention of keeping.

The CRA employs more than 5,500 employees throughout Quebec and is a major economic driver in towns like Shawinigan and Jonquière. Unlike the Conservatives, we will not put these jobs in jeopardy. That said, we are always prepared to work with Revenue Québec to make it easier to file tax returns in Quebec.

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Revenue is stubbornly refusing to grant a legitimate request from Quebeckers. In my humble opinion, the National Assembly's request to let Quebeckers file a single tax return sounds reasonable. However, letting Quebeckers save time and money just does not seem to be a Liberal value.

Quebeckers will remember the Minister of National Revenue's simplistic arguments come October 21.

Why is the Minister of National Revenue making herself the spokesperson for a centralist government instead of opening her eyes to what is best for all Quebeckers?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what Quebeckers will remember when the next election rolls around is the “chop, chop, chop” of the Conservatives' axe falling during the 10 years they were in power.

Here is what we have done over the past three years. We have invested in the Canada Revenue Agency and its call centres, simplified tax returns, invested in community volunteer programs, and encouraged low-income non-filers to file a return. We are working for Canadians and Quebeckers.

*Oral Questions***AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD**

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the severe drought of 2018 was even worse than the drought of 2017. Quite a few farmers in my riding and many other regions of Quebec experienced major losses. Unfortunately, some of them are on the verge of giving up farming because agri-stability payments amount to little or practically nothing.

Quebec's ministry of agriculture, fisheries and food, the Financière agricole du Québec and the Union des producteurs agricoles have all asked the Liberal government to revise how it calculates losses.

When will the government take action on this?

Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has always stood up for farmers and farm families.

We invested \$100 million in agricultural science and innovation. In contrast, the Conservatives cut \$700 million from Agriculture Canada's budget.

The Canadian Agricultural Partnership will strengthen the agriculture sector and provide tools to ensure the success of Canadian farmers.

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, since farmers signed on to the crop insurance program several years ago, they expect fair compensation for the losses they have suffered.

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada has even acknowledged an error in its method for evaluating losses and said it is prepared to go ahead with adjustments for 2019. However, we have learned that it refuses to do anything about 2018, at the expense of farmers who suffered from last year's extreme drought.

Why are the Liberals turning their backs on the farmers in my riding and across eastern Quebec?

Mr. Jean-Claude Poissant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me remind the House that while the Conservatives were in power, they slashed \$700 million from the Department of Agriculture budget.

We have invested \$350 million to support dairy producers and processors. We will continue creating growth and opportunities for Canadian farmers.

* * *

●(1155)

[English]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, if the government really wanted to help Canadian workers and small businesses, it would have stood up to Trump and refused to sign a trade deal that would compromise Canada's future. Canadian workers are tired of paying the heavy price of losing jobs because the Liberals failed to do everything in their power to lift the devastating tariffs on steel and aluminum. These tariffs have caused layoffs, and some companies are being forced to close shop across the country.

Why are the Liberals refusing to stand up for Canadian steelworkers and small businesses?

Ms. Pamela Goldsmith-Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the illegal and unjustified U.S. tariffs on Canadian steel and aluminum must be lifted. That is a message we are delivering to the United States, and it is working. Last month, U.S. lawmakers from both sides of the aisle told U.S. trade representatives to lift the tariffs. Just this week, Kevin Brady, a top level Republican, said that they must be lifted before Congress considers the new NAFTA deal.

We will never stop fighting for our workers and against these tariffs.

* * *

HOUSING

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we have heard about unaffordable housing in big cities, but Courtenay has now joined the ranks of the world's least affordable housing markets.

Marcie, a single woman from the Comox Valley, was living in her van and finally found a camper to live in, but it is not on properly zoned land. There is nowhere to live in the community, and she has been living in fear that she will be evicted. Sure enough, this week she was told that she has to move.

The Liberals might pat themselves on the back, but the reality is that people still have nowhere to live. How can they spin their talking points, when people like Marcie have nowhere to go?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, from day one, we have made it very clear that every Canadian has the right to have access to a safe and affordable place to live and to live in dignity. That is why we have invested, since 2016, \$5.7 billion to help one million families and therefore well over a million Canadians. That is why we are going to keep investing in housing for Canadians because of the neglect of previous governments in Canada.

We are entering a new era in housing. We have a lot of work to do and we look forward to doing it.

* * *

[Translation]

ETHICS

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Norman case proves that this Liberal government is not as open and transparent as it promised it would be. Justice department lawyers are obstructing the transfer of documents to Vice-Admiral Norman's defence team. The Minister of Defence seems to want to subvert the access to information system.

Why is the Prime Minister hiding the truth? Who is he protecting?

Oral Questions

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the case in question is being prosecuted by the Public Prosecution Service of Canada, which operates independently from the Department of Justice and my office. Lawyers with the Attorney General of Canada are meeting all their obligations to the court regarding the lawyers' request for publication of third-party files.

This file is currently before the courts so it would be inappropriate for me to comment further.

[*English*]

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the chief of staff to the Minister of National Defence was on the stand at the Norman trial yesterday. Ms. Astravas was questioned about efforts in the Prime Minister's Office to delay the documents in the Norman trial.

Could the Prime Minister assure the House that there was no coordinated effort to delay this court case until after the election?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I just said in French, the prosecution in question is being handled by the Public Prosecution Service of Canada, which operates independently from the Department of Justice and my office.

Counsel to the Attorney General of Canada is fulfilling all of its obligations before the court with respect to third party records applications. It is improper for me to comment further, this matter being before the courts.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what is improper is that the Prime Minister moved the Dalton McGuinty-Kathleen Wynne team to Ottawa to help run his office, including Ms. Astravas. She was part of the Liberal team in Ontario that used code words like apple, fruit salad and vapour to delay and prevent the release of documents in the gas plant scandal.

I see a pattern. It is clear the same thing is happening now in the case of Kraken, the code word for Vice-Admiral Norman. When will the Prime Minister stop doing things from the Kathleen Wynne cover-up playbook?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member well knows, according to the *sub judice* principle, best articulated by former member of Parliament, Peter Van Loan, members are expected to refrain from discussing matters before the courts or under judicial consideration in order to protect those involved, in order to give them the ability to have a fair trial and to be heard in court.

The matter will be tried in court and, according to Mr. Van Loan, it is not only improper for me to answer, it is improper for the hon. member to ask the question.

* * *

● (1200)

[*Translation*]

PASSPORT CANADA

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (London North Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the winter vacation period approaches, many Canadians are looking into trips to warmer climates.

[*English*]

Could the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development tell the House how this government is making it easier for Canadians to access passport services regardless of where in Canada they live?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for London North Centre for his question and congratulate him on his excellent French and his hard work.

We were elected to help the middle class and to help more Canadians join it. To that end, we need to provide quality services to Canadians. For this reason, I am very pleased to announce that Canadians now have access to 300 passport service centres across the country. This is twice as many passport service centres as there were under the Harper government just a few years ago. We are very proud of this, because serving Canadians should be the Canadian government's primary objective.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, businesses are being hit hard by the 25% tariffs on steel and 10% tariffs on aluminum and the situation keeps getting worse. The Liberals promised \$2 billion in compensation to support the steel and aluminum industry. Business are still waiting, even though the government has collected \$1 billion in retaliatory tariffs.

Why do steel and aluminum companies in Saguenay and Canada have to keep paying for the Prime Minister's negotiation mistakes?

Mr. Rémi Massé (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as my colleague from Chicoutimi—Le Fjord mentioned, we provided a \$2-billion support program, which is very important for the companies affected by these unjustifiable duties.

To give my colleague examples of the type of investment we have made over the past year, we invested \$90 million in Algoma Steel, which will create 50 jobs and protect 3,000. Also—for something closer to home for him, as he must surely be aware of, given the great announcements we made—we invested \$60 million in Rio Tinto and Alcoa to support jobs and invest in new technology.

We are committed to supporting the aluminum industry.

Oral Questions

[English]

SMALL BUSINESS

Mrs. Mona Fortier (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has said that it is a small business-friendly government committed to helping small businesses start up, scale up and access new markets.

[Translation]

In my riding, Ottawa—Vanier, small businesses employ a large number of people and help stimulate economic growth at the local and national levels.

[English]

Could the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Small Business and Export Promotion share with the House what our government has done to make it easier for small businesses to create good-paying jobs?

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Hébert (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Small Business and Export Promotion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, small businesses are the backbone of our economy, and our government is working hard to help them out. We cut the small business tax to 9% on January 1 to help them save money and ensure that Canada has the lowest tax rate in the world.

We reduced 450 administrative burdens and we are introducing measures to modernize the regulatory system in order to simplify business.

The Conservatives often claim that they care about small businesses. Their decade of disappointments suggests that all they have to offer is lip service.

* * *

[English]

CONSULAR AFFAIRS

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, two Canadian children were kidnapped and taken to a hostile foreign country, which is littered with no-go zones, where Hezbollah roams freely and suicide, car bombings and rocket fire are not uncommon, yet the Prime Minister is letting their mother, Shelley Beyak, fend for herself. Only direct intervention by the Prime Minister will bring Liam and Mia Tarabichi home, but he refuses to act.

When will the Prime Minister call the President of Lebanon and demand the return of Liam and Mia Tarabichi?

Ms. Pamela Goldsmith-Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our thoughts go out to the family at the centre of an abduction of Canadian children to Lebanon. Canadian consular officials are in direct contact with the family and are providing consular assistance. I have spoken personally with the family. Due to the provisions of the Privacy Act, I am very sorry not to be able to disclose any further information.

● (1205)

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Simon Marcell (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, by refusing to hear the case of former Aveos workers, the Supreme Court of Canada is confirming what we have been telling the government for years: it is the government that created this problem, and it is the government that must solve it. This is more of a political file than a legal one.

The Minister of Social Development says that his thoughts are with the former Aveos workers. Seriously, that means nothing. What the Aveos workers really need is concrete action.

When will he take action and cancel their odious debt?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every MP understands the significant difficulties that the workers and their families are facing and have faced for far too long. I read the Supreme Court of Canada ruling, as have the other members of this chamber. It would be completely inappropriate for a politician to comment on court decisions.

That said, I can assure all workers that they will be treated fairly and with respect and dignity by the Canada Revenue Agency.

Mr. Simon Marcell (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, in an attempt to avoid being seen as heartless, the Minister of Social Development claimed to be unfamiliar with the Aveos file. This is not a joke.

We have written him a number of times. Former Aveos employees have written to him. He even met with them. I cannot even count the number of times we have questioned him in the House on this matter.

Compared to the \$20 billion they gave to the oil companies, \$4 million for victims of the Aveos saga is pocket change.

What is the government going to do? Will it do the right thing and write off this debt?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the members of the House were all elected to serve their constituents. We are all listening and in tune with their needs. We are saddened by the difficulties they face. We are all there to serve them.

What I said yesterday pertains to a legal matter, and I will say it again today. I will add that the minister responsible for the Canada Revenue Agency will work very hard to ensure that all of the workers involved, who are going through a difficult time, are treated with dignity, fairness and respect.

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, every year, farmers worry that they will not be able to hire enough temporary foreign workers in time for the harvest because of Ottawa's dawdling. The government has obviously done nothing to fix that problem, because processing times for applications from Quebec more than doubled this year.

What is the minister going to do today to make sure that our farmers are able to hire workers this summer and that the workers get there before the crops rot in the fields?

[*English*]

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has helped create 800,000 jobs across the country, 190,000 jobs in Quebec alone. That has put pressure on the workforce in Quebec. We are working with the Government of Quebec. With respect to processing, we have added additional resources.

After having experienced the Conservative cutbacks over the last number of years, we have reinvested in those who are able to process and enter data. We hope we are able to support the farmers who need those workers.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Hon. Hunter Tootoo (Nunavut, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Indigenous Services.

There are \$700 million missing. That is what was identified by a media analysis of the spending of the current government's infrastructure program. That reporting gap was directly attributed to an ongoing failure by your department and Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs to report details of its spending.

Nunavut has a huge infrastructure gap, particularly social infrastructure. Therefore, where is the missing \$700 million and why has it not been invested in these desperately needed projects?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I want to remind hon. members to place their questions through the Speaker, not to the speaker, just to facilitate things.

The hon. Minister of Indigenous Services.

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are making significant investments in Nunavut in conjunction with our indigenous partners. For instance, we have invested some \$27.5 million over five years to eliminate tuberculosis by 2030. We are working with our partners. We have invested \$189 million over 10 years in a Nunavut wellness agreement, as well as \$8.4 million this year alone for mental health support for Nunavut.

We understand, too, that significant investments require accountability. I will continue to work with the hon. member and with local partners to make sure that we have that accountability for his constituents and for the people of Nunavut.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon Marcil: Mr. Speaker, I really believe I have the unanimous consent of the House to table the correspondence

Routine Proceedings

between my office and the minister's office concerning the Aveos workers.

• (1210)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Does the hon. member have unanimous consent to table this document?

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, you will soon find the unanimous consent of the House to table the Liberal platform. Page 76 talks about returning to a balanced budget in 2019.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Does the hon. member have unanimous consent to table this document?

Some hon. members: No.

[*English*]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, the member erred in not repeating his motion in English. The motion was to table the Liberal platform showing a balanced budget in 2019. I think, Mr. Speaker, you will find unanimous consent to table that in the House of Commons.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): We do have translators who take care of that, but I thank the member for pointing it out.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

PETITIONS

PLASTICS

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to table today, which were signed primarily by people in my riding.

The first petition has to do with a national strategy to combat plastic pollution. Plastics are ending up in our oceans, lakes, rivers and other waterways and are threatening sensitive ecosystems, wildlife and individuals. Plastics make their way into these bodies of water in a variety of ways, including stormwater outfalls, ocean tides and currents, and direct industrial and consumer waste disposal.

For all these reasons, the petitioners are calling on the government to work with the provinces, municipalities, communities and indigenous peoples to develop a national strategy to combat plastic pollution in aquatic environments.

LOCAL FOOD

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition has to do with local food.

Routine Proceedings

When Canadians buy local, it encourages our local farmers, our agricultural industry and our economy. Since buying local cuts down on transportation and greenhouse gas emissions, it is also good for the environment. What is more, when people buy local, they get fresh, nutritious food.

For all these reasons, and since the federal departments and agencies should be setting an example, the petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to host a conference of provincial and territorial agricultural ministers to develop a Canada-wide strategy on local food.

They are also calling on the Department of Public Works and Government Services to develop a policy for purchasing locally grown food for all 48,000 federal institutions across the country.

[English]

NICARAGUA

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today for the first time in this beautiful chamber to present a petition on behalf of Nicaraguan Canadians from across Canada, including many who live in my riding of Edmonton Manning.

The Nicaraguan community is very concerned with the grave and persistent human rights abuses occurring in their home country under the Ortega regime.

The signatories are calling on the Government of Canada to follow the example set by the United States and take concrete steps against Ortega regime officials who are implicated in severe human rights violations and corruption by applying sanctions through the Magnitsky act.

I know the community looks forward to the government's response on this vitally important petition.

NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by many people, from Toronto in particular, who are concerned about the use of nuclear weapons and about the signing of the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

I would like to thank the advocacy of Michael Nevin, who collected all of these signatures.

• (1215)

PLASTICS

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am presenting two petitions today.

The first petition is on behalf of coastal British Columbians who are very happy to see the House unanimously pass my motion, Motion No. 151, to call on the Government of Canada for a national strategy to combat plastic pollution. With a garbage truck of plastic entering our waterways every minute, they are calling on the government to immediately act on Motion No. 151 to combat plastic pollution and develop a national strategy as soon as possible to mitigate and eliminate the amount of plastic entering our ecosystem.

VISION CARE

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is calling on the government for a national framework for action to promote eye health and vision care.

The number of Canadians with vision loss is expected to double in the next 20 years. The emerging crisis in eye health and vision care affects all segments of the Canadian population, with Canada's most vulnerable populations, children, seniors and indigenous peoples, at particular risk. Just 1% of the total expenditures on vision loss is invested in post-vision loss rehabilitation therapy.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very honoured to rise in the House today to present a petition that has garnered overwhelming support from people across Canada. On January 18, e-petition 1833 closed after receiving 18,200 signatures. It was initiated by Devon Hargreaves, co-president of the YQueerL Society for Change in Lethbridge. It calls upon the federal government to do more to protect minors in Canada from the harmful practice of conversion therapy. They have seen examples of municipal and provincial leadership. The petitioners are now asking the federal government to provide federal leadership.

As a proud LGBTQ member of Parliament, I am honoured to present this petition on behalf of the thousands of Canadians standing up for human rights.

PRISON FARMS

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise in the House today to present two petitions.

The first is e-petition 1774. This petition relates to a very specific situation in a specific locality. It is the ongoing issue of prison farms in Canada. A number of them were closed down by the previous government and efforts to reopen are the subject of these petitioners' concerns.

The prison program is being used to advance, in their petition, commercial interests. Milk from the prison program will be sent to a multinational, processed and shipped to China. The petitioners are asking for the government to overturn the decision to establish this prison dairy operation, establish prison farms that support local food and prevent the use of animals in rehabilitation programs.

MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition from many residents of Saanich—Gulf Islands relates to the issue of establishing marine protected areas. They note that there is a tremendous number of conflicting jurisdictions within the federal government around the issue of creating marine protected areas and they call for the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard to work with colleagues to simplify the process.

*Government Orders***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.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

WRECKED, ABANDONED OR HAZARDOUS VESSELS ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion in relation to the amendments made by the Senate to Bill C-64, An Act respecting wrecks, abandoned, dilapidated or hazardous vessels and salvage operations.

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my colleague, Sheila Malcolmson, proposed a number of amendments in committee. Unfortunately, the Liberals rejected nearly all of them at report stage. My colleague worked on this bill and based her amendments on a number of consultations with dozens of coastal communities and chambers of commerce across the country. They proposed a number of very good solutions to the abandoned vessels crisis. My colleague proposed the amendments to improve the bill because she was not given the opportunity to debate her own private member's bill.

The Minister of Transport saw no value in adding these amendments to his own bill. He turned them down flat, even though they had received nationwide support. He did not care. They had even garnered support in communities represented by Liberal MPs. How exactly does this bill serve democracy? This is appalling. This contributes to the pervasive cynicism infecting the public, which expects MPs to work together in the interests of all Canadians, but that is definitely not happening with this bill.

What is more, the bill is hobbled financially. In 2017-18, the government's vessel removal initiative only managed to deal with 21 of the thousands of abandoned vessels in Canada. It just goes to show what a spectacular failure this initiative has been. It was a step in the right direction, but there are many shortcomings, and the government has shown no willingness to improve its bill.

I want to list the amendments proposed by my colleague, Sheila Malcolmson. One was to implement a turn-in program for vessels, inspired by the cash-for-clunkers program that is working well for cars in several provinces. It was rejected by the Liberals. Without such a program, we cannot hope to address the backlog of thousands of abandoned vessels across the country. As a result, many coastal communities will be unable to get rid of the shipwrecks that have been lying abandoned in their waters for years.

Another rejected amendment proposed to establish a fee to cover the disposal cost of vessels. This amendment was based on the model used by Washington state, where vessel owners pay fees to

fund the removal of derelict vessels, relieving taxpayers of a massive financial burden. I can give some figures later.

Another amendment that was rejected sought to formalize the Coast Guard's role as the agency in charge, the one-stop shop, for coastal communities so they do not have to go through several channels. In Beauharnois alone, how many times have people been redirected? It is a veritable bureaucratic quagmire. First we were told the Coast Guard was responsible for the *Kathryn Spirit*. Then it was Transport Canada, because the vessel was moored. Then we were told it was Environment Canada, because a working committee was being struck.

We were in limbo for seven years. Forgive the expression, but people really had no idea which way to turn, because federal department officials could not make up their minds. The same is true in the House of Commons. One day it was the transport minister who would answer our questions, the next it was the minister responsible for the Coast Guard. It would change from one week to the next. If a sole receiver of wrecks would be designated, it would be much easier for everyone, including the government, to manage this, but once again a common-sense solution was rejected.

Another amendment that was rejected sought to ensure greater transparency and accountability and correct the Canadian Register of Vessels and the pleasure craft licensing system. In February 2018, Andrew Kendrick of Vard Marine appeared before the Standing Committee on Transport. He said the licensing database needs to be improved and updated because it is out of date. He said that would be very helpful in tracking vessel ownership in many cases.

• (1220)

A Transport Canada backgrounder from 2018 indicated that improving vessel owner identification systems related to pleasure craft licensing was not part of the proposed bill.

Why not add it if it could help identify the vessels?

Another amendment was rejected. It would have compelled the minister to take responsibility for vessels. The response was that this responsibility would be discretionary. It would be up to the minister to decide whether or not to take measures with respect to a vessel. What good is the law if the minister has discretionary authority?

Another amendment that was rejected called on the government to use the Washington State model, which would decrease the wait time for communities to take action with respect to abandoned vessels from two years to 90 days. I remind members that it took seven years to get rid of the *Kathryn Spirit*. In fact, it took five years for the federal government to agree to take charge of the vessel. The dubious Mexican company, which bought the vessel, went bankrupt. Thus, the federal government had no choice but to take responsibility for this vessel, which was lying in a drinking water reservoir and, with each spring thaw, could have capsized in Lake Saint-Louis. That took far too long, and still, the 90-day period was rejected. There is going to be red tape and it could take far too long for the federal government to do its part and take charge of an abandoned vessel.

Government Orders

The government also rejected the idea of increasing transparency, reviewing the problems in the legislation every five years and following up. I have spoken about this. I think that seems appropriate. Every time we pass a bill we monitor it to see whether it has been effective and whether there is anything to improve, but no, this bill is apparently perfect right off the bat and has no need for improvement.

The government also rejected an amendment to add conditions of sale or disposal in the legislation to prevent Crown-owned vessels and other vessels seized and sold by the government from becoming abandoned.

There were more. It makes absolutely no sense. As we learn about the amendments to this bill that were rejected, we can see that these measures did not come from a single person. A number of municipalities and business owners worked together on these amendments. This is hurting tourism and the fishing industry. It affects those who live on the waterfront and, in some cases, people who need drinking water.

I would like to close by providing statistics from other jurisdictions that implemented the effective measures that we suggested but that the Liberals rejected. The municipality of Bowen Island, one of the 450 islands in the Islands Trust, has done 400 hours of work and spent over \$75,000 since 2014 to remove over four tonnes of debris from vessels, wrecks and mooring buoys. From 2013 to 2017, Washington state removed over 750 vessels under its derelict vessel removal program. We proposed that the government model its approach on those methods, but the Liberals rejected our proposal.

Nearly 100 vessels have been removed under this program since it was launched in 2014, and the cost of removing them is included in the vessel registration fee. That was another measure that we proposed, but the Liberals rejected it as well. Why? I have no idea. Perhaps it was too logical.

I could go on and give countless examples of solutions that have been implemented in places like France, Finland, Florida, California and Oregon. We did our research and our amendments were based on the work of experts, but the Liberals rejected them all out of hand without any analysis or explanation.

● (1225)

We will continue to support this bill because it is a first step and one step in the right direction is better than nothing. However, it would have been nice if the Liberals had added the amendments proposed by my colleague from Nanaimo—Ladysmith, Sheila Malcolmson, who is no longer a member of the House. Another NDP MP, Jean Crowder, proposed these same amendments before Ms. Malcolmson, and she had support from across the country. I do not think the Liberals should be so quick to pat themselves on the back. After all, their budget for this is a drop in the bucket when it comes to dealing with thousands of wrecks. The budget is \$1.25 million, but the *Kathryn Spirit* alone cost taxpayers over \$24 million. I think they need to rethink this.

● (1230)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if we want to look at the glass being half full, I suspect there are many measures within the legislation that address this very serious issue that has been there for many years. The abandonment of watercraft has been a huge concern.

We have a department that has done a great deal of work in terms of consultations and ultimately bringing the legislation forward. The bill did go to committee. We have seen, whether in this legislation or other legislation, the government being very responsible in terms of looking at and taking into consideration amendments. In fact, this government has had a policy of accepting amendments where it can be determined that they better the legislation.

As much as the member might have some issues with respect to not seeing enough amendments passed, would she not agree that at the very least what the bill would do is move the area of dealing with the issue of abandonment forward? It may not be to her personal satisfaction but at least we are moving in the right direction.

[Translation]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach: Mr. Speaker, once again, the member's self-congratulatory remarks leave a bad taste in my mouth, especially since I just listed all the amendments we proposed in committee that were summarily rejected. Twelve of our 13 amendments were rejected. We consulted 50 coastal communities before drafting our amendments. Chambers of commerce supported our amendments and helped draft Bill C-352. That should tell the Liberals something. That bill was rejected outright before it was even debated.

The Liberals say they are open to amendments. I can list plenty of bills that were not amended in committee at all because the Liberals want nothing to do with opposition parties' amendments. The Green Party member knows what I am talking about. She proposes dozens and dozens of amendments, all of which are instantly rejected without ever coming up for debate. It is a hard no every time.

I am saying that we do not have any receivers of wreck. In the seven years that I rose to talk about the *Kathryn Spirit* and call for intervention from the federal government, Conservative or Liberal, it was always the same old story. I kept getting referred from one department to another, one contact person to another without ever being told who was in charge. We called for a receiver of wreck. The Liberals said no.

We also asked for a registry. The Groupe St-Pierre is responsible for bringing the *Kathryn Spirit* to Lake Saint-Louis to be dismantled. The ship was sold to a Mexican company. Since the ship had no registration on board, it was extremely difficult to identify that company, who it was, what they were about. When we called the company, it took months for them to return our calls. If we had a registration system, that would make the administrative process much easier.

Government Orders

Eventually, the company declared bankruptcy. It is extremely complicated. To ensure that the public did not bear the full financial burden, we asked that the shipowners contribute and pay to have their ship recycled. The Liberals did not like that idea either. They rejected that amendment. The *Kathryn Spirit* cost the people of Canada \$24 million because the Conservatives and the Liberals dragged their heels on this file and did not want to intervene.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Salaberry—Suroît for her speech.

I too presented amendments to the committee when it was studying Bill C-64. I am more satisfied with Bill C-64 than the NDP is. That may be because I am the MP for the Gulf Islands.

Derelict vessels and wrecks are a serious problem. They are also connected to another problem, which is that homeless people are taking shelter in these extremely dangerous vessels. This is a serious threat. That is why I am especially eager for this bill to come into force. We need more funding to address the threats posed by the vessels off the coast of British Columbia.

•(1235)

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach: Mr. Speaker, I agree that this bill has some positive elements, and we do support it. As we have said, the NDP will naturally be supporting this bill, because it is a step in the right direction.

My colleague mentioned funding. It is true that \$1.25 million will be invested over five years, but that is just a drop in the ocean. The dismantling of the *Kathryn Spirit* alone cost \$24 million. If we do the math, there is a major shortfall somewhere.

If there are thousands of wrecks, many of them in British Columbia, how can a preposterously low budget of \$1.25 million be enough to dismantle these vessels safely and get them out of the water for the benefit of coastal communities?

There are some sanctions, it is true, and there are steps that can be taken to have vessels dismantled. However, only 21 vessels have been dismantled since 2017. It is better than nothing, at least. What the NDP is saying is that the bill does not go far enough. The Liberals lack the vision and commitment to ensure that this bill is truly effective once it comes into force.

[English]

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as we have moved out of the building with the Peace Tower and Memorial Chamber that honour those who made the ultimate sacrifice to Canada, it is quite fitting that in my final speech of the week, during this first week in the new chamber in West Block, I am going to speak about something that is very important to military families, veterans and Canadians: preserving the legacy of those who died in the service of Canada.

Bill C-64 is a bill that deals with wrecked, abandoned and hazardous vessels, and there is a lot in it. At times, the abandoned, hazardous vessels that appear listless, to me, sounds like a description of the Liberal cabinet.

Regardless, this is a bill that deals with an important maritime safety piece. It is an example of how the Senate and the House of Commons, but most importantly Canadians, have worked to make

sure Bill C-64 preserves something far greater than the maritime regulations for safety regarding abandoned vessels. It is going to preserve the remains of those who died on the sea in service of our country.

As a veteran and someone who spoke regularly in the old chamber on these issues, and now in this one, I am honoured to say a few words and to thank the Canadians who helped the Senate and the House make this legislation better and to preserve the legacy that we owe to our fallen.

This bill, as amended by the Senate, would allow the government to make regulations to protect and preserve Canada's war graves. I want to thank the patriotic Canadians who brought this to committee and to the Senate, and who pushed these amendments forward in collaboration with many members on both sides of this chamber.

Project Naval Distinction was behind this effort. I want to thank its leaders, and most importantly retired captain Paul Bender, a World War II veteran who has been fighting passionately on this issue for many years to protect the final resting place of our service men and women. It is going to be achieved by this legislation. Alongside him is retired vice-admiral Denis Rouleau and the hon. Ian Holloway, a naval veteran who is now the dean of law at the University of Calgary, as well as a good friend of mine, Richard Blackwolf, the head of the Canadian Aboriginal Veterans and Serving Members Association. These volunteers and passionate Canadians have been pushing for this.

I also want to add to that group a friend and former staff member of mine, Patrick White, a naval lieutenant in the reserves who is currently attending law school. He worked for me when I was parliamentary secretary and when I was minister of veterans affairs. He was one of the serving or veteran members of my office. I was so proud that as a law student, working alongside Captain Bender, he appeared before committee to ensure that we preserve this important testament to the people who gave their lives serving Canada.

This legislation would preserve the final resting place of our merchant marine and warships on which Canadian sailors and merchant mariners perished, and in particular, those from the longest single battle of the Second World War. While there are war graves from before that, many of the vessels that would get protection by regulations from this legislation are from the Battle of the Atlantic, which between 1939 and 1945 achieved victory in that conflict. It was the single longest battle of the Second World War.

This legislation would recognize and define the war graves of these shipwreck sites, provide regulations regarding their preservation and even attach penalties for violating these sacred areas. Thank you to the amazing Canadian veterans and volunteers, the passionate patriots who pushed to make this happen.

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The U.K. has had similar legislation for about 20 years, which is the Protection of Military Remains Act. I want to also thank our allies in France, whose government also has legislation preserving shipwrecks. Captain Bender and the volunteers of Project Naval Distinction have actually worked with the French to protect HMCS *Athabaskan* and HMCS *Guysborough*, which lie in French territorial waters. These volunteers have been working not only to make sure our legislation is better but have been working with our allies.

● (1240)

[Translation]

I want to thank our ally, France.

[English]

Let us review how profound the Battle of the Atlantic was. Seventy-two merchant marine vessels supplying the war effort were lost as well as over 1,600 lives. In fact, Conservative MP Elsie Wayne fought for years to ensure our merchant marine veterans received better and appropriate recognition. Their loss and casualty rate was one in seven in the Second World War. I want to thank those veterans and their families, and let them know we will preserve those wrecks.

The Royal Canadian Navy lost 26 warships and seven torpedo boats. Over 2,000 lives from the Royal Canadian Navy were lost in the Battle of the Atlantic and 752 from the Royal Canadian Air Force, which was flying in conjunction with the anti-submarine warfare type missions to protect the convoys.

As a proud naval air veteran in the House, I am proud of the navy and air force's tradition of working on this. I am proud to have served on the HMCS *St. John's* as part of the air detachment. We continued that legacy of protecting the ships and lives at sea from the subsurface threat. There was incredible collaboration between the merchant marine, the Royal Canadian Navy, the Royal Canadian Air Force and our allies to ensure the war effort was run.

Civilians can be recognized through this as well, because 136 lives were lost on SS *Caribou*, a ferry which was sunk in transit between Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador. You seem to be very aware of that, Mr. Speaker. This is part of Canada's remarkable contribution to the Battle of the Atlantic and to global peace and security. We should be proud of it, but we should fight to preserve it. The bill would do that.

When we talk about our military history and veterans and when we hear numbers like 2,000 in the navy, 752 in the air force and 1,600-plus in the merchant marine, we sometimes lose sight of the fact that those are not numbers. Each one is a family that was gripped by the loss of its son or daughter. We cannot lose sight of that. Therefore, I invite parliamentarians to think of that as we pass this and support it with these amendments, that we are thankful for all sides and Project Naval Distinction for making it happen.

In Westboro, there is a bench with a plaque dedicated to Lieutenant Leslie Ward, who died aboard HMCS *Athabaskan* on April 29, 1944.

Now, lives lost at sea are recognized in the naval monument in Point Pleasant Park in Halifax. I and many members have been there. We can hear the bell toll for each ship lost, and the many rings makes

us realize how many ships were lost. However, the names are not there because we count them in ships.

Decades ago, Lieutenant Ward was honoured at the Point Pleasant monument. Fortunately, naval veterans and his family also honoured him in Westboro on Wellington Street just down the road. People can go have a seat on the bench in his honour and contemplate the thousands of Canadians who died serving us on the oceans.

To end my remarks on a Friday and to end my remarks with respect to those lives lost, I will say a few words selected from the naval prayer:

Preserve us from the dangers of the sea, and from the violence of the enemy; that we may be a safeguard unto our most gracious Sovereign Lady...and her Dominions...that the inhabitants of our Commonwealth may in peace and quietness serve Thee...and that we may return in safety to enjoy the blessings of the land...

For those who did not return to enjoy the blessings of the land, this bill and its amendments, thanks to many Canadians, will preserve and protect their final resting place.

Lest we forget.

● (1245)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, the bill before us should be passed. The protection of war graves below the waterline certainly has been attended to by the other place. However, the imperative to pass the legislation, of course, is the current threat to life and limb that exists, particularly along the west coast of British Columbia. It is obviously not an issue at that level that touches on the member's riding.

However, I want to assure him that the bill is urgently needed, that there is a current threat along the coast of British Columbia. I will have an opportunity in a moment to explain what it is more fully, but I really do welcome the legislation. I am pleased to know that members of his party will be voting for its passage.

Hon. Erin O'Toole: Mr. Speaker, I certainly agree with my friend from Saanich—Gulf Islands. This is a very serious issue that we have heard of for many years in a variety of forms, particularly from our Pacific coast in British Columbia.

I was fortunate in the fact that there seemed to be general agreement in the House on the pith of the legislation itself. However, I wanted to take the opportunity to not just highlight the importance of the remembrance of those who had served Canada, but the great example of passionate advocates like Captain Bender, who I think is in his eighties.

Government Orders

Canadians can influence this place, because we are their representatives. This is a process with Bill C-64 where their passion has helped make the legislation better. Therefore, I have dedicated my remarks today really to showcase what they have done, alongside the Senate and members of this place, to ensure we amend this to fix the real public policy challenge we see on the west coast and also to show that passionate Canadians can make their changes to preserve our history.

• (1250)

Mr. Jim Eglinski (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my friend from Durham for his advocacy in protecting our military sea graves.

We have so many historical events that happened in our country during World War II, whether on the east or west coasts, with the lost sailors and airmen, the Alaska Highway route where we supplied military aircraft from the United States to Alaska and then on to Russia during the war. We have so many of these sites and so many are forgotten.

Could he elaborate on the need for us to now start to recognize these historically significant spots in Canada where things happened, tragedies happened, during World War II, on our east or west coasts or in the Arctic?

Hon. Erin O'Toole: Mr. Speaker, I am happy my friend from Yellowhead asked that question. He knows service well from his decades of service in uniform to our country, and we appreciate his service now in Parliament after giving a lifetime of service.

The member is right. In fact, several of us were just talking with him about how special and sacred the National Military Cemetery at Beechwood in Ottawa was and how few Canadians actually knew we have a national military cemetery in our nation's capital. Certainly, it is not as well known as the hallowed grounds at Arlington, which I have had the privilege to lay a wreath at, but Canadians should explore and know these places.

I met with passionate people, including retired General Beno of the Juno Beach Centre. It now has lost some private sector funding. This was to preserve the landing place where thousands of lives in the Normandy Operation were lost, starting at Juno. It is now looking for funding. I hope the new Minister of Veterans Affairs can work with the organization.

Here is another example of passionate Canadians who opened the visitor centre and museum in France on their own, really with no help. Now, there are little operating funds, but I hope the government comes forward with a plan to preserve it, like it did with Vimy, which we started and they opened. It can be done this with Juno.

My friend is right, as McCrae said over a century ago:

To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.

We are now losing so many World War II veterans. It is up to us to preserve that legacy. We can hold the torch high, not in combat but in recognizing their sacrifice, preserving their final resting places and educating future Canadians who enjoy the country they provided us.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I could not be more pleased to take the floor. I think I may be the last speaker at this stage of the progress of the bill. We are now reviewing the amendments sent to us by the Senate before approving the bill to go back to the Senate.

I want to share with members who do not experience it what it means to have the problem of derelict and dilapidated boats. It might sound to someone who does not live on a coastline as though it is a rather small issue, as though it is something one could leave waiting a while. After all, the boats are derelict and dilapidated and abandoned.

On the east coast, where I lived for so long, certainly around Cape Breton Island, we did not have a problem with derelict and dilapidated boats, because they were generally smashed to bits by the winter storms, and we did not see them the following year. However, on the more tranquil inland waters of the Salish Sea, around the southern Gulf Islands and up into the northern areas of our Gulf Islands, around Gabriola, Hornby and the islands stretching up into the eastern coast of Vancouver Island, we have a lot of problems with derelict boats. Many areas of British Columbia have peaceful inland waters and a lack of winter storms. Boats are abandoned, which owners do far too frequently at no cost and no risk to themselves. They just abandon the vessels. That has caused threats to navigation and hazards in the waters.

More recently, we have had a profound problem. The housing shortage in southern Vancouver Island and on the Lower Mainland is so acute that homeless people have taken up residence in abandoned vessels. Try to imagine the multiple threats and hazards that involves, and it is growing at an epidemic rate.

On January 21 I took a tour with local residents of Tsehum Harbour, where multiple vessels, some of them rafted together to form something of a community of vessels, are housing people. Some people are paying rent to the owners for substandard living conditions. Of course, there is no proper heat. Living on a vessel on open water in the winter is not a safe living condition, but it is particularly acute on Salt Spring Island, where Burgoyne Bay and Ganges have become magnets for crime. They are no longer safe areas. It is a significant problem. That is compounded by not having adequate RCMP attending to the southern Gulf Islands. There just are not enough RCMP officers to help where crime is increasing in areas, such as Pender Island and Salt Spring Island, which are idyllic places. This is really a crisis. We need to find homes for these people who are taking refuge in inadequate habitation on abandoned vessels. We need to deal with abandoned vessels rapidly.

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There is another problem that is worse than this situation. That is in a bill that is currently before the Senate. I am going to seek amendments there to deal with Bill C-69, which amends our navigable waters protection act, now the Navigation Protection Act. Under the previous government of Stephen Harper, they made it much easier to put buoys out and ignore them. They did not think they were making it easier to put buoys out. They just exempted minor works. This needs to be dealt with now, because what has happened is that it is easier to place buoys in the water without proper review, because we treat them as minor work and they are therefore exempted. That is another matter to return to.

I want to let the House know that multiple layers of government are struggling with this problem and waiting with bated breath for Transport Canada to have the additional resources and focus. The current situation involves local governments, municipalities, the Islands Trust, and the Capital Regional District for the Victoria area, which has an abandoned vessel program and gets stuck with the costs. We need to find federal funding to help the CRD with the costs it experiences. We also have the Coast Guard and the RCMP involved and primarily Transport Canada, which is gearing up. I have to say that the civil servants working on this in our local area are terrific. There are also numerous local residents for whom this bill cannot come soon enough.

● (1255)

I am extremely grateful to the local residents who organized that meeting on January 21, which brought together mayors, CRD officials, the Islands Trust, the RCMP and Transport Canada. This has been a nightmare of an issue. We know that funding is waiting. It will not be enough, but it is a good start.

I would like to thank the House for doing everything possible, as expeditiously as possible, to get this legislation passed, get those derelict boats out of our waters and find housing for people who are currently taking shelter in abandoned vessels.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Todd Doherty): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to, amendments read the second time and concurred in)

● (1300)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I suspect if you were to canvass the House, you would find unanimous consent to see the clock at 1:30 p.m. so we could begin private members' hour.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Todd Doherty): Does the hon. member have unanimous consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Todd Doherty): Accordingly, the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business, as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

ENDING THE CAPTIVITY OF WHALES AND DOLPHINS ACT

The House resumed from November 29, 2018, consideration of the motion that Bill S-203, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and other Acts (ending the captivity of whales and dolphins), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise to speak to Bill S-203, an act to amend the Criminal Code and other acts in order to end the captivity of whales and dolphins.

This bill would amend the Criminal Code to create offences respecting cetaceans in captivity. It would also amend the Fisheries Act to prohibit the taking of cetaceans into captivity and the Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act to require a permit for the import of cetaceans into Canada and the export of cetaceans from Canada.

There are two facilities in Canada that have cetaceans in captivity. My comments will focus primarily on the one in my beautiful province of British Columbia, the Vancouver Aquarium.

Essentially, this bill would shut down the important research work done by professionals at the Vancouver Aquarium.

I listened to my colleague's passionate speeches on this important bill. I have listened to the leader of the Green Party, and while I know that her intentions are good, I am afraid her concerns are perhaps misstated.

The Vancouver Aquarium is an established not-for-profit marine science centre that has contributed to groundbreaking conservation research for over six decades. Research at the Vancouver Aquarium is conducted by world-class scientists, biologists, veterinarians, animal care technicians and scholars.

For over 60 years, scientists at the aquarium have delivered insights into a natural world. Situated on the shoreline of Stanley Park in British Columbia, the aquarium is ideally positioned to conduct research that provides real-world relevance. The knowledge acquired through these initiatives contributes to improved animal care, increased understanding of the biology of diverse species and effective conservation planning.

I have to also admit that I have spent a couple of nights in the Vancouver Aquarium. Another part of what the Vancouver Aquarium does is educate the next generation coming through our school systems.

I will share a secret. I am absolutely terrified of snakes, so camping out in the middle of the night with an anaconda, probably a 30-foot anaconda, in a tank a mere 12 feet away was of some concern for me, but my son and daughter, who took part in those overnight trips at the Vancouver Aquarium, both came away understanding more about what we could do to help our wild animals, beaches and oceans than they could have by reading a textbook any day.

Vancouver Aquarium researchers explore a wide range of topics, including veterinary sciences, nutrition, life history and habitat needs. Ocean Wise, a not-for-profit organization, whose vision is a world in which oceans are healthy and flourishing, conducts its research at the Vancouver Aquarium.

The Vancouver Aquarium leads the only marine mammal rescue centre in Canada, with a skilled team able to rescue stranded whales and dolphins. The aquarium has been rescuing and rehabilitating whales and dolphins along B.C.'s coast for over 50 years, with the intention to release healthy and recovered animals back to their natural habitats. The only cetacean currently in professional care at the aquarium is a rescued Pacific white-sided dolphin that had been deemed non-releasable by government authorities due to her inability to survive alone in the wild.

Those that stay in care are there because they must, for their survival, and are cared for at the highest standards, as per the Canadian Council of Animal Care guidelines. They also, in turn, contribute immensely to scientific research, as they accord scientists the opportunity to study their social interaction, their interaction with underwater acoustics and their communication with each other. It is in accredited aquariums that we have learned about cetacean physiology, their mechanisms and interactions that operate within them as a living system.

Team members of the Vancouver Aquarium have learned about their hearing and acoustic ability. They have learned much about their diet and their energy requirements, their lung mechanics and pulmonary function. They have tested field equipment such as hydrophones, mark-recapture bands and non-invasive attachments for satellite tags and cameras.

Research with animals at Vancouver Aquarium often carries on into the field. In the St. Lawrence Estuary, Vancouver Aquarium's scientists are measuring the acoustic communication of beluga whales to learn how we can mitigate the impact of underwater noise on that endangered population. They are studying the endangered killer whales, using images taken from a drone to measure and assess changes in the whales' length and girth and to determine if they are not getting enough fish to eat. All of that study starts at the Vancouver Aquarium.

Accredited aquariums and zoos have a unique expertise that is needed to save species that are at risk. This is not the time to be phasing out facilities and expertise that can help wildlife in an unknown future.

• (1305)

We have only begun to scratch the surface of what we can do with species survival programs and reintroduction projects for species at risk. Zoos and aquariums offer critical elements in these efforts that other stakeholders simply cannot.

Around the world, accredited facilities have helped save species such as the black-footed ferret, the California condor, and at the Vancouver Aquarium, the Panamanian golden frog. Vancouver Aquarium's marine biologists, veterinarians and scientists contribute to research on killer whales, narwhals, beluga whales, harbour porpoises, etc., because they have the necessary elements—veterinarians, biologists, husbandry experts and facilities—always

Private Members' Business

trained and always ready. Programs like these take time to develop, and expertise is gained through experience.

The Marine Mammal Rescue Centre is the only hospital of its kind in Canada and now rescues, rehabilitates and releases more than 150 or more marine animals a year. These are wild animals that are found stranded or severely injured and are rescued under government permits.

I know my colleague from the Green Party will not like what I have to say and I accept that, but I am not alone in my belief that the work of science is extremely important to the protection of species at risk.

Just a few weeks ago, I received an email from Dr. Laura Graham, a professor at the University of Guelph. Her specialty is endocrinology and reproductive physiology of wildlife species, including looking at factors that can impact the welfare of wildlife species managed by humans and using science to solve some of the challenges wildlife managers face as they work toward optimizing the welfare of animals in their care.

I would like to read a direct quote from her correspondence. She said:

As an expert in endangered species physiology I can tell you that this bill is short-sighted and will do irreparable harm to critical research on the marine mammals listed under SARA, including the Salish Orca. Over 90% of what we know about marine mammal biology is based on research on individuals under human care. And we need these captive animals to develop research techniques that can be applied to free-ranging animals.

Dr. Graham, along with her colleague Dr. Sam Wasser, used a non-invasive method of monitoring hormones in the Salish orcas and determined they were losing their pregnancies due to a nutritional deficit.

Dr. Graham wrote:

And if this research hadn't been done and these orcas were managed according to demands of animal activists, we would have instigated restrictions on how close tourist boats can get to them and then watched with stupid looks on our faces as they slowly starved to death. And although there is a clause for research in Bill S-203, it is meaningless.

I have no doubt that those in favour of this bill have the best intentions at heart, but if they truly cared about the survival of the species, if they wanted to ensure their survival and not just pander to the demands of animal activists, they would look closely at this bill and come to the realization that science is important and we need to continue the life-saving research that groups like the Vancouver Aquarium and scientists provide.

As I have said, there are provisions within Bill S-203 that will interfere with the good work and accomplishments we have talked about today. As such, I look forward to seeing the bill go to committee, but I will not be voting for it.

Private Members' Business

•(1310)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Bill S-203 seeks to phase out cetacean captivity in Canada. Canadians everywhere, whether from Quebec, the Prairies or Vancouver, are increasingly opposed to keeping dolphins, killer whales and belugas in captivity.

The NDP would like to see this bill go forward because it has the support of scientists and ordinary Canadians alike. Canada can take an important step toward protecting vulnerable marine mammals and putting an end to the inhumane treatment of these highly intelligent creatures.

An Angus Reid survey conducted in May 2018 found that twice as many Canadians believe that keeping these mammals in captivity in Canadian aquariums should be prohibited compared to those who think it should be allowed.

Bill S-203 sets out a three-pronged approach to phasing out captivity. First, under the Fisheries Act, it prohibits the capture of live animals, except for the purpose of rescue. At present, such captures are legal if they are authorized. The last time cetaceans were captured in Canada was in 1992, when some belugas were captured near Churchill.

Second, it prohibits imports and exports, unless authorized for the purpose of conducting scientific research or to ensure the animals' welfare, for example, by transferring it to an open water sanctuary. It prohibits this under the Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act.

Third, it also bans breeding under the animal cruelty provisions of the Criminal Code, subject to summary conviction and a \$200,000 fine unless provincially licensed for scientific research.

Bill S-203 was studied by the Senate Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans for months. During this time, the committee heard from the world's foremost marine mammal experts that keeping animals in captivity cannot be justified given the scientific knowledge available on the biological needs of cetaceans.

These marine mammals are intelligent, social and sensitive to noise. They need to move freely and to dive deeply to thrive.

I was surprised to learn how far a whale travels to feed and socialize. It is about 100 miles a day. When we consider the size of pens, it is understandable that these animals must feel constrained, to say the least.

The scientific literature on the nature and behaviour of cetaceans tells us that it is cruel to keep them in captivity. They are intelligent marine mammals, very social and sensitive to sound. They need plenty of space to swim and dive deep.

Captive orcas live in the equivalent of one-ten-thousandth of 1% of their natural habitat. That is infinitesimal. They do not have enough space to swim in a straight line or deep underwater. It is even worse when they are forced to entertain tourists all day long. The animals get bored, and that makes them frustrated and aggressive.

Captive whales and dolphins are imprisoned and isolated. They suffer from health problems, they die younger, and their infant

mortality rates are higher. They suffer from sensory deprivation. Transfers from one aquarium to another and mother-calf separations are traumatic. In other words, the evidence shows that the social and biological needs of cetaceans cannot be met in captivity.

Now that we know so much about cetacean ecology and biology, we cannot condone an economic model that is harmful to these animals' health.

The benefit of Bill S-203 is that it gives the parks and aquariums time to adapt to this new reality. The bill does not threaten the animals that are already in parks like Marineland or the Vancouver Aquarium. On the contrary, these animals can live several decades, and I hope that they will one day be able to retire to a sanctuary.

In addition, the bill does not eliminate the rescue program. It allows for rescue and rehabilitation efforts of cetaceans that have washed ashore, for example.

However, there must be absolutely no breeding of these animals in captivity, under the current conditions. There is no proof that this provides any kind of scientific benefit. As I already mentioned, captivity has some very harmful effects on these marine animals.

Jane Goodall, who was invited to testify before the Senate committee last fall, said that the current permission of Vancouver Aquarium's breeding programs on-site and at SeaWorld with belugas on loan, is no longer defensible by science. She also said that this is demonstrated by the high mortality rates evident in these breeding programs and by the ongoing use of these animals in interactive shows as entertainment. Lastly, she said that the phasing out of such programs is the natural progression of humankind's evolving view of cetaceans as equals.

•(1315)

This should not be a partisan issue, but rather a moral issue informed by science. Since it was introduced in December 2015, the bill has been stalled repeatedly by the Conservatives, so much so that my colleague from Port Moody—Coquitlam and other members spoke out publicly, calling on the Senate to stop dithering, put it to a vote and send the bill to the House of Commons.

We in the NDP believe that the government should support ethical and useful research on cetaceans, that is, research done in a natural environment. There, scientists can get a realistic view of their natural behaviours without causing a lifetime of pain and suffering. Cetaceans in captivity endure unjustified suffering.

Bill S-203 is a reasonable, balanced piece of legislation. It allows exemptions for animals that are already in captivity and provides for a lengthy transition period for the zoo and aquarium community. No one is asking those facilities to shut down overnight.

This is the right thing to do, and it is time to act.

Private Members' Business

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Youth) and to the Minister of Border Security and Organized Crime Reduction, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill S-203, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and other Acts, also known as the Ending the Captivity of Whales and Dolphins Act.

This bill proposes changes to three acts: the Criminal Code, the Fisheries Act, and the Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act.

I will begin by saying that I strongly support this bill, as do a large number of my constituents in Vaudreuil—Soulanges and Canadians across the country. I hope that this debate will continue in committee.

As we learn more about the life of whales and other cetaceans, it is clear that captivity is never the right thing to do. Canada is not alone on this. To be honest, the movement against the captivity of whales has grown and keeps growing around the world. My wife and I saw whales in the St. Lawrence and in Tadoussac and the experience changed us. Tadoussac is not the only place to go whale-watching.

[English]

The reality is that support for this law is not just strong for those near the Gulf of St. Lawrence. There are also those on the west coast who are in awe of the beauty of these creatures, such as those who live in Vancouver, Victoria or Haida Gwaii where people on the coast are treated to the incredible sights and sounds of the orcas as they play, hunt and share their majesty with us all.

However, it is not just coastal Canadians who are fuelling this movement. It is all Canadians, young and old, who have listened to the science, learned more about these incredible creatures and know that they do not belong in swimming pools, no matter how large. This is indeed good news, but that is not all the good news that I want to share with my colleagues.

While the banning of whale captivity is not yet in legislation, the practice has been in place for years in Canada. Licences for the capture of live cetaceans are only issued by the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard for scientific research or rehabilitation. In the past 10 years, only one licence has been issued for the rehabilitation of a live stranded *Pseudorca* calf.

Our government has also taken notice of the growing concern to ensure that cetaceans are not being captured for the sole purpose of being kept on public display. That is why last year our government introduced Bill C-68, which is awaiting committee consideration in the other place, and contains amendments that would prohibit the captivity of whales and allow the minister to put in place regulations to ban the import and export of these beautiful creatures. Today, there are only two facilities in Canada that house cetaceans: Marineland in Niagara Falls, Ontario, and the Vancouver Aquarium in British Columbia.

Marineland is, as many of us know, a commercial facility with approximately 60 cetaceans. Most are belugas, with one being a killer whale. The Vancouver Aquarium is a not-for-profit facility and has one cetacean at its facility, a 30-year-old Pacific white-sided dolphin that was rescued from the wild and has been deemed unfit

for release back into the wild. The Vancouver Aquarium works with Fisheries and Oceans Canada to rescue and rehabilitate marine mammals in distress. Even with all of this, we know that we must do more to ensure that cetaceans continue to be protected. That is why we need to make it clear through legislation that, indeed, whales do not belong in captivity.

While we are here today debating the need for whales to remain in the wild, I also want to highlight the need for us to ensure that their marine environment is also protected. Over the past few years in that regard, this government has made real investments to protect and conserve our marine environment. In 2016, the Prime Minister announced \$1.5 billion dollars for the oceans protection plan, which has since funded 55 coastal restoration projects, is helping to address threats to marine mammals from vessel noise and collisions, and increased our on-scene environmental response capacity all across the country.

Further, as part of budget 2018, this government also announced \$167.4 million for the whales initiative, which has further funded recovery plans for endangered species such as the southern resident killer whale, the beluga whale and the North Atlantic right whale.

• (1320)

It is clear that protecting marine mammals is an ongoing initiative and today we are debating a piece of legislation that will help ensure that whales stay where they belong: in the wild.

[Translation]

However, I heard some concerns about our jurisdiction and the mechanism that would allow this bill to make important changes to the Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act.

As many members know, a number of provinces also have animal welfare laws in place. For example, Ontario has legislation that prohibits the breeding and acquisition of killer whales, as well as other animal protection rules. The bill before us today also seeks to amend the Criminal Code regarding animal welfare. I look forward to hearing the debates in committee and learning more about the shared federal-provincial jurisdiction in this regard.

In spite of everything, I continue to support this bill, and I fully support the principle behind it. It is time to put an end to the captivity of whales and cetaceans. Let's do it for our children and our grandchildren.

[English]

Mr. William Amos (Pontiac, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to the issue of Bill S-203, which has a stated objective of ending the captivity of whales and dolphins, while allowing some exceptions for rescue and rehabilitation. I support the bill's moving forward to be studied by a committee. As MP for Pontiac, I call upon members of this chamber to move forward quickly so that this can be studied, because Canadians are expecting more action on this issue. We need to do a better job of protecting our whales and our dolphins.

Private Members' Business

Banning whale and dolphin captivity would demonstrate a concrete step toward international leadership on this key animal-welfare issue. It would bring Canada into step with countries like France, India, Chile, Costa Rica, Switzerland and various U.S. states where there are strict restrictions. Canadian values are evolving. They are changing. As scientific understanding evolves, so do Canadian values and so does our appreciation for those sophisticated creatures with which we share this planet. Canadians understand that whales and dolphins are complicated, intelligent beings and that the breeding in captivity of these species has no place in Canadian society.

One of the leading conservationists of the past two generations, Dr. Jane Goodall, whom I had the good fortune of meeting in Parliament in 2016, has said that the phasing-out of captive cetacean programs is the natural progression of humankind's evolving view of our non-human animal kin. This is an issue that has been raised by my constituents as embodying, yes, a scientific dimension, but also an important moral dimension. Bill S-203 has attracted tremendous support from the public as well as politicians of all parties, and it is clear that it is an opportune moment for the bill to be sent to committee and studied further.

• (1325)

[*Translation*]

As the member for Pontiac, I am proud to urge my colleagues in the House of Commons to move forward with this bill quickly and send it to committee because it is an innovative measure to protect whales and dolphins. Prohibiting the captivity of cetaceans is an important step toward international leadership on animal welfare. Canadians have been showing their growing opposition to keeping cetaceans in captivity. Today, the only facilities where cetaceans are still kept in captivity are the Vancouver Aquarium in British Columbia and Marineland in Ontario.

[*English*]

Fierce debate continues over issues such as mortality rates and longevity, especially of whales and dolphins while they are in captivity. The most conclusive data, as I understand it, are for orcas. Their annual mortality rates are significantly higher in captivity than in the wild. The mortality data related to live captures are relatively straightforward. Capture is undeniably stressful and, in the case of dolphins, results in a sixfold increase in mortality risk during and immediately after capture.

Live captures, particularly of dolphins, continue around the world in regions where very little is known about the status of populations. For smaller stocks, live capture operations are a significant conservation concern. These are issues that we have to take seriously. Even for those stocks not currently under threat, the lack of scientific assessment or regard for welfare makes the proliferation of these operations an issue of global concern. Therefore, it is good and it is appropriate that Canadian legislators are examining putting an end to cetacean captivity.

In the case of Bill S-203, to achieve this objective the bill proposes amendments to a series of statutes, namely the Criminal Code, the Fisheries Act and the Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act, which tends to be called WAPPRIITA.

[*Translation*]

The capture of live cetaceans falls under federal jurisdiction. Although the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast

Guard has the authority to issue licences for the capture of live cetaceans for the purpose of public display, no such licence has been issued since the 1990s.

[*English*]

Bill S-203 proposes to amend the Fisheries Act to prohibit moving “a live cetacean...from its immediate vicinity with the intent to take it into captivity.” This translates into making it illegal to capture or take a wild cetacean with the goal of keeping it captive. An exception is made when the animal is captured to help it.

As mentioned in the first hour of debate, the amendments to the Fisheries Act proposed in Bill S-203 are substantively similar to those introduced by the government in Bill C-68. In drafting Bill C-68, great care was taken to include the intent of Bill S-203, which is to end the capture of cetaceans from Canadian fishery waters for public display purposes.

Like Bill S-203 before us today, Bill C-68 includes provisions that would prohibit the capture of cetaceans and would allow for changes to import regulations to stop the import of cetaceans.

One of the important things for committee members as they study Bill S-203 is to examine what is the best legislative path forward, given the measures proposed in Bill C-68 and those proposed in Bill S-203. I look forward to following that process carefully.

There is one particular aspect that would merit an in-depth study, specifically the amendments this bill seeks to make in relation to WAPPRIITA, the Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act.

WAPPRIITA forbids the import, export and interprovincial transportation of species it applies to unless those specimens are accompanied by the appropriate documents, licenses and permits. In all cases, the act applies to plants or animals, alive or dead, as well as the parts and any derived products. What is most important to understand about WAPPRIITA, which is the domestic statute that enables us to fulfill our international obligations under the CITES convention, is that it is a conservation-focused statute. We need to make sure that the objectives of that statute are consistent with Bill S-203. That is going to be an important discussion to have at committee.

The other thing we need to take into account is that this debate speaks to Canadian values.

• (1330)

[*Translation*]

I have had the wonderful opportunity to observe cetaceans in their natural environment, not just in eastern Canada, but also in western Canada, the Pacific and the St. Lawrence River. I know just how many Canadians have been touched by this experience.

Private Members' Business

[English]

My two young children have loved that experience, and they cannot even contemplate how cetaceans could be kept in captivity.

My wife, Regina, spent a summer with Dr. Paul Spong on Vancouver Island at his research station on Hanson Island studying the A5 pod. She was forever changed by that experience.

Most Canadians will recognize just how important it is to all of us that we do right by these species that are so special. Let us be conscious of the fact that these are some of the most highly sophisticated, most incredible beings on earth. When they are in captivity, they demonstrate absolutely abnormal behaviours. We need to make sure that Canadian legislation respects that these are incredibly sophisticated beings with complex social relations, and they deserve to be in the wild.

I appreciate this opportunity to urge the House to move this legislation forward for study in committee.

[Translation]

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I would first like to thank those members who spoke this afternoon, especially the member for Vaudreuil—Soulanges, the member for Salaberry—Suroît and the member for the Pontiac. I am very pleased to have the support of the NDP and Liberal members for this very important bill.

[English]

The bill comes to us from the Senate. Occasionally that happens, that a bill originates from the Senate. In reply, a huge thanks to retired Senator Wilfred Moore from Nova Scotia, who brought the bill initially forward in 2016. I also want to extend my deepest thanks to Senator Murray Sinclair, who took up the bill and ensured it complied with concerns about the rights of indigenous people as it moved forward. It is very important that the bill has had the review it had by the Senate and that it comes to us finally.

As many people will know, it was held up for an unconscionable length of time and prevented from having a vote by a handful of senators. It is here now and we want to get it passed into law before the House rises in June and an election is called. We want to be able to say, and I hope the Conservatives will want to say this as well, that we are really pleased that we took this step to stop the cruel torture of cetaceans in Canada.

I forgot to thank my friend from Cariboo—Prince George, and I did not intend to overlook his speech, for his kind words toward me. I want to assure him that it is true that there are only two facilities in Canada that still have cetaceans in captivity. However, I am so pleased to say that Vancouver Aquarium already took a voluntary step to ensure that it would not keep whales and dolphins in captivity any longer. The current population count in Vancouver Aquarium facility is one dolphin.

Marineland in Niagara, Ontario still has 50 to 60 belugas, five dolphins and one orca. We are very concerned for the fate of those animals. However, I also want to ensure it is on the record that the goal of the legislation is not to harm any particular business; it is to encourage it to transform, not to be dependent on keeping animals in cruel conditions in order to have a business. As I mentioned, Vancouver Aquarium plans to remain as it has always been, a place where families in the Vancouver area and tourists from all around the world want to visit. Unlike Marineland, it is not a purely commercial activity.

Vancouver Aquarium, as the hon. member for Cariboo—Prince George mentioned, does a lot of stellar research. In fact, Dr. Peter Ross used to run the chemical contaminants program for our oceans within the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. When that program was demolished by the previous government, he was able to continue his research within the Vancouver Aquarium. It also houses the ocean wise program. It has made a transformational change and is not dependent on keeping whales and dolphins in captivity.

Marine Land could do the same. That would be wonderful and it could transform itself into an amusement park. It should consult with the people who run Cirque du Soleil to imagine what kind of entertainment can be offered by human acrobats, using the swimming pool as the base of a theatre.

In any case, I digress. Bill S-203 is ready for passage. It has been thoroughly studied, but we need to take it to committee, as the member for Pontiac has said. I hope, indeed I pray, for continued support from all members on the Liberal benches as well as the New Democratic Party. I hope the Conservatives will change their current view and that we will get the bill passed. There is abundant scientific evidence, evidence from veterinarians, from those who study marine mammals in the wild and marine mammals in captivity. We know that for cetaceans, captivity is torture and it is time we put an end to it.

● (1335)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: On division.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I declare the motion carried. Accordingly the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): It being 1:38 p.m., the House stands adjourned until next Monday at 11 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 1:38 p.m.)

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