



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

House of Commons Debates

VOLUME 148 • NUMBER 401 • 1st SESSION • 42nd PARLIAMENT

OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Tuesday, April 9, 2019

—

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, April 9, 2019

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1005)

[*English*]

NATIONAL SECURITY AND INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to subsection 21 (6) of the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians Act, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the committee's first annual report for the year 2018.

Consistent with the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians Act, security officials, in consultation with the Department of Justice, recommended the redaction of information that would be injurious to national security, national defence or international relations if disclosed or that is subject to solicitor-client privilege.

I would like to thank the committee for its work over the past year.

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[*Translation*]

PARLIAMENTARY BUDGET OFFICER

The Speaker: Pursuant to section 79.13 of the Parliament of Canada Act, it is my duty to present to the House a report from the Parliamentary Budget Officer, entitled “Infrastructure Update: Investments in Territories”.

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[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to four petitions.

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITIES

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 29th report of the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, entitled “Supporting Canada’s Flight Schools”, presented by the member for Kelowna—Lake Country.

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

LIAISON

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 107(3), I have the great honour of presenting, in both official languages, the 10th report of the Liaison Committee, entitled “Committee Activities and Expenditures—April 1, 2018 - December 31, 2018”. This very lengthy report highlights the work and accomplishments of each committee of the House, as well as detailing the budgets that fund the activities approved by the committee.

TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITIES

Mr. Matt Jeneroux (Edmonton Riverbend, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for the most part, Conservative members of the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities support the report that was just tabled. However, where we dissent is with respect to the complete lack of recommendations regarding concerns raised frequently by the owners and operators of flight schools in Canada. The two concerns, which are referenced in the body of the main report just tabled, are as follows: the federal excise tax, which is a substantial burden to flight schools; and the carbon tax, whether levied by the federal or provincial government, which is another cost to flight schools.

The testimony of one committee witness succinctly summed up the impact of any federal or provincial carbon tax on flight schools. He stated:

Any additional costs will eventually be passed on to the customer. In the case of a flight school, the customer is the student pilot. But all of that is going to eventually end up at the industry level, and the ultimate customer, the regular passenger on any airline, will end up footing that bill. There's no miracle there.

That is pretty explosive testimony.

Routine Proceedings

Considering the extensive testimony we heard, Conservative members of the committee recommend the following: first, that the Government of Canada scrap the carbon tax or at a minimum exempt aviation fuel for instructional purposes; and second, that the Government of Canada consider a reduction or exemption of the federal excise tax on aviation fuel used for instructional purposes. That is very reasonable I believe.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present three reports this morning.

First, I have the honour to present and table, in both official languages, the 62nd report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, entitled “Report 6, Community Supervision—Correctional Service Canada, of the 2018 Fall Reports of the Auditor General of Canada”. Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to the report.

Second, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 63rd report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, entitled “Report 1, Connectivity in Rural and Remote Areas, of the 2018 Fall Reports of the Auditor General of Canada”. Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to the report.

Third, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 64th report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, entitled “Report 4, Physical Security at Canada's Missions Abroad—Global Affairs Canada, of the 2018 Fall Reports of the Auditor General of Canada”. Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to the report.

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 20th report of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, entitled “Bill S-203, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and other Acts (ending the captivity of whales and dolphins)”.

The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House without amendments.

I wish to thank everybody, staff and members of the committee, for their participation. I especially want to recognize Senator Moore who originally brought this bill to the other place and, of course, the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands who sponsored it here in the House.

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Mr. John Aldag (Cloverdale—Langley City, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 18th report of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, entitled “Clean Growth and Climate Change in Canada: Forestry, Agriculture and Waste”.

Second, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 19th report of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, entitled “Clean Growth and Climate Change in Canada: How Canada Can Lead Internationally”.

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

* * *

● (1010)

NATIONAL FRESHWATER STRATEGY ACT

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-439, An Act respecting the development of a national strategy in relation to fresh water.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce my private member's bill that calls on the government to commit to a national freshwater strategy. My riding of Essex is surrounded by the beauty of the Great Lakes, which not only supply us with fresh water for drinking but provide all of our communities with environmental benefits that deserve targeted protection and sustainable planning.

Canada needs a modernized national freshwater strategy. It has been over 20 years since the government established a policy on fresh water, and environmental conditions have changed dramatically since 1987. While Canada has seemingly abundant freshwater resources, very little of it is actually renewable.

My bill asks the Minister of Environment and Climate Change to study, review and adopt a national water policy. The review will work to establish national drinking water standards, ensure that water is protected in international agreements, protect groundwater, evaluate the readiness of water and waste-water infrastructure to handle climate change impacts and reduce eutrophication.

Fresh water is vital, whether for tourism, agriculture, recreational use, health or household needs. It plays an important role in all of our communities. Essex is surrounded by the majesty of Lake Erie and Lake St. Clair, along with our many rivers, wetlands and tributaries. The health of our water is instrumental to our region's sustained growth, environmental stability and safety.

I hope that all sides will support this important effort to protect our fresh water for generations to come.

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

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COPYRIGHT ACT

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-440, An Act to amend the Copyright Act (Crown copyright).

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise to introduce my bill to amend the Copyright Act. In particular we would replace section 12 with the following: “Without prejudice to any rights or privileges of the Crown, no copyright subsists in any work that is or has been prepared or published by or under the direction of the control of Her Majesty or any other government department”.

As things stand right now, the government is a closed door when it comes to government publications, research and a number of periodicals that are published. In fact, this costs us a significant amount of taxpayers' money. Second, it is against open government. As well, this is based upon a law that Canada enacted in 1921, which was based on a law from 1911 from the U.K.

Therefore, this bill would save money for taxpayers. It would provide for educators, innovators and open government and bring accountability. Most importantly, it would bring Canada in line with so many other countries that have information available for businesses, for civil society and for the advancement of our nation and our country of Canada.

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

* * *

[Translation]

COMMISSIONER FOR YOUNG PERSONS IN CANADA ACT

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-441, An Act respecting the Office of the Commissioner for Young Persons in Canada.

She said: Mr. Speaker, after four failed attempts, I finally have the honour and privilege to introduce this bill, which seeks to establish a commissioner for young persons.

I would like to thank the dozens of stakeholders from such organizations as Children First Canada and OXFAM-Québec, as well as former parliamentarians, such as Senator Landon Pearson, who helped me draft this bill. The commissioner would have four main roles.

The first is to ensure respect for the rights of children and young people, including first nations, Métis, Inuit and other youth across Canada, and conduct investigations when necessary. The second is to raise awareness of the rights of children and youth. The third is to work at the national and international levels with provincial commissioners and advocates as well as first nations, Métis and Inuit governments. The fourth is to conduct studies and make recommendations to the government.

This idea was suggested nearly 30 years ago. The United Nations recommended three times that the government establish such an office, and the provincial council of commissioners and advocates is calling for one. I am proud to have the support of a number of organizations, such as the Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador, Children's Healthcare Canada and UNICEF Canada.

I hope that the government will create a commissioner for young persons as quickly as possible, before the upcoming election. Since the Liberals have already introduced a similar bill three times, I think they already agree.

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

* * *

● (1015)

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL ARRANGEMENTS ACT

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel, BQ) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-442, An Act to amend An

Routine Proceedings

Act to authorize the making of certain fiscal payments to provinces, and to authorize the entry into tax collection agreements with provinces.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House to introduce this bill, which is entitled "An Act to amend An Act to authorize the making of certain fiscal payments to provinces, and to authorize the entry into tax collection agreements with provinces".

If passed, this bill would allow Quebecers to file a single tax return, as requested by the National Assembly and the Government of Quebec. I want to make it clear that all taxes would be collected by the Government of Quebec, and a portion would then be paid to the federal government.

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

[English]

Mr. Earl Dreeshen: Mr. Speaker, I would like to respectfully seek unanimous consent to be able to present the crisis that canola farmers have with China for emergency debate at the quickest convenience.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Hon. Ed Fast: Mr. Speaker, I would seek unanimous consent to table a dissenting report regarding the report on forestry, agriculture and waste. This is a dissenting report from Conservative members of the committee.

The Speaker: The hon. member is asking for consent to return to presenting reports from committees. The hon. member for Cloverdale—Langley City did present a report. Is there agreement that the member could give a dissenting report, a dissenting opinion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

* * *

PETITIONS

PRIVACY

Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure of tabling petition e-1924, signed by 2,450 Canadian citizens.

Routine Proceedings

This is a petition to the Government of Canada stating that whereas the Government of Canada has broken the laws that cover the right to privacy, the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act, by authorizing Statistics Canada to collect the personal, financial and banking information and history from Canadian banks and credit bureaus for 500,000 citizens and residents, and the government has no right to our private financial information, and the act is both illegal and immoral, the Government of Canada and Statistics Canada do not have the right to this information without our signed authorization for the privacy act, we, the undersigned taxpayers of Canada, call upon the Government of Canada to cease and desist collection of information of Canadian citizens' private financial affairs and demand that the Government of Canada put an immediate end to Statistics Canada's compelling Canadian financial institutions and credit bureaus to transfer any financial information, detailed or otherwise, from any taxpayer to Statistics Canada.

HEALTH

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table this petition on behalf of hundreds of British Columbians from Courtenay and Cumberland in light of the over 10,000 preventable opioid overdose deaths as a result of fentanyl-poisoned sources.

The petitioners are calling on the government to declare the current opioid overdose and fentanyl poisoning crisis a national public health emergency under the Emergencies Act in order to manage and resource it with the aim of reducing and eliminating preventable deaths.

They are also calling for a reform of current drug policy to decriminalize personal possession and to create, with urgency and immediacy, a system to provide safe, unadulterated access to substances so that people who use substances experimentally, recreationally or chronically are not at imminent risk of overdose from a contaminated source.

The petitioners cite that the war on drugs has failed. They are calling on the government to take immediate action and to take away the stigma in this important national health emergency.

• (1020)

ANIMAL WELFARE

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a massive petition with more than 2,000 signatures, many of them from Prince Edward Island, with respect to animal testing for the safety of cosmetics.

The petitioners point out that animal testing is not necessary to prove the safety of cosmetics, that a ban on cosmetics sold using animal testing would not affect sales and that signatories to CETA and many other countries have already adopted alternative measures or have banned animal testing for this purpose.

The petitioners call on the House to support Bill S-214 to ban the sale and manufacture of animal-tested cosmetics in Canada.

FIREARMS

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition signed by Canadians

from the ridings of Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, Saanich—Gulf Islands, Nanaimo—Ladysmith, Kanata—Carleton, Ottawa—Vanier, Nepean, St. Catharines, Mississauga—Malton, London—Fanshawe, London North Centre, Mississauga—Lakeshore, London West, Courtenay—Alberni and Chatham-Kent—Leamington. They are calling on the House of Commons to respect the rights of law-abiding firearms owners and reject the Prime Minister's plan to waste taxpayers' money studying a ban on guns that are already banned.

This petition was signed before the Liberal-appointed senator in the other place announced that she is going to put forth an amendment in Bill C-71 that is going to ban all firearms in Canada.

[Translation]

DAIRY INDUSTRY

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure of presenting a petition initiated by Alexandra Cournoyer, from the municipality of Sainte-Victoire de Sorel, and signed by over 1,500 people, that calls for financial support to offset dairy farmers' losses and for mandatory labelling standards to inform consumers about the source of the milk in the dairy products they buy.

I commend this young woman for taking this initiative and raising awareness among young farmers in Quebec and Canada.

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased to present a petition signed by women in my riding, Jonquière, who want the government to ensure universal access to employment insurance.

Employment insurance unfairly penalizes women in terms of their access to benefits. Only 35.2% of unemployed women are eligible for regular EI benefits, compared to 52.5% of unemployed men. As written, the act currently prevents many women from accessing employment insurance. The government must heed the petitioners' call and amend the act.

[English]

ANIMAL WELFARE

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions, two of which have to do with animal testing. I will figuratively piggyback on the comment from the member for Charlottetown, as he has already articulated what these petitions are about.

Effectively, the petitioners call upon the House of Commons to support Bill S-214 and ban the sale and/or manufacture of animal-tested cosmetics and their ingredients in Canada. These are signed by, primarily, residents of Mission and Abbotsford, one of the 27 census metropolitan areas of Canada.

Routine Proceedings

•(1025)

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the last petition is one in which the petitioners call upon the House of Commons to permit Christians to robustly exercise their religious beliefs and their conscience rights, both in their private and public acts, without coercion, constraint or discrimination by, first, amending section 241 of the Criminal Code and amending the Civil Marriage Act to provide Christians and their faith-based institutions protection from its provisions that are contrary to their religious and conscience beliefs and, second, enacting a policy to provide a review of any new legislation that may in the future be brought forth by the government to ensure it does not impinge upon the religious rights of Christians in accordance with the historic continuity of the Canadian Bill of Rights and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

PHARMACARE

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I would like to table yet another petition from the residents of Winnipeg North who have been advocating very strongly for a national pharmacare program that would see prescribed medicines covered. It is something that I know is very important to my constituents, as they have been signing numerous petitions on the issue, and it is with pleasure that I table it today.

CANADA SUMMER JOBS INITIATIVE

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table three petitions in regard to the topic of freedom of thought and conscience. Constituents of mine are concerned about the Liberals' manipulation of the Canada summer jobs program. This primarily affects summer camps and day camps in Oshawa that benefit low-income families. The petitioners see denying funding or making funding dependent on one's beliefs as a huge precedent that they are worried about. They are calling on the government to end this discrimination against faith-based organizations.

WILD SALMON

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

The first is from residents of Saanich—Gulf Islands, who are calling for the government to do something that was, as petitioners note, pledged some time ago: fully implement all 75 recommendations made by Mr. Justice Cohen in the inquiry into the missing salmon in British Columbia. It focuses on the threat posed by open-pen aquaculture.

BEE POPULATION

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition calls for a ban on the use of pesticides derived from nicotine. Known as neonicotinoids, they pose a specific threat to pollinators in Canada.

HOUSING

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table a petition calling on action now by the federal government on the housing crisis. It is signed by residents of Edmonton, and I am pleased to say two of those include youth residing in the Youth Empowerment shelter in my riding. The petitioners state that over half of the 49,000 Edmonton households in

need of housing that spend more than half of their gross income on housing are at risk of losing their housing.

The current government campaigned to build more affordable housing. A growing number of Canadians are only a paycheque away from not being able to make ends meet, and petitioners call on the government to address the housing crisis by delivering the funds now for affordable housing, including for co-ops and non-profit housing, and immediately issue a subsidy for renters and waive the GST and PST on new affordable housing.

[Translation]

FORCED MIGRATION

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today I am very pleased to present a petition on behalf of Development and Peace, an organization working for justice around the world.

The petition I am presenting today was signed by 124 people who want Canada to do more to address the causes of forced migration. Forced migration is caused by war and climate change.

We sincerely hope that this petition will strike a chord with the government. I have 124 signatures on paper and another 668 signatures on postcards. The latter are not admissible in the House, so I am going to take them to the Prime Minister's office right now.

[English]

MEDICAL CANNABIS

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am rising in the House today to table a petition that has been signed by 2,800 Canadians from coast to coast.

These Canadians are very concerned about the government's imposition of an excise tax on prescribed medical cannabis. These petitioners are saying that the government should reverse the excise tax it has imposed on medical cannabis and recognize that cannabis for medicinal purposes should be exempt from any taxes.

As we know, people who have access to medical cannabis need it for pain management. It is absolutely essential. That the government has imposed this excise tax is simply unconscionable, so the petitioners are hoping the government reverses its decision.

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QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 2248, 2251 to 2254, 2258 and 2263.

Routine Proceedings

[Text]

Question No. 2248—**Mr. Matt Jeneroux:**

With regard to the government's Connect to Innovate Program first announced in the 2016 Budget: what are the details of all 181 announced projects under the program, including (i) recipient of funding, (ii) name of program, (iii) municipality and province (iv) project start date, (v) projected completion date of project, (vi) amount of funding pledged, (vii) amount of funding actually provided to date?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the government's connect to innovate program, first announced in the 2016 budget, please visit the website at <http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/119.nsf/eng/00009.html>.

Question No. 2251—**Mr. Robert Kitchen:**

With regard to statistics on boat registrations and sales held by the government for each of the last ten years: (a) what is the number of recreational boat registrations, broken down by type of boat (recreational power boats, non-motorized vessels, 12 passengers and less, etc.) for each the last ten years; and (b) what are the sales figures for boats in Canada, broken down by province and type of boat?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), for information on vessel registrations held by the government for each of the last 10 years, please refer to <http://wwwapps.tc.gc.ca/Saf-Sec-Sur/4/vrqs-srib/eng/vessel-registrations/advanced-search>.

With regard to part (b), Transport Canada does not maintain a registry of sales figures for boats in Canada.

The Wrecked, Abandoned and Hazardous Vessels Act, which received royal assent on February 28, 2019, will enable the federal government to increase its information gathering capabilities. Notably, the act enables Transport Canada to enhance the integrity of current data through information sharing provisions. Improving vessel ownership information and putting the responsibility and liability on vessel owners to properly remove and dispose of their vessels is a key component of the national strategy on abandoned and wrecked vessels announced as part of the oceans protection plan.

Question No. 2252—**Mr. Dave MacKenzie:**

With regard to income tax revenues: (a) what is the amount the federal government collected in income tax revenues from taxpayers with incomes exceeding \$202,000, since 2014, broken down by year; and (b) what is the percentage of total income tax revenue that each of the amounts in (a) represent?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the CRA neither captures nor compiles information in the manner described in the question.

Question No. 2253—**Mr. Glen Motz:**

With regard to gender-based analysis conducted by the government: (a) was a gender-based analysis conducted in relation to Bill C-71, An Act to amend certain Acts and Regulations in relation to firearms, and, if so, what are the details, including findings, of the analysis; and (b) was a gender-based analysis conducted in relation to the government's handgun ban consultations and, if so, what are the details, including findings of the analysis?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), a gender-based analysis plus, GBA+, was completed for Bill C-71, An Act to amend certain Acts and Regulations in relation to firearms.

The details included within the findings of the analysis indicated that, as of February 27, 2017, out of a total of 2,084,760 firearms

licences issued to individuals, including non-restricted, restricted and prohibited, 1,830,919 were possessed by men and 253,841 by women. Of a total of 886,643 registered firearms, restricted and prohibited only, 853,680 belonged to men and 32,963 to women. This data does not include firearms registered by businesses and museums.

Suicide is a leading cause of death in both men and women from adolescence to middle age. According to Statistics Canada, between 2009 and 2013, there was an average of 549 firearm-related suicides per year in Canada, accounting for almost 14% of all suicides in Canada. Over the same period of time, males were far more likely to use firearms than females, accounting for approximately 96% of all firearms-related suicides.

A Juristat report by Statistics Canada entitled "Family Violence in Canada: A statistical profile 2014" noted differences between the severity of violence experienced by women compared with men. Women were twice as likely as men to experience being sexually assaulted, beaten, choked or threatened with a gun or a knife, at 34% versus 16%, respectively.

Although measures to strengthen controls over firearms through legislation will apply to all who possess licences and who legally own firearms, regardless of sex, more firearms licences are held by men.

With regard to part (b), gender-based considerations were discussed throughout the government's handgun ban consultations with Canadians. Eight in-person round table sessions were held across the country in October 2018. Participants included representatives from firearms associations, women's groups, victims' groups and public health officials, as well as business owners, sports shooters, subject-matter experts, academics and community leaders.

In addition, Canadians were invited to provide written submissions through an online questionnaire. The questionnaire collected information regarding the residence, age and gender of the submitter. A summary report on the consultation will be released in the coming weeks.

Question No. 2254—**Mr. Phil McColeman:**

With regard to the usage of private, chartered or government aircraft by the Minister of Veterans Affairs between February 1, 2019, and February 19, 2019: what are the details of all flights taken by the Minister including (i) date, (ii) origin, (iii) destination, (iv) type of aircraft, (v) purpose of trip, (vi) vendor (if not government aircraft), (vii) total cost, (viii) breakdown of costs, (ix) number of passengers?

Routine Proceedings

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there were no expenditures related to the usage of private, chartered or government aircraft by the Minister of Veterans Affairs between February 1, 2019, and February 19, 2019.

Question No. 2258—**Mr. Colin Carrie:**

With regard to the government's announced intention to merge the Oshawa Port Authority and the Hamilton Port Authority: (a) what are the projections related to how many jobs in Oshawa will be either (i) transferred to Hamilton or (ii) eliminated as a result of the merger; (b) what is the government's official rationale for pursuing a merger; (c) what is the current number of employees or full-time equivalents (FTEs) at the (i) Oshawa Port Authority and (ii) Hamilton Port Authority; and (d) what is the projected number of FTEs following a merger?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), the integration of the port authorities of Oshawa and Hamilton is being pursued with a view to supporting ongoing growth at both ports. It is anticipated that the action would unlock greater economic opportunities for working Canadians.

As such, this amalgamation is expected to result in no job losses. In an amalgamation scenario, all services, including employment contracts, would continue with the amalgamated entity. Should amalgamation proceed after consultations, the management of the amalgamated port would be responsible for determining its human resources requirements and strategy.

With regard to part (b), the Government of Canada announced its intent to amalgamate the Oshawa and Hamilton port authorities to enable both ports to remain competitive. Canada port authorities are mandated to facilitate Canadian trade and this amalgamation would enhance opportunities in the regional supply chain. An amalgamated port authority would be better positioned to enhance Canada's global competitiveness with a greater ability to strategically plan and invest, to improve port efficiencies and leverage key investments; enhance investment opportunities in the region by attracting long-term investment more strategically, based on the ability to plan from a region-wide perspective and to improve port efficiencies; and improve the supply chain through a greater combined revenue strength allowing investment into port facilities and intermodal connections.

With regard to part (c), according to information provided by the port authorities, approximately 53 people are currently employed at these ports. The Hamilton Port Authority has 50 employees and the Oshawa Port Authority has three employees.

With regard to part (d), should a decision to amalgamate the two ports be taken, it is anticipated that this would enable growth at both ports. A new amalgamated port authority would be responsible for staffing appropriately to ensure it can deliver on its mandate to support trade, economic growth and the efficient movement of goods and people. This amalgamation is expected to result in no job losses.

Question No. 2263—**Mr. Scott Duvall:**

With regard to consultations on retirement security conducted by the Minister of Seniors between July 18, 2018, and November 22, 2018: how many stakeholders were directly consulted by the Minister, broken down by (i) provinces, (ii) electoral ridings, (iii) organizations representing pensioners, (iv) organizations representing workers, (v) organizations representing employers?

Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in recent years, there

have been concerns about the security of employer-sponsored pension plans when the employer goes bankrupt. In response to these concerns, our government committed in budget 2018 to adopt an evidence-based, whole-of-government approach to improving retirement security for all Canadians.

We consulted workers, pensioners, businesses and the public, and received more than 4,400 submissions on this important issue.

In order to properly prepare her consultations, the minister discussed the subject with the following stakeholders: Gudrun Langolf, Council of Senior Citizens' Organization of British Columbia on October 4, 2018; Danis Prud'homme and Maurice Dupont, FADOQ network, on October 5, 2018; Mike Powell, Canadian Federation of Pensioners, on October 25, 2018; Trevor Harris, Stelco, October 26, 2018; Gary Howe and Ron Wells, United Steelworkers, on October 26, 2018; Bill Missen, former senior VP commercial, Stelco, on October 31, 2018; and Jim Ray, VP technology, ArcelorMittal Dofasco, on October 31, 2018.

After consulting with Canadians, our government proposed, in budget 2019, new measures to further protect employer-sponsored pension plans in the event of a company's insolvency.

Among other protective measures, the proposed measure would make insolvency proceedings more fair, clear and accessible to pensioners and workers, in part by requiring all parties involved to act in good faith and by giving the courts greater ability to review payments made to executives in the days leading to insolvency.

It would also set higher expectations and better monitoring of corporate behavior. Federally incorporated public companies will be required to disclose their policies on workers and pensioners and executive compensation or explain why such policies are not in place.

Finally, it would protect hard-earned benefits for Canadians by specifying in federal pension law that if a plan ceases to operate, it must still pay pension benefits as it did when it was active.

Routine Proceedings

• (1030)

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, if the government's response to Questions Nos. 2246, 2247, 2249, 2250, 2255 to 2257, 2259 to 2262 and 2264 could be made orders for returns, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Question No. 2246—Mr. John Brassard:

With regard to the use of prescribed medical marijuana by clients of Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC): (a) how many medical marijuana users are there, broken down by year from 2015 to present; (b) how many VAC clients are prescribed, on a daily basis, (i) three grams or less, (ii) four grams, (iii) five grams, (iv) six grams, (v) seven grams, (vi) eight grams, (vii) nine grams, (viii) ten grams, (ix) any other amount; (c) for each of the prescriptions in (b), what is the form of the marijuana being dispensed, namely (i) dried, (ii) oil, (iii) cream, (iv) suppository; (d) how many VAC clients are permitted to grow their own marijuana for prescribed medical use; (e) what evidence, reports, scientific studies or other studies have been used as a frame of reference to evaluate the use, prescription or denial of the prescription of medical marijuana; and (f) have any of the studies in (e) been used as justification for the government's proposed reduction of the maximum allowed amount of medical marijuana prescribed to VAC clients to three grams per day in cases where there is no medical approval for prescribed amounts of medical marijuana of over three grams per day?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2247—Mr. John Brassard:

With regard to the use and cost paid by the government for prescribed medical marijuana and prescribed pharmaceuticals used by members of the Canadian Armed Forces and veterans of the Canadian Armed Forces, and administered by Veterans Affairs Canada: (a) what was the total amount paid annually, broken down by year from 2015 up to the current year, 2019, for (i) medical marijuana, (ii) Diazepam, (iii) Clonazepam, (iv) Trazodone, (v) Zopiclone, (vi) Wellbutrin, (vii) Effexor, (viii) Celexa, (ix) Seroquel, (x) Ambien, (xi) Remeron, (xii) Nabilone, (xiii) Valium, (xiv) Prazosin, (xv) Oxycodone, (xvi) Demerol, (xvii) Dilaudid, (xviii) Fentanyl, (xix) Mirtazapine, (xx) Gabapentin, (xxi) Baclofen, (xxii) Propranolol, (xxiii) Targin, (xxiv) Pantoprazole, (xxv) Nortriptyline, (xxvi) Ketoconazole, (xxvii) prescribed pharmaceuticals, including opioids and other pain relief medications; and (b) what evidence, reports, scientific studies or otherwise have been used as a reference or a basis for the use, prescription or non-use or non-prescription of the pharmaceuticals or medical marijuana?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2249—Mr. Matt Jeneroux:

With regard to the government's Small Communities Fund first announced in 2014: what are the details of all projects under the program, including (i) recipient of funding, (ii) province, (iii) municipality, (iv) project start date, (v) projected completion date, (vi) amount of funding pledged, (vii) amount of funding actually provided to date?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2250—Mr. Robert Kitchen:

With regard to videos produced by the government for internal usage since November 4, 2015: (a) what are the details of all such videos, including (i) date, (ii) duration, (iii) title, (iv) purpose, (v) intended audience; and (b) for each video in (a), what were the total expenditures, broken down by type of expense?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2255—Mr. Phil McColeman:

With regard to the use of taxi chits by the government, broken down by department or agency, and by year since January 1, 2016: (a) how much has been spent on taxi chits for government employees; and (b) broken down by ministerial office, including the Office of the Prime Minister, how much has the government spent on taxi chits for ministerial exempt staff?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2256—Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:

With regard to polls administered by the government since October 25, 2017, and broken down by department or agency: (a) how many public opinion polls have been administered; (b) what amount has been spent on polls; and (c) what are the details of each poll administered including (i) start and end date, (ii) pollster or vendor, (iii) list of all poll questions and subjects, (iv) results of each poll?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2257—Mrs. Cathay Wagantall:

With regard to classified or protected documents, since January 1, 2016, broken down by department or agency, and broken down by year: (a) how many instances have occurred where it was discovered that classified or protected documents were left or stored in a manner which did not meet the requirements of the security level of the documents; (b) how many of these instances occurred in the offices of ministerial exempt staff, including those of the staff of the Prime Minister, broken down by ministerial office; and (c) how many employees have lost their security clearance as a result of such infractions?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2259—Mrs. Marilène Gill:

With regard to monitoring studies of recreational fishing areas in the federal riding of Manicouagan since 2013: what are the results of analyses concerning (i) the shellfish resource, (ii) the location of shellfish farms, (iii) the sources of pollution, (iv) the presence of toxicity, (v) the presence of marine biotoxins?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2260—Mrs. Marilène Gill:

With regard to the \$75 million in federal assistance to the Atlantic provinces to combat spruce budworm in Budget 2018, what are: (a) the briefing notes prepared for (i) the Privy Council Office, (ii) the Office of the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, (iii) the Office of the Prime Minister, (iv) the Office of the Minister of Natural Resources, (v) any other federal department; (b) all stakeholders consulted, including (i) how they were consulted, (ii) the dates of these meetings, (iii) the briefing books for these meetings, (iv) correspondence with these stakeholders; and (c) the research used for developing this federal assistance, including but not limited to (i) analyses, (ii) studies, (iii) data, (iv) reports?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2261—Mrs. Marilène Gill:

With regard to the airports within the federal riding of Manicouagan, since 2000, what is the amount of annual revenues related to (i) taxation, (ii) operations, (iii) leasing collected by: (a) Transport Canada; and (b) the Canada Revenue Agency?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2262—Mr. Scott Duvall:

With regard to pensions for the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of federal agencies or any other federal organization, since November 2015: (a) how many CEOs are deemed not to be part of the public service for the purposes of the Public Service Superannuation Act, broken down by (i) CEO, (ii) organization; (b) how many times has the Governor in Council ordered a CEO to participate in the public service pension plan, broken down by (i) year, (ii) CEO, (iii) federal organization; and (c) for each of the CEOs deemed not to be part of the public service for the purposes of the Public Service Superannuation Act, what are the detailed justifications for their non-participation in the public service pension plan for the purposes of the Public Service Superannuation Act?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2264—**Mr. Scott Duvall:**

With regard to consultation called “Consultations on enhancing retirement security” in which Employment and Social Development Canada has been involved: (a) what is the total number of stakeholders consulted, broken down by (i) provinces, (ii) electoral ridings, (iii) organizations representing pensioners, (iv) organizations representing workers, (v) organizations representing employers; (b) how many submissions were received; (c) how many analyses were carried out by those responsible for the consultation; (d) how much research has been done by those responsible for the consultation; (e) how many targeted outreach activities were carried out by those responsible for the consultation; (f) how many stakeholders raised the issue of the tight deadline for submitting documents; and (g) what was the total amount spent on the twitter hashtag #YourFutureMatters?

(Return tabled)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Finally, Mr. Speaker, I ask that all remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

ALLEGED PROCESS USED TO DETERMINE LIBERAL CAUCUS MEMBERSHIP

The Speaker: I have a notice of a question of privilege from the hon. member for Markham—Stouffville. I understand that it touches on something on which there was a ruling yesterday. I trust that she will address this and advise the Chair about how she feels this affects her privileges.

Hon. Jane Philpott (Markham—Stouffville, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege concerning my recent expulsion and the expulsion of the member for Vancouver Granville from the Liberal caucus and a breach of the Parliament of Canada Act.

The question of privilege concerns a breach of my rights, the rights of the member for Vancouver Granville and other members' rights. While respecting the confidential nature of caucus discussions and my and the member for Vancouver Granville's obligations to maintain confidentiality of caucus discussions, how do I know that mine and my colleague's rights were breached?

On November 5, 2015, section 49 of the Parliament of Canada Act required Liberal MPs to vote four times. These four votes were to be recorded.

On March 21, 2019, the hon. member for Scarborough—Guildwood confirmed in a Toronto Star article that with respect to the four required votes, “Nothing like that ever happens in caucus...” As such, this would mean that one of the recorded votes that did not occur was the rule concerning caucus expulsions. This also means that one of the recorded votes that did not occur was the rule for readmission of a member to the caucus.

When the Prime Minister and his office prevented Liberal members of Parliament from exercising their rights under section 49.8, they violated the rights of Liberal members in three ways.

First, the Prime Minister deprived members of their right under right under section 49.8 to vote four times in a recorded manner.

Privilege

Second, in depriving members of their right to vote, the Prime Minister denied members the opportunity to adopt the rules in sections 49.2 and 49.3 concerning caucus expulsions and caucus readmittance respectively. In doing so, the Prime Minister deprived members of their right to determine the expulsion of a caucus colleague on a secret ballot vote and their right to determine the readmittance of a Liberal member to the caucus on a secret ballot vote.

Third, in denying members their right to vote and adopt the expulsion rule in section 49.2 and the readmission rule in section 49.3, the Prime Minister denied members being considered for expulsion or readmission the right to a due process, one that is not ad hoc, not arbitrary nor unlawful.

With respect to expulsion specifically, section 49.2 lays out a clear process for expulsion and the bar is deliberately set high. First, at the time, on April 2, at least 36 Liberal MPs would have had to write to the caucus chair requesting an expulsion. Second, a majority of the entire caucus, not just a majority of MPs present, would have had to vote in favour of expulsion in a secret ballot, an absolute majority.

In other words, on April 2, 2019, when I and the member for Vancouver Granville were expelled by the Prime Minister, the Liberal caucus had 179 members, which means that at least 90 Liberal MPs would have been required to vote in favour of expulsion in a secret ballot. If only 120 MPs showed up to vote, 90 votes in favour of expulsion would still have been required.

The Prime Minister stated at the April 2 open meeting of the Liberal caucus and on national television that he had taken the decision to expel the honourable members from caucus. The Prime Minister added that he had met with me and the member for Vancouver Granville to inform us of his decision. This confirms that we were expelled prior to the commencement of the Liberal caucus meeting.

The Prime Minister's words that night to the Liberal caucus are important to underscore because expulsion should not be his decision to take unilaterally. However, the decision had been already made.

Members of Parliament are not accountable to the leader; the leader is accountable to members of Parliament. This is a constitutional convention.

I cannot adequately underscore how important this part of the confidence convention is. In fact, it is so critical to the functioning of our institutions that the last Parliament decided to take part of that unwritten constitutional convention and enshrine it in legislation to make an amendment to the Parliament of Canada Act.

This question of privilege is timely. Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, you ruled on a question of privilege raised by the member for Perth—Wellington. Respectfully, that response does not address our situation nor our concerns.

First, the response to the question from the member for Perth—Wellington concerned the member for Whitby, who resigned from caucus and was not expelled. This is not the circumstance with respect to myself or the member for Vancouver Granville.

Government Orders

Second, we are not asking that the House deal with the possible expulsion of a specific member of caucus as a question of privilege. Rather, the matter of privilege is with respect to knowing which rules apply with regard to expulsion and readmission. This is necessary in order to ensure due process, fairness and that the rule of law is respected.

• (1035)

The Speaker's response to a point of order raised on December 10, 2015, by the member for Wellington—Halton Hills indicates that the chair of the Liberal caucus did indeed inform the Speaker in accordance with section 49.8(5) of the Parliament of Canada Act, but that the content of such notice would not be made public. The Speaker stated, “all actions required by the act to be taken by the Speaker have been taken.”

Recently, my hon. colleague, the member for Vancouver Granville, inquired of the Liberal caucus chair, the member for Lac-Saint-Louis, by email, no less than four times, asking for clarity on the rules that applied respecting expulsion from the Liberal caucus. We anticipated that expulsion was imminent as was being reported in the media. The expulsions have now taken place, however we still do not know the rules and so cannot determine if they were followed.

Notwithstanding the Parliament of Canada Act, the rules of this place, points of order, or questions of privilege or inquiries we have made of our former colleagues, both myself and the member for Vancouver Granville still do not know what rules applied to our expulsion, nor what rules would apply to any readmission.

Third, we acknowledge, Mr. Speaker, that you have stated that you have no role in the interpretation of a statute or in the conduct of these 2015 provisions, but with respect, it is our view that this does not relieve you of your responsibility to ensure that all members are aware of their rights in this place. This is our privilege. Accordingly, a remedy is required for our situation. This matter is urgent and cannot wait for new Standing Orders. Procedural fairness and the rule of law demand this.

Secret in-camera meetings or private notices should not be a shield to prevent the upholding of the law and members' rights. I ask that you find a prima facie case of privilege, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that the rights of members, both for expulsion and readmission, are upheld and are consistent with the law.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Markham—Stouffville for raising her argument. While I am left with the difficulty, as I said in my ruling yesterday, that the Speaker is not empowered to enforce statutes, I will certainly consider her argument and come back to the House.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

MACKENZIE VALLEY RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ACT

BILL C-88—TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.) moved:

That, in relation to Bill C-88, an act to amend the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act and the Canada Petroleum Resources Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts, not more than one further sitting day shall be allotted to the consideration at second reading stage of the bill; and

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

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 67.1, there will now be a 30-minute question period.

I invite hon. members who wish to ask questions to rise in their places so the Chair has some idea of the number of members who wish to participate in this question period.

The hon. member for Chilliwack—Hope.

• (1040)

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again the government is shutting down debate in the House of Commons. As I will remind Liberals once again, this is something they promised in their platform that they would not do, yet here we are.

Today, the Liberals are proposing to ram through a bill that would take away tools from northerners who want to control their own destiny. This reminds us of what they are doing with other bills, like Bill C-69. They are making it impossible for development to occur in the natural resource sector.

As we have seen, the Premier of the Northwest Territories, Bob McLeod, has rejected the approach of the government. It is a unilateral approach whereby Ottawa knows best and the southern government in Ottawa is telling the northern governments how they can operate, trying to turn the north, quite frankly, into one big national park.

Could the minister responsible for this portfolio respond to the concerns of Premier McLeod and others, who believe that northerners should make decisions about natural resource development in their territories? Why is the government doing everything it can to shut down natural resource development in the country, particularly in the north?

Hon. Bardish Chagger: Madam Speaker, we are debating why we need to put time allocation on this important legislation. We are doing so because the opposition chooses not to find a way forward.

Government Orders

Since the member opposite has done a fairly decent job at misrepresenting the legislation, I will remind Canadians that Bill C-88 responds to concerns raised by indigenous governments and organizations in the Mackenzie Valley, specifically the proposed restructuring of the land and water boards of the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act.

Following the general election in October 2015, Canada committed to exploring ways to address the concerns raised about restructuring provisions. When it comes to these restructuring provisions, conversations took place between different levels of government. The Conservatives were a part of those.

When the Conservatives introduced legislation, they brought in the super board concept. That is why the Conservative government at the time was taken to court. It lost that court case because northerners did not support that approach.

However, northerners support our approach and we believe it should receive swift passage. Unfortunately, we have to move time allocation because the Conservatives will do whatever they can to block the important work that benefits northerners, especially when it comes to this legislation.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is sad to note that this is now the 60th time that closure has been imposed by the Liberal government. I remember that back in 2015, the Prime Minister promised he would take a new respectful approach to Parliament. Unfortunately and sadly, yet again closure is being imposed in the House. We are seeing a real betrayal of the election commitments that were made.

We in the NDP support the bill, but we have also been consistently raising concerns about the fact that there is not a single reference to the United Nations Declaration on the Right of Indigenous Peoples in it. There are flaws in the bill. The government has refused to entertain amendments and it is refusing, in any way, to entertain improvements to the bill.

This is the heart of the problem. Commitments that were made in 2015 have been steadfastly broken. The government is not respecting Parliament at all.

Why is the government being so dysfunctional regarding improving legislation and being so dysfunctional in the House of Commons?

Hon. Bardish Chagger: Madam Speaker, technically, time allocation can only be used when we cannot find a way forward. The fact that I have had to use time allocation is a reflection on the way he chooses to represent his benches. If we could have found a way forward, we would not have had to move time allocation.

There was a time when NDP members would recognize the importance of legislation, but they have been holding hands with the Conservatives now for so long that they have forgotten their ways.

I would remind those members that it was the NDP that held hands with the Conservatives to ensure we did not have the Kyoto accord. It was the NDP that held hands with the Conservatives to ensure we got rid of Kelowna, which was an important accord that would advance indigenous communities. It was the NDP that held hands with the Conservatives to ensure there was no national child

care plan. Today, the NDP House leader continues to hold hands with the Conservatives, rather than get to work on advancing important legislation.

I am more than willing to find a way forward and not have to use time allocation.

• (1045)

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Madam Speaker, here we go again with the government shutting down debate, just as it has done for the last number of days when we have tried to ask for an emergency debate on the canola issue in the Prairies.

This is an emergency situation for these farmers. They are trying to decide what they can plant or should plant and what their livelihoods or potential future could be. However, the government continues to throw out these delay tactics, moving to Orders of the Day so that we cannot introduce these requests. Today the government refused to allow an emergency debate when it was asked for, when we finally had the opportunity to ask.

Again and again the government throws up roadblocks to any reasonable debate and discussion in this House.

Hon. Bardish Chagger: Madam Speaker, when the Conservative Party is going to, nationally, make comments that it will do whatever it can to disrupt the House of Commons to ensure that the government cannot advance the mandate it was provided by Canadians, yes, I will use the limited tools I have available to ensure that we show up to work and advance legislation that will make a difference in the lives of Canadians.

That member made a fairly rich comment just now with regard to an emergency debate. There have now been two opportunities when the opposition could have raised an emergency debate request. Last Friday, not a single Conservative stood up during the rubric under Routine Proceedings for an emergency debate, and no one asked for it. Members know that it would be a decision for the Speaker to rule on. Today, once again, the Conservatives chose to stand up under Motions rather than stand up under Request for Emergency Debate.

For the Conservatives, the issue is not an emergency, and that is exactly why they asked no questions in question period, yet they are making a mockery of the system by thinking it is a light issue. It is a serious issue when it comes to our farmers. Canola is a serious matter. The government will respond.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, we keep seeing this happening with the Liberals, who shut down debate and then speak to the content of the bill we would all like to be debating here.

What is the whole point of this bill we are supposed to be debating, except that the Liberals would rather shut down debate? It is about giving a voice to people. What is the purpose of shutting down the debate? It is to take away the voice of people.

Government Orders

I regret the day my former colleague Dennis Bevington was not re-elected. Why? It is because we never hear a voice for the north in this place anymore. All the representatives of the north are either Liberals or, now, an independent. It is very sad. In the previous term I was in office, we spoke regularly in this place about the north and the need for the protection of the resources and the protection of the environment and particularly about giving a voice to the people of the north. Contrary to what is being expressed by the Conservatives, that is exactly what they did in their bill. They shut down those local voices.

I would prefer that we spend the time in the House talking about the need to give a voice to northerners instead of debating another shutdown of voices for democracy.

Hon. Bardish Chagger: Madam Speaker, if that member has the permission of her leadership, because I am sure she will not get to speak on her own, she will have plenty of time today to actually debate this important legislation.

When it comes to Bill C-88, it is important to note that it is the result of co-operative, conciliatory discussions that resulted in an agreement to repeal the restructuring provisions in the Northwest Territories Devolution Act. The Government of the Northwest Territories supports these amendments. Indigenous governments and organizations in the Northwest Territories want these amendments. The mining industry that conducts its business in the territory has indicated its support for these changes.

These conversations and discussions have taken place. It is northerners, it is the Northwest Territories, who are asking us to move quickly on this legislation. If that member wants to talk about it, she will have plenty of time today to talk about it. Northerners need action. They need this legislation to go to committee so that we can act. Enough with the talking. Let us move this legislation along. The opposition needs to stop playing games. Let us get to work.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, the hon. government House leader will know that being in the position of the Green Party in this Parliament means that we are not part of the discussion.

I sympathize with her concern that we do not have goodwill in planning expediting legislation in this place. However, I really must protest that we cannot continually have time allocation. The debates on bills are shut down far too often.

I support this legislation. I think it is important to get it through the House. However, on the use of time allocation, and I know the member just referred to her having limited tools, a government in this place with the majority of the seats has the ultimate tools all the time. It is very frustrating for members in positions such as mine and for other members who are not part of the two larger opposition parties to try to have our voices heard on legislation.

• (1050)

Hon. Bardish Chagger: Madam Speaker, I agree with the member that we should not have to use time allocation. Everyone knows that when I need to use time allocation, I do it with sincere regret, because I would rather find a way forward. I can assure the member that we will do our best to accommodate her to ensure that her voice is heard in this place.

I can speak to the efforts we have made with many members who are not considered recognized parties in this place to ensure that they can represent their constituents. Whenever we are able to share some of the time provided to us, I am more than willing to do that. I agree that the member should be able to be on the record. She represents her constituents, like everyone else. I will do my best to ensure that she is given that opportunity.

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is unfortunate that we have come to this situation in this place. Bill C-88 is yet another anti-energy policy the Liberals are trying to bring in. They are driving investment out of Canada's north. Just like Bill C-69, Bill C-88 politicizes oil and gas extraction by expanding the power of cabinet to block economic development and add to the increasing levels of red tape, hampering investment in the north.

I was at the AME Roundup in Vancouver a few months ago and spoke with numerous mining professionals and people inside the mining and oil and gas extraction industries. They are quite frustrated with the Liberals' plan to take power from the people of northern Canada, in the Northwest Territories in particular. Making the Northwest Territories basically a part is not a way to solve the issues of economic development in Canada's north.

The people spoke loud and clear at that conference. I would like to hear the Liberals' plan for solving the poverty rates in the Northwest Territories if they are actually hampering the industry that could provide jobs, opportunity and wealth.

Hon. Bardish Chagger: Madam Speaker, I agree that it is unfortunate that we have to use these tools. I would encourage the member to perhaps talk to his leadership team to find a better way forward. Let us also understand why we are where we are today.

It was the previous Conservative government, with its rush to weaken environmental reviews and trample on land claims and indigenous governments, that, overall, put a cloud of uncertainty over the regulatory regime in the Northwest Territories. The Conservatives added a few extra clauses to the Northwest Territories Devolution Act in 2014 to amend the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act. These changes were made to restructure the land and water boards. What they meant by "restructure" was eliminating the regional panels that had been in place and effective for years and that are a significant component of indigenous participation.

The member talks about participation. The Conservatives did whatever they could to bring in a concept of super-boards to take those rights away. They were challenged in court, and they lost. We were elected. We did not appeal that decision, because we knew it was the wrong approach. Therefore, we are trying to correct that.

Government Orders

It is important that we move forward on this bill as quickly as possible to bring clarity to environmental assessment processes in the Northwest Territories for those wanting to benefit from economic opportunities in the north, including indigenous peoples and all northerners. This brings the clarity—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Questions and comments, the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, I want to come back to the question I asked earlier that the government House leader has not responded to. I must say that I find the tone the government House leader is adopting in the House to be very disrespectful. All members of Parliament have a responsibility to stand up for their constituents. Whether we are Liberals, Conservatives, New Democrats, Greens, Bloc members or independents, we all have the best interests of the country in mind. The government House leader casting aspersions on all members of Parliament I find completely inappropriate.

I asked earlier why the Liberal government is not supporting the amendments the NDP wanted to bring forward to have references to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and to include intervenor funding. These are things that have been sent forward. The Liberal government, to date, has absolutely refused to entertain them, and the use of closure today indicates, unfortunately, a trend to try to ram this through committee.

Will the government support these amendments, yes or no?

• (1055)

Hon. Bardish Chagger: Madam Speaker, I am on the record numerous times in the House, as well as outside the House, saying that I have a lot of respect not only for this place but for all members of Parliament. I recognize and acknowledge that all members of Parliament have the best interests of their constituents and the country at heart. Whether I agree or not, I believe that when people make decisions, they do so in the belief that those decisions are in the best interests of the country. I have always said that, and I will continue to say that.

I do not need it to be mansplained to me. It is unfortunate that the member does not like my tone. It is my voice. I work hard for my constituents in the same way I am sure he and every member of Parliament does.

That member should take partial responsibility for our being in this situation. He and the opposition House leader do not want to find a way forward on legislation. They have publicly stated that they will do whatever they can to disrupt the work we are doing in the House, because they do not want to see us advance legislation.

This legislation is at second reading. It will be debated all day today, and then it will go to committee, where committee will be able to look at it.

This legislation would undo the restructuring the Conservatives brought in. That needs to be corrected. That is what northerners are asking for. That is what the people of the Northwest Territories are asking for. We have committed to getting it done. We would like to find a way forward. Unfortunately, the NDP is not willing to provide it.

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise frustrated by the responses of the government House leader. She is

trying to tell Canadians why we are in this situation right now. The reason we are here is that we have a government that, instead of doing the work it is supposed to be doing, is obsessed with its scandals and selfies.

This government is actually one of the worst functioning governments since the 1920s. The Liberals are not working with anyone. They are not getting any of the legislation that is important to Canadians put through. They are shutting down debate once more on a very important bill.

Regardless of what the House leader is saying, let us look at the facts. Bill C-88 reveals a full rejection of calls from the elected territorial leaders for increased control of their natural resources by giving the federal cabinet the ability to block oil and gas projects. These are key economic activities in the north. This top-down, paternalistic action of the Liberal government would do nothing to reduce poverty in the north.

This is just another sign that the Liberal government is obsessed with what it feels is important: the selfies and the scandals that are going on. Canadians expect us to debate bills in the House, debate them for northerners, so we can get some economic activity and decreased poverty in the north.

Hon. Bardish Chagger: Madam Speaker, the member's comments have just confirmed that he has not read the bill and is not aware of what we are debating right now. This legislation would increase local autonomy. It would give back what the Conservatives tried so hard to take away.

The member talks about poverty and all these factors. Let the record once again show that since this government came into office, close to 300,000 children have been lifted out of poverty because of the tax-free Canada child benefit, which the Conservatives voted against. Over 800,000 Canadians have now been lifted out of poverty.

I recognize that there is definitely a lot more work to do. That member represents a community that is going through challenging times. We want to be able to provide support. These are the kinds of programs that actually provide those supports.

We have an economy today that has created 900,000 jobs. Canadians have those jobs because of our investments. Every single investment we have made, the Conservatives have voted against. Conservative members take quite literally their job as the opposition. Their job is to hold the government to account. That does not mean they have to oppose every single thing, and that does not mean we cannot be productive.

• (1100)

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have been listening to this debate, and it has become clear to me that the government House leader is talking exactly from the same page as the Prime Minister. They will not take responsibility for their actions.

Government Orders

The truth of the matter is that the Liberal government's agenda is to try to bring forward the work that needs to be done, and it has failed to do so. Who do the Liberals blame? They blame everyone else. In that process, they are exerting something they said they would not do during the 2015 election. I remember, because I was a new candidate at that time. They said that they would not copy the ways of Harper, that they would not shut down debate, yet time and time again they have shut down debate.

What is the NDP trying to do with respect to this legislation? We are trying to do something the government says is its top priority on the question around reconciliation. What do we want to see in the bill? We want to see amendments that recognize exactly that, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Liberals refuse to allow it, and now they are shutting down debate.

When will the government House leader and her government take responsibility for their actions for a change?

Hon. Bardish Chagger: Madam Speaker, I have an open door policy and I try to find a way forward. I will take responsibility for being unable to find a way forward. The New Democrats and the Conservatives did not want to offer a way forward so, yes, I am using time allocation to advance this legislation.

This bill responds to indigenous concerns respecting the legislative and regulatory framework flowing from their constitutionality, protected land claims and self-government agreements. This is what is being asked for. That is exactly why we are advancing this piece of legislation, and we are going to do it by using time allocation because the Conservatives and the New Democrats refused to provide a path forward.

That member and the NDP should definitely take responsibility for abolishing the Kelowna accord as well as the Kyoto protocol. That member and the NDP should take responsibility for turning the clock back on Canada and allowing Stephen Harper to have the platform to do it. When that member takes responsibility, we will actually be able to find a way forward in a better way. Yes, I chose to move time allocation. I take responsibility.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind members that when someone has the floor, other members who have questions and comments to add will wait until it is the time for questions and comments.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I find it interesting to listen to the questions at this point. It is important that we highlight that the New Democrats have actually supported time allocation. We have seen them support time allocation. They recognize bills that are important to them and then they get behind time allocation. The Conservatives support time allocation.

We need to realize that from the government's perspective there are many bills that are high priorities for this government, and northern Canada is important to the Government of Canada. That is one of the reasons we once again have to use this tool. I wonder if the government House leader can just emphasize why at times we

need to be able to use time allocation so we can get important work done for Canadians.

Hon. Bardish Chagger: Madam Speaker, that was a really good question because it allows us to explain the limited tools we have available.

We have debated this piece of legislation in the past, and there was no desire to see it move forward, so I was more than willing to call it back up again. I still have not been provided any insights from the opposition parties as to how much time they would like. Therefore, we are using the tool of time allocation.

This legislation is at second reading stage. After we vote on it, if and when it passes, it will go to committee. The committee will be able to study and scrutinize this legislation to ensure that it responds to the desires of northerners and people in the Northwest Territories, because that is the area that is directly implicated and affected by this legislation. That legislation would then come back to the House for third reading.

This is therefore the beginning of the process, and we would just like to see it move on to committee so the committee can do its important work as well.

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Madam Speaker, as we are hearing from the Liberals, every issue they are having is always somebody else's fault, whether it is Omar Khadr's \$10.5-million payment, the SNC-Lavalin scandal, the Prime Minister's disastrous trip to India or the failure to get the Trans Mountain pipeline built, or any pipeline for that matter. It is always somebody else's fault.

However, I will speak to Bill C-88, which, I want to point out for the member opposite, repeals the restructuring of the four land and water boards, which the member opposite said very emphatically that she is against, and reintroduces regulatory provisions that were included in the Conservative government's Bill C-15. I would like to remind this House and the member opposite that when Bill C-15 was debated in the previous Parliament, Liberals, including the Prime Minister, voted in favour of the restructuring.

The current Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Inter-governmental and Northern Affairs and Internal Trade, speaking to Conservative Bill C-15 on February 11, 2014, stated, "As Liberals, we want to see the Northwest Territories have the kind of independence it has sought."

Why does the Liberals' tone change now? Why all of a sudden are they against giving the north the power to control its own destiny and providing jobs, opportunity and wealth to make the north strong again?

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•(1105)

Hon. Bardish Chagger: Madam Speaker, it is important to note that Bill C-88 is the result of co-operative conciliatory discussions that resulted in an agreement to repeal the restructuring provisions of the Northwest Territories Devolution Act. The member is correct when he said the Conservative government did important work when it came to this matter. However, what the member seems to forget is that it tried to go further by restructuring a system that was already working. It put forward measures that would create this concept of superboards, which northerners and the people in the Northwest Territories were opposed to. However, because it was trying to diminish environmental assessments and whatever else, it figured it would sneak a couple of these things in.

Therefore, the Conservative government was taken to court. When it was taken to court, it actually lost that case. This is something that happened not that long ago, and this legislation responds to it. I hope the member understands that because the previous government tried to sneak in a couple of extra points, it was taken to court and lost. It lost in court because that was the wrong thing to do. We are correcting that wrong.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, the government House leader is very eloquent. She can choose to use that in an effective way, either by advancing the government agenda or by toxically insulting each member of the House as members raise questions. For the life of me, I cannot understand why she is choosing the latter course. The reality is that she is throwing out an array of drive-by insults when members of Parliament ask very legitimate questions about the use of closure by the current government.

In 2015, there was a commitment to make Parliament work. We all remember “sunny ways”. Instead, we are seeing, on the floor of the House of Commons, a completely inappropriate and toxic approach to the parliamentary work that we all must do in common.

I have not, in the weeks since I became House leader, had a single proposal from the government about how to move forward. There have been no proposals from the government to the opposition parties.

Also, when the government House leader suggests that I have in some way said I am going to use procedural tools to block Parliament, that is simply false and she should retract it.

I will ask my question again. Why is the government opposing the reference to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in this bill, and why is it invoking closure?

Hon. Bardish Chagger: Madam Speaker, I do not want to say anything, because it feels like the member is offended by anything I comment on or say. I will tell the member that I have not attacked or commented on any individual member of this place. Members choose to do their own work. They represent their constituents no differently from how I represent mine.

What we are debating right now is the use of time allocation to advance Bill C-88. We are using time allocation because we have not been able to find a way forward.

The member needs to be proposed to, it turns out, but he is more than able to provide me insights as to how much time is needed. The previous House leader was able to communicate for her team and

provide us a way forward. I know this member has come back into this role. I acknowledge that he is new to this role this time, I guess, and I will definitely do a better job at providing proposals with respect to a way forward. I will take that as feedback from the member.

However, when it comes to this legislation, it will go to committee. The committee will be able to scrutinize and study this legislation, and the amendments will definitely be considered. The minister responsible and members will definitely have their opportunity to debate them. I am sure there will be a fruitful discussion.

I thank the member for his great question.

•(1110)

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

[*Translation*]

The question is on the motion. Shall I dispense?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

[*Chair read text of motion to House*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And five or more members having risen:

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Call in the members.

•(1150)

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

(*Division No. 1287*)

YEAS

Members

Aldag
Amos
Arseneault
Badawey
Bains
Bennett

Alghabra
Anandasangaree
Arya
Bagnell
Baylis
Bibeau

Government Orders

Bittle
 Boissonnault
 Breton
 Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
 Chagger
 Chen
 Cuzner
 Damoff
 Dhaliwal
 Drouin
 Duclos
 Duncan (Etobicoke North)
 Easter
 El-Khoury
 Erskine-Smith
 Eyolfson
 Fillmore
 Fisher
 Fortier
 Fraser (West Nova)
 Freeland
 Fuhr
 Gerretsen
 Graham
 Hardie
 Hébert
 Hogg
 Housefather
 Hutchings
 Joly
 Jordan
 Khalid
 Lambropoulos
 Lamoureux
 Leboutillier
 Levitt
 Lockhart
 Longfield
 MacKinnon (Gatineau)
 Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
 May (Cambridge)
 McCrimmon
 McKay
 McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
 Mendès
 Mihychuk
 Soeurs)
 Monsef
 Morrissey
 Nassif
 O'Connell
 Oliver
 Ouellette
 Peterson
 Philpott
 Poissant
 Ratansi
 Robillard
 Rogers
 Rota
 Ruimy
 Sahota
 Sajjan
 Sangha
 Scarpaleggia
 Schulte
 Sgro
 Sheehan
 Sidhu (Brampton South)
 Simms
 Sorbara
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 Vandal
 Vaughan
 Whalen
 Wilson-Raybould
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Blair
 Bossio
 Carr
 Casey (Charlottetown)
 Champagne
 Cormier
 Dabrusin
 DeCoursey
 Dhillon
 Dubourg
 Duguid
 Dzerowicz
 Ehsassi
 Ellis
 Eyking
 Ferguson
 Finnigan
 Fonseca
 Fraskatos
 Fraser (Central Nova)
 Fry
 Gameau
 Goodale
 Hajdu
 Harvey
 Hehr
 Holland
 Hussen
 Iacono
 Jones
 Jowhari
 Khera
 Lametti
 Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
 Lefebvre
 Lightbound
 Long
 Ludwig
 Maloney
 McDonald
 McKenna
 McLeod (Northwest Territories)
 Mendicino
 Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-
 Morneau
 Murray
 Ng
 Oliphant
 O'Regan
 Peschisolido
 Petitpas Taylor
 Picard
 Qualtrough
 Rioux
 Rodriguez
 Romano
 Rudd
 Rusnak
 Saini
 Samson
 Sarai
 Schiefke
 Serré
 Shanahan
 Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
 Sikand
 Sohi
 Spengemann
 Tan
 Trudeau
 Vandenbeld
 Virani
 Wilkinson
 Wrzesnewskyj
 Young

NAYS

Members

Aboutaif
 Albrecht
 Allison
 Angus
 Aubin
 Barrett
 Beaulieu
 Benzen
 Berthold
 Blaikie
 Block
 Boutin-Sweet
 Cannings
 Chong
 Clarke
 Davidson
 Diotte
 Dreesen
 Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
 Duvall
 Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
 Fast
 Gallant
 Généreux
 Gill
 Godin
 Harder
 Hughes
 Johns
 Julian
 Kent
 Kusie
 Lake
 Liepert
 Lukiwski
 MacKenzie
 Martel
 May (Saamich—Gulf Islands)
 McColeman
 Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
 Nantel
 Nicholson
 Paul-Hus
 Plamondon
 Quach
 Rankin
 Reid
 Richards
 Saroya
 Shields
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Albas
 Alleslev
 Anderson
 Arnold
 Barlow
 Barsalou-Duval
 Benson
 Bernier
 Bezan
 Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
 Boulterice
 Brosseau
 Carrie
 Choquette
 Clement
 Deltell
 Donnelly
 Dubé
 Dusseault
 Eglsinski
 Falk (Provencher)
 Finley
 Garrison
 Genuis
 Gladu
 Gourde
 Joback
 Jeneroux
 Jolibois
 Kelly
 Kmiec
 Kwan
 Laverdière
 Lloyd
 MacGregor
 Maguire
 Masse (Windsor West)
 McCauley (Edmonton West)
 McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
 Motz
 Nater
 Nuttall
 Pauzé
 Poilievre
 Ramsey
 Rayes
 Rempel
 Sansoucy
 Schmale
 Shipley
 Stanton
 Strahl
 Sweet
 Trost
 Van Kesteren
 Warkentin
 Webber
 Wong

PAIRED

Members

Ayoub
 LeBlanc
 Paradis
 Fortin
 Moore
 Ste-Marie — 6

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

[English]

I will inform the House that because of the proceedings on the time allocation motion, Government Orders will be extended by 30 minutes.

SECOND READING

The House resumed from December 3, 2018, consideration of the motion that Bill C-88, An Act to amend the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act and the Canada Petroleum Resources Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-88, an act to amend the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act and the Canada Petroleum Resources Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts.

The bill would make two amendments to the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act of 1998, and I will refer to this in my speech going forward as MVRMA. Part A reverses provisions that would have consolidated the Mackenzie Valley land and water boards into one. These provisions were introduced by the former Conservative government within Bill C-15, Northwest Territories Devolution Act of 2014.

Part B would amend the Canada Petroleum Resources Act to allow the Governor in Council to issue orders, when in the national interest, to prohibit oil and gas activities, and freezes the terms of existing licences to prevent them from expiring during a moratorium.

Bill C-88 is yet another Liberal anti-energy policy in a long list of policies from the government that are driving energy investments out of Canada, costing Canadian workers their jobs and increasing poverty rates in the north.

First, I will speak to part A of the bill, the section that reverses the previous government's initiative to consolidate for the devolution of governance of the Northwest Territories, wherein the federal government transferred control of the territories' land and resources to the Northwest Territories government.

Part of that plan sought to restructure the four Mackenzie Valley land and water boards into a single consolidated superboard, with the intent to streamline regulatory processes and enable responsible resource development. For the reasons why this was proposed under Bill C-15, we have to turn back the clock nearly seven years earlier when, in 2007, then-minister of Indian affairs and northern development, the hon. Chuck Strahl commissioned a report on improving regulatory and environmental assessment regimes in Canada's north.

The consolidation of the Mackenzie Valley land and water boards into one entity was a key recommendation, which would address the complexity and capacity issues by making more efficient use of expenditures and administrative resources, and allow for administrative practices to be understandable and consistent.

Furthermore, during debates in the House in 2013 and 2014, the then-minister of aboriginal affairs and northern development, Bernard Valcourt and the member for Chilliwack—Hope, or as it was known back then, Chilliwack—Fraser Canyon, pointed out that the restructured board was included in the final version of the modern land claim agreements.

The proposed changes were not acceptable to everyone, and two indigenous groups, the Tlicho Government and Sahtu Secretariat,

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filed for an injunction with the Northwest Territories' Supreme Court to suspend the related provisions.

They argued that the federal government did not have the authority to abolish the Mackenzie Valley regulatory regime without consultation with affected indigenous communities. I should point out that, at the time, Liberal members of Parliament voted in favour of Bill C-15 when it was debated in Parliament, including the Prime Minister.

The report commissioned by the then-minister of Indian affairs and northern development was never meant to diminish the influence that indigenous people have on resource management in the north. Rather, it was meant to allow for this influence in a practical way, while at the same time enabling responsible resource development through an effective regulatory system.

This brings us back to today and the bill currently before us. As previously mentioned Bill C-88 would repeal the restructuring of the four land and water boards but also reintroduce regulatory provisions that were included in the previous Conservative government's Bill C-15.

These provisions have been redrafted to function under the current four-board structure and provide for the following: an administrative monetary penalty scheme that will provide inspectors with additional tools to enforce compliance with permits and licences under the MVRMA; an enforceable development certificate scheme following environmental assessments and environmental impact reviews; the development of regulations respecting consultation, which are intended to help clarify the procedural roles and responsibilities respecting indigenous consultation; clarification of requirements for equal proportions of nominees from government and indigenous governments and organizations; a 10-day pause period between a board's preliminary screening decision and the issuance of an authorization to allow for other bodies under the MVRMA to refer a project to an environmental assessment; regional studies that provide the minister with the discretion to appoint committees or individuals to study the effects of existing and future development on a regional basis; the authority to develop cost-recovery regulations that would provide the federal government with the ability to recover costs associated with proceedings; and the extension of a board member's term during a proceeding to ensure board quorum is maintained until the conclusion of an application decision.

• (1155)

These are good regulations and I am glad to see that the current government is continuing on with that and did not throw away these provisions.

The Liberals will say that Bill C-88 is about consultation, however, under part 2 is where the real motivation for Bill C-88 becomes evident.

Part 2 is simply the Liberals' plan to further politicize the regulatory and environmental processes for resource extraction in Canada's north by giving cabinet sweeping powers to stop projects based on its so-called national interest. So much for the comments from the parliamentary secretary to the minister of indigenous and northern affairs, who, on speaking to the Conservatives' Bill C-15 on February 11, 2014, said:

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As Liberals, we want to see the Northwest Territories have the kind of independence it has sought. We want it to have the ability to make decisions regarding the environment, resource development, business management, growth, and opportunity, which arise within their own lands.

I would agree with that.

Bill C-88 exposes the Liberals' full rejection of calls from elected territorial leaders for increased control of their natural resources. The Liberals have demonstrated disregard for those who speak truth to power, they have demonstrated contempt for indigenous peoples advocating for the health and welfare of their children and now they are adding indifference for northern Canadians' interests to their long litany of groups marginalized by the Liberal government.

The Conservatives strongly criticized the Liberals for a moratorium on offshore oil and gas development in the Beaufort Sea, an announcement made in December 2016, in Washington, D.C. by the prime minister, an announcement, I might add, where territorial leaders were given less than an hour's notice. The Liberal government's top-down maternalistic approach to northerners must end. It does nothing to reduce poverty in remote and northern regions of Canada.

Like Bill C-69, the no-more pipelines bill before it, Bill C-88 politicizes oil and gas extraction by expanding the powers of cabinet to block economic development and adds to the increasing levels of red tape proponents must face before they can get shovels into the ground. Like Bill C-68, the convoluted navigable waters bill before it, Bill C-88 adds ambiguity and massive uncertainty in an already turbulent investment climate. Like Bill C-48, the tanker ban bill before it, Bill C-88 aims to kill high-quality, high-paying jobs for Canadians and their families who work in the oil and gas-related industries.

We know the Prime Minister's real motivation. He spelled it out for us at a Peterborough, Ontario town hall in January 2017, when he clearly stated that he and his government needed to phase out the oil and gas industry in Canada. The Prime Minister's plan to phase out the energy industry has been carried out with surgical precision to date.

The Liberals' job-killing carbon tax is already costing Canadian jobs. Companies repeatedly mention that the carbon tax is the reason they are investing in jobs and projects in the United States over Canada. The Liberals new methane regulations could end refining in Canada by adding tens of billions of dollars of cost to an industry that is already in crisis.

The Liberals introduced their interim review process for oil and gas projects in January 2016, which killed energy east, the 15,000 middle-class jobs it would have created and the nearly \$55 billion it would have injected into the New Brunswick and Canadian economies, a review process which delayed the Trans Mountain expansion reviews by six months and added upstream admissions to the review process.

The Liberal cabinet imposed a B.C. north shore tanker ban within months of forming government, with no consultation or scientific evidence to support it. The Liberals cancelled the oil and gas exploration drilling tax credits during a major downturn in the oil and gas sector, which caused the complete collapse of drilling in

Canada. The Liberals' proposed fuel standard will equate to a carbon tax of \$228 per tonne of fuel according to their own analysis.

● (1200)

When the Prime Minister vetoed the northern gateway pipeline, he killed benefit agreements between the project and 31 first nations, worth about \$2 billion. The unprecedented policy will apply not to just transportation fuels but to all industries, including steel production, heating for commercial buildings and home heating fuels like natural gas.

All this is destroying energy jobs and investment from coast to coast to coast. Now, with Bill C-88, we add another coast, the northern coast.

The Liberals love to champion the Prime Minister's personal commitment to a new relationship with indigenous people through new disclosure and friendly policies. They will, no doubt, due so again with Bill C-88.

This is what some organizations and people have to say, with respect to the Prime Minister's so-called commitment:

Stephen Buffalo, the president and CEO of the Indian Resource Council, in the National Post, October 19, 2018 stated:

...the government of Canada appears to consult primarily with people and organizations that share its views...It pays much less attention to other Indigenous groups, equally concerned about environmental sustainability, who seek a more balanced approach to resource development.

Here is another quote from that article:

The policies of the [Prime Minister's] government are systematically constraining the freedom and economic opportunities of the oil- and gas-producing Indigenous peoples of Canada. We are not asking for more from government. We are actually asking for less government intervention

Roy Fox, chief of the Kainaiwa first nation, in The Globe and Mail, December 10, 2018 stated:

While the Kainaiwa [nation] continue to fight against high unemployment, as well as the social destructiveness and health challenges such as addiction and other issues that often accompany poverty, my band's royalties have recently been cut by more than half. Furthermore, all drilling has been cancelled because of high price differentials—the enormous gap between what we get on a barrel of oil in comparison to the benchmark price—which has limited employment opportunities on our lands.

Chief Fox continued:

...it'd be an understatement to say the policies proposed within Bills C-69 and C-48 are damaging our position by restricting access and reducing our ability to survive as a community.... I and the majority of Treaty 7 chiefs strongly oppose the bill for its likely devastating impact on our ability to support our community members, as it would make it virtually impossible for my nation to fully benefit from the development of our energy resources.

I can continue to read quotes. However, we here on this side of the aisle are deeply disappointed that the Prime Minister, who campaigned on a promise of reconciliation with indigenous communities, blatantly would allow and choose to deny our 31 first nations and Métis communities their constitutionally-protected right to economic development.

This is from the Aboriginal Equity Partners:

We see today's announcement as evidence of the government's unwillingness to follow through on the Prime Minister's promise.

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The Government of Canada could have demonstrated its commitment by working with us as environmental stewards of the land and water to enhance marine safety. All 31 AEP plus the other affected communities should have been consulted directly and individually in order to meet the Federal Government's duty to consult.

I have said this many times in my speech. It is time to stop politicizing these projects. Bill C-88 politicizes oil and gas development in the far north by providing the cabinet in Ottawa the unilateral power to shut down oil and gas development without consulting the people it affects directly.

I want to point to a few “key facts” from NRCAN's website. It states that in 2017, Canada's energy sector directly employed more than 276,000 people and indirectly supported over 624,000 jobs; Canada's energy sector accounts for almost 11% of nominal Gross Domestic Product (GDP); government revenues from energy were \$10.3 billion in 2016; more than \$650 million was spent on energy research, development, and deployment by governments in 2016-17; and Canada is the sixth largest energy producer, the fifth largest net exporter, and the eighth largest consumer

Just last week, in *The Globe and Mail*, David McKay, the president and CEO of the Royal Bank of Canada, stated:

History has placed Canada at a crossroads.

No other country of 37 million people has access to more natural resources – and the brainpower to convert those resources into sustainable growth for a stronger society.

And yet, Canada is at risk of taking the wrong turn at the crossroads because some believe there are only two paths: one for economic growth, and the other for environment.

● (1205)

We're seeing this dilemma play out in Canada's energy transition as we struggle to reconcile competing ideas.

We aspire to help the world meet its energy needs and move to ever-cleaner fuel sources. We aim to reduce our carbon footprint. We want Indigenous reconciliation and long-term partnership. And we hope to maintain the standard of living we have come to enjoy.

But without a balanced approach to harnessing our energy future, all of this is at risk.

We need to take a third path—one that will help us develop our natural resources, invest in clean technologies and ensure a prosperous Canada....

But we're reaching a critical time in our country's history.

As our resources sector copes with a growing crisis, we worry that Canada is not setting up our energy industry for growth and success in a changing world.

When I travel abroad, and proudly talk up our country, too many investors tell me they feel Canada's door is closed when it comes to energy. We need to change that impression immediately, because these investors are backing up their words with action.

According to a recent study from the C.D. Howe Institute, Canada has lost \$100-billion in potential investment in oil and gas in the past two years.

We can't forget that energy is not only part of the economic fabric of Canada, it also funds our social needs. The sector has contributed \$90-billion to government revenues over the past five years, which covers about 10 per cent of what the country spends on health care, according to RBC Economics.

And if we squander our huge advantage and cede the dividends to other countries, we'll also risk losing the opportunity to help combat the most daunting challenge of all – climate change.

The article ends with the following charge to government:

We can't stay at a crossroads.

It's time for Canada to pull together on a plan – one that re-energizes our place in the world.

The Conservatives have long viewed the north as a key driver of economic activity for Canada for decades to come. The Liberals,

however, view the north as a place to create huge swaths of protected land and shut down economic activity.

Bill C-88 appears to be based in a desire to win votes in major urban centres rather than reduce poverty in remote regions of Canada. Northerners face the unique challenges of living in the north with resilience and fortitude. They want to create jobs and economic opportunities for their families. They deserve a government that has their backs.

We are at a crossroads and it is time for Canada to pull together a plan. The Conservatives are up to that challenge. We look forward to unveiling our plan and growing the economy in the next election for voters to decide for themselves who really has the best interests of Canadians.

● (1210)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the 20-minute speech of the member across the way. One of the very important things to point out, which in fact happens a lot when we listen to the Conservatives, is that when they talk about the energy industry and sector, what they really mean to say is energy that is derived from oil-based products. A lot of the facts he brought up may have been true related to fossil fuel energy, but the reality of the situation is that when he talks about driving energy workers out of Canada, he is misleading in the sense that he is not capturing the fact that over the past five years the green energy sector has increased by 37% in Canada. Over \$25 billion have been invested into green energy in Canada.

In fact, for the first time, as recently reported by *The Globe and Mail*, the newspaper the Conservatives like to quote so much in the House lately, the green energy sector now employs 23,700 people whereas the oil sands are at 23,340. Despite what we have heard about the oil sector specifically and its contribution to energy, would he at least not recognize that now, for the first time pretty much ever, the green energy sector is a significant component to producing energy for our country?

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Mr. Speaker, as my friend mentioned, green energy has seen investment of about \$25 billion. We have also seen about \$100 billion more leave the energy sector and the oil and gas sector.

He talks about the 23,700 people working in the clean energy sector. What about the 100,000-plus people in Alberta and Saskatchewan who have lost their jobs?

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I do not think it is one or the other; it is both. As we have said many times in the House and elsewhere, Canada has some of the most responsible resource management anywhere in the world. We are a world leader. We should be promoting that. If we want to ensure that the bad actors in this world, like Nicaragua and Venezuela, start to up their game, we need to get our product to markets that want a resource responsibly extracted. We have great labour and environmental laws, and the list goes on.

We should be promoting this. We should be getting our energy to markets. We can have a green energy sector working with the oil and gas sector, not just pick one over the other.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, one of the important aspects of Bill C-88 is that it would restore the four water and land co-management boards, which were established by a negotiated agreement between the federal and territorial governments and the first nations of the north, but the Tlicho and Sahtu people went to court and had that bill struck down.

What is important and significant is that the land claim and self-government agreements are now modern treaties entrenched in the Constitution.

Could the member tell us how his party rationalizes arguing against the Constitution of Canada in saying that the boards should not be restored?

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Mr. Speaker, Conservatives have been saying the whole time that we need to ensure that the bill lets people in the north decide their own future. We have been talking about this, and even my speech, which was 20 minutes long, talked about how giving more power to the territorial governments and letting them have control over their resource development are good things. These are things we should be championing here.

I do not think having Ottawa make decisions for the people in the north is a very smart path forward. Giving more power over their decisions to those who are there on the ground is the way to go.

• (1215)

Mr. William Amos (Pontiac, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out the inconsistency in speech by the member opposite. On the one hand he is suggesting that the indigenous people of our northwest should be in control of their destiny. That absolutely should be the case. However, the legislation passed by the Harper administration ran absolutely roughshod over their constitutionally entrenched rights. Their land and water boards were amalgamated and were effectively dealt with so disrespectfully that the courts up north upheld an injunction.

How can the member possibly suggest that our government, in issuing a moratorium on Arctic offshore drilling in the northwest—which I happen to be very proud of—is somehow controlling the future of that resource, when the Conservatives, under the Harper administration, stripped the land and water boards of so much of their authority?

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Mr. Speaker, I would point out that Bill C-15 under the previous Parliament received support from the Liberal Party, including from the current Prime Minister.

I will also point out that we had agreements with the 31 first nations communities along the northern gateway pipeline that was

killed. They were directly impacted by the northern gateway pipeline. This was worth about \$2 billion in economic activity for those first nations communities. They have spoken up loud and clear to say that there are decisions being made in Ottawa that are impacting their economic future.

If we want to reduce poverty in some of these northern communities, responsible resource development is a path forward to create jobs, opportunity and wealth. This is what they are asking for, and I think it is something we should heed.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague really articulated well that the Liberals like consultation by convenience. He gave a number of examples, such as the moratorium up north in the Beaufort Sea for which the leadership had half an hour of notice, or the tanker moratorium, or Bill C-69. Liberals talk a good talk about consultation, but in actual fact they have not done a very good job, including when, as we found out, they had not done a proper job with the Trans Mountain pipeline.

Does the member think this is part of the government's anti-development plan, in which it consults if people want to shut things down but it does not consult when people want to move forward with economic opportunities in their communities?

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Mr. Speaker, I agree that Bill C-88 is yet another anti-energy policy from the government. It is driving investment out of Canada. It is taking potential opportunities away from those in the north who want a path forward, a path to prosperity by harnessing resources in a very responsible manner, something in which Canada is a world leader. If people in the north are asking for more power to define their future, to create their own path, that is something we should be doing, rather than having an Ottawa-knows-best approach.

I was at the AME Roundup in Vancouver a few months ago. It is a very large mining conference, although not as big as PDAC in Toronto. When we spoke with people in the north, that was the number one issue they were talking about. These were not mining people from big companies; they were juniors, start-ups, people in the middle, all talking about the fact that there is great potential in the north for responsible resource development, but they do not feel that making the north a park, basically, is a way to do that or to create jobs, wealth and opportunity.

We should be listening to those people.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what we have before us is very positive legislation that ultimately would have a positive impact in northern Canada. That includes being sensitive to the many different stakeholders as well as to the environment in the development of resources and so forth. I believe the Government of Canada has been called upon to do this. I do not share the same pessimism that comes from across the way.

This is a government that has been very good at developing our country as a whole, both from an economic and an environmental perspective. That is one of the reasons we created 900,000-plus jobs.

Government Orders

Does the member feel that there are amendments that the Conservatives will bring forward to try to improve upon the legislation, or is their intention just to vote against it as it is?

• (1220)

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Mr. Speaker, as the member knows, the Liberals have the majority of seats in this Parliament, so they are going to vote for it and we will be voting against it. We will try within the committee structure to work with the Liberals. Whether or not they will be receptive to anything proposed from this side of the House is yet to be seen.

The member opposite talked about the economy. Many economists would agree that it is going very well because of the U.S. economy, which is on fire right now, despite what the Liberals are trying to do in slowing down this economy with red tape, regulations and high taxes.

Jobs are created with low taxes and reasonable red tape and regulations—full stop. It is not because the government says that jobs are going to be created or the Liberals come up with a new next great government program. Jobs are created by low taxes and reasonable red tape and regulations, something they are not doing. That is why this economy is going forward. It is not what they are proposing.

Mr. Matt DeCoursey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time this afternoon with the member for Winnipeg Centre, but first let me acknowledge that we are here on the traditional unceded territory of the Algonquin people.

I stand in support of Bill C-88, An Act to amend the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act and the Canada Petroleum Resources Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

The proposed legislation now before us would modernize the regulatory regime that governs resource development in the Northwest Territories.

The central goal of Canada's approach to regulating resource development in the north has been to realize a project's full potential value while minimizing and mitigating any negative environmental, social and economic impacts. To achieve this goal, regulatory regimes across Canada include measures to assess proposed projects and to track the progress and performance of approved projects.

Environmental impact is a key consideration throughout all phases. In general, and particularly in the north, environmental impact is defined as any effect on land, water, air or any other component of the environment, as well as on wildlife harvesting.

The assessment includes any effect on the social and cultural environment or on heritage resources.

The northern regime has long been ahead of the southern environmental assessment regime in this respect. In the north, regulatory regimes are notably different from those in the rest of Canada, for several reasons. The most significant reason is that many northern indigenous people have concluded land claim agreements with the Government of Canada, and these agreements have created a robust system through which indigenous governments have a meaningful role in processes to review and license proposed resource

development projects, have representation on boards, and have a strong voice in the process from the beginning to the end. This is reconciliation in action.

The Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act is part of the legal framework for resource development in the north. The act authorizes a unique regulatory regime that references a series of comprehensive land claim and self-government agreements with indigenous groups, including the Gwich'in, Sahtu Dene and Tlicho.

The regime features an integrated and coordinated system of boards and ensures indigenous representation. The result is co-management. The Government of Canada, the Government of the Northwest Territories and indigenous governments all participate in reviews of and final decisions about proposed projects.

In recent decades, the north has experienced unprecedented change, and the pace of change continues to accelerate. Territorial governments have acquired new authorities under devolution, for example, and diamond mining has generated billions of dollars in revenues and created thousands of jobs. As well, the impacts of climate change have been greater in the north and have accelerated more quickly there than anywhere else in the world. Given these realities, the regulatory regime governing resource development in the north must evolve to keep pace, and this is the main impetus for Bill C-88.

About eight years ago, the Government of Canada began a process to modernize the regulatory regime at the same time as it moved to devolve greater authorities to the Northwest Territories. In 2014, Canada enacted the Northwest Territories Devolution Act. Along with authorizing devolution, this act also made important changes to the regulatory regime. One of these changes was the amalgamation of four existing boards into a single entity, the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board.

Almost immediately, the Tlicho government and Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated launched court actions against Canada. The lawsuits claimed that amalgamation violated land claim agreements. The Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories granted an injunction, which effectively halted amalgamation and prevented the implementation of several elements of the regulatory regime. Bill C-88 proposes to repeal amalgamation, which would resolve the litigation and support Canada's commitment to reconciliation with indigenous peoples.

• (1225)

Bill C-88 would also authorize a series of policy elements that the court injunction also blocked. These elements include development certificates and an enforcement scheme for part 5 of the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act. They also include regional studies, extensions of the terms of board members, regulation-making authorities related to consultations, a 10-day pause in the environmental impact assessment process, and a requirement to give proper notice of government inspections of Gwich'in- and Sahtu-owned land.

Government Orders

Together the changes proposed in the legislation now before us would significantly strengthen the regulatory regime in the north. They would ensure that the assessment of environmental impacts would remain paramount in both the review of proposed projects and the monitoring of approved projects. The changes would also ensure that any contravention of a regulation could result in a stiff penalty, such as a large fine, and possibly, incarceration. Bill C-88 would also ensure that indigenous governments would continue to participate meaningfully in reviews of and decisions about development projects in the north.

Another aspect of Bill C-88 aims to further strengthen environmental protection in the Arctic through the Canada Petroleum Resources Act. As my hon. colleagues can appreciate, Canada's Arctic features some of the most fragile ecosystems in the world. Two years ago, the Prime Minister committed to stepping up Canada's efforts to protect Arctic ecosystems. In particular, he called for a ban on any new Arctic offshore resource exploration and extraction. Rather than set a deadline for the moratorium, the Government of Canada committed to reviewing it every five years. The review will focus on an assessment of the latest climate and marine sciences.

Along with imposing a moratorium, the Government of Canada began a series of consultations with territorial and northern indigenous governments and the holders of offshore oil and gas rights in Arctic waters to discuss their interests. A central focus of these consultations was how best to balance environmental and economic concerns and how to protect the offshore environment while pursuing safe, responsible activities that create jobs and economic opportunities in northern indigenous economies. The result of these consultations are the proposed amendments before us in Bill C-88.

First, to complement the moratorium on new licences, the amendments would allow the Government of Canada to ban any oil and gas exploration or development activities under 11 existing exploration and significant discovery licences in the Beaufort Sea.

The amendments would also fix a problem that came to light regarding the plan for a science-based review every five years. Some oil and gas rights in the Arctic offshore will begin to expire before the completion of the next review period. With a ban on activity in the Arctic offshore, these rights suddenly lost all their value. The discussions identified a solution, that being a freeze on the terms of existing rights for the duration of the moratorium. Bill C-88 would authorize this solution.

Canada's regulatory regime is among the best in the world, because it continually seeks to strike an appropriate balance between economic, environmental and social concerns. Key to this ability is the careful and thorough assessment of potential project impacts. An effective regulatory regime makes it possible to foster both economic activity and environmental protection.

The legislation now before us aims to achieve this goal in the north, and I urge my hon. colleagues to endorse Bill C-88 at second reading.

• (1230)

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to speak to a broader issue. The

government has consistently talked about what its priority bills are in terms of moving forward, but our time is getting very short.

The Liberals have accused the Conservatives of stalling on Bill C-91, the indigenous languages legislation, and on Bill C-92, the child welfare bill. They have said that it is absolutely critical that we move forward and get them done. They like to lay the blame for their lack of House management on the Conservatives.

We fully anticipated that we would be talking to the important child welfare legislation. I wonder if my colleague could comment on the fact that his government seems to have priority legislation but does not seem to be able to get things through the House in a timely way. The government ends up cutting off debate on every single piece of legislation that comes along due to its poor House management. This is just another example.

I thought we would be talking about Bill C-92, but we are talking about a bill the government introduced six months ago and that has been on the floor for only a short time, and suddenly we have time allocation.

Mr. Matt DeCoursey: Mr. Speaker, I am always happy to talk about the priorities of this government, those priorities being helping middle-class Canadians and growing the Canadian economy; lifting thousands of Canadians out of poverty; fighting climate change in a meaningful way; and advancing the most important relationship for this government, that being the relationship with indigenous peoples.

Every time we have brought forth measures to grow the economy and support middle-class Canadians, the Conservatives have opposed them. Every time we have brought forth measures to help lift 825,000 Canadians out of poverty, the Conservatives have opposed them.

We have a plan to fight climate change. What do the Conservatives have? They have an unsolicited, unethical mass texting campaign. That is not a climate change plan.

Every time we bring forward investments and measures to advance reconciliation in this country, including in Bill C-88, the Conservatives oppose them.

Our priorities, our plan and our results are clear to Canadians. Why do the Conservatives continue to oppose them?

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend and colleague for taking this important step to reverse some of the wounds the Harper government inflicted on indigenous people.

Government Orders

There are important issues that still have not been addressed and need to be addressed, including adequate drinking water for indigenous peoples, waste water infrastructure, education and the implementation of rights, including in my area, where indigenous people are still in court with the government in an effort to establish the right to catch and sell fish so they can implement rights that are protected under the Constitution. The government continues to fight them tooth and nail. The Liberals have spent over \$19 million on lawyers to fight the first nations and indigenous people of my region.

Billions of dollars are needed for many things. I will speak to the housing issue, because the member cannot speak about a case that is in the courts right now.

We know how inadequate housing is. I have 10 first nations in my riding. Ahousaht is one of them. Sixteen people are living in one home in overcrowded, mouldy conditions. They are waiting for adequate housing. The Liberal government promised to build housing for indigenous people.

Could the member speak to why his government has not advanced this promise in the way it needs to so that everyone has healthy, safe and secure housing, as people should?

• (1235)

Mr. Matt DeCoursey: Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend raises the importance of advancing reconciliation and quality of life for indigenous people in this country, and I hope to have many more years to work on that with him in all facets in this chamber.

Our government has made historic investments in overcoming the long-term boil water drinking advisories in first nations communities across this country, and we have had significant results to date. We are on track to meet our target of having no more boil water advisories, long term, in first nations communities in a few years.

We have made significant investments through our \$40-billion national housing strategy, a lot of which goes to support indigenous communities.

We have legislation coming forward to deal with the child welfare situation in indigenous communities. We have an important bill in front of Parliament that deals with strengthening indigenous languages in this country, something that is fundamental to the identity of indigenous people here. We also have this legislation, which would advance reconciliation with indigenous people in the north.

These are all elements of the government's broader cross-government agenda to advance reconciliation in a meaningful way. I look forward to continuing to work with my colleague in the years to come to see these important steps taken for all Canadians.

Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette (Winnipeg Centre, Lib.):

[Member spoke in Cree as follows:]

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[Cree text translated as follows:]

Mr. Speaker, to all my relations, I say hello. I am very proud to be here.

[English]

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to express my support for Bill C-88. I also acknowledge that we are here on the traditional territory of the Algonquin people.

This important bill proposes to improve the regulatory regime that governs resource development in the Northwest Territories. Equally important, in my view, is the contribution Bill C-88 would make to reconciliation with indigenous peoples.

Throughout much of this country's history, indigenous peoples have been actively prevented from contributing fully to and benefiting equally from the social and economic prosperity that so many of us take for granted. Reconciliation and a renewed relationship with indigenous peoples will help create the conditions needed to close the socio-economic gap that persists between indigenous and non-indigenous Canadians.

Today we have an opportunity to right some of the wrongs of the past and to unlock economic growth for indigenous peoples and all Canadians. We have a chance to create an environment that supports self-determination. This will not only be good for indigenous peoples but will be good for all of Canada.

The National Indigenous Economic Development Board has estimated that engaging indigenous people in the economy at the same rate as non-indigenous people would boost Canada's GDP by 1.5% and create almost \$28 billion in economic growth. Several others have suggested that the number is actually much higher.

Reconciliation is a multi-faceted undertaking that ultimately must involve and engage all people in Canada, indigenous and non-indigenous alike. At the personal level, it involves confronting and erasing all prejudice, embracing fresh ideas and throwing out those racist ideas of the past. For the Government of Canada, it involves sweeping changes to legislation, policies and how we approach policy.

Allow me to quote the Prime Minister's description of the challenge facing Canada. He stated:

Reconciliation calls upon us all to confront our past and commit to charting a brighter, more inclusive future. We must acknowledge that centuries of colonial practices have denied the inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples. The recognition and implementation of Indigenous rights will chart a new way forward for our Government to work with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples and to undo decades of mistrust, poverty, broken promises, and injustices.

The legislation now before us would support reconciliation in a clear and unequivocal way by re-establishing the land and water boards in a manner requested by indigenous communities themselves. The boards would enable three indigenous communities in the Northwest Territories, the Gwich'in, the Sahtu and the Tlicho, to influence resource development in their traditional territories in a direct and meaningful way.

Government Orders

Four years ago, Parliament endorsed legislation to restructure the regulatory regime governing resource development in the Northwest Territories. Part of this plan involved the amalgamation of four boards into a single entity, the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board.

Soon after the plan became law, the Tlicho Government and the Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated launched court actions against the Government of Canada. Both indigenous governments challenged Canada's authority to unilaterally eliminate boards that had been legally authorized years earlier. A 1992 comprehensive land claims agreement had established the Gwich'in Land and Water Board, which was given effect by the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act in 1998, for instance. In 2003, the Tlicho land claims and self-government agreement had authorized the creation of the Wek'èezhii Land and Water Board.

The court challenges effectively put a halt to some of the restructuring measures included in the 2014 legislation under the Harper regime. The new Government of Canada agreed to work in co-operation with northern indigenous communities, including the plaintiffs in the court actions, to resolve the impasse and to restructure the regulatory regime in a way that would meet the needs of all concerned.

Representatives of indigenous groups, the Government of Northwest Territories and industry met with federal officials. The meetings inspired the Government of Canada to draft a legislative proposal and to share the draft with all interested parties.

• (1240)

This collaborative effort not only exemplifies the spirit of reconciliation but also illustrates reconciliation in action. It is “reconciliation”, and it abides by the principles respecting the Government of Canada's relationship with indigenous peoples established last year. For instance, principle 1 states, “The Government of Canada recognizes that all relations with Indigenous peoples need to be based on the recognition and implementation of their right to self-determination, including the inherent right of self-government.”

Principle 5 states, “The Government of Canada recognizes that treaties, agreements, and other constructive arrangements between Indigenous peoples and the Crown have been and are intended to be acts of reconciliation based on mutual recognition and respect.”

Following this approach soon produced a negotiated solution. We sat down and we negotiated. It is a solution articulated today in Bill C-88. However, to fully appreciate the value of the solution requires an understanding of how it came into being. This was not a case of the Government of Canada imposing its will on others. In fact, the bill before us incorporates the suggestions made by the negotiators representing other groups, including indigenous governments. They were central to this.

One change to the original draft legislation proposal relates to court jurisdiction for judicial reviews of administrative monetary penalties imposed under the regulatory regime. The change ensures consistency with exclusive jurisdiction of the Northwest Territories' Supreme Court under section 32 of the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act. A second modification to the original draft

legislation aims to ensure consistency with comprehensive land claims agreements. New language was added to clarify consultation obligations related to administrative monetary penalties.

Is it not exciting to talk about administrative monetary penalties? These changes came about because the parties negotiated as equals in an atmosphere of mutual respect and mutual recognition of rights and responsibilities.

Should Bill C-88 become law, if it can make its way through this Parliament, its effects would also foster reconciliation. This is because co-management is central to the regulatory regime envisioned in the legislation now before us. Boards comprised of members nominated by northern indigenous governments and the governments of the Northwest Territories and Canada would render decisions about proposed development projects. Board decisions are legally binding on all parties, including developers. This means that northern indigenous governments would be fully able to exercise their right to self-determination.

The onus has long been on indigenous peoples to prove that their rights exist. For too long, indigenous communities have had to fight to exercise their rights. This is why reconciliation absolutely requires the Government of Canada, on behalf of all Canadians, to base all of its relations with indigenous peoples on the recognition and the implementation of existing rights.

On one level, Bill C-88 would repeal the amalgamation of land and water boards in the Northwest Territories. It would also modernize the regulatory regime governing resource development in the region. On a higher level, Bill C-88 would foster reconciliation with indigenous peoples across Canada. It would demonstrate to indigenous communities across the country that the Government of Canada is committed to reconciliation.

Hon. members of this chamber, the people's House, have an opportunity to show their commitment to reconciliation, and I encourage all of them to join me in supporting Bill C-88.

[Member spoke in Cree as follows:]

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[Cree text translated as follows:]

Thank you again, that is all.

[English]

• (1245)

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to my colleague talking about the importance of consultation and collaboration. Does he not realize that the bill would give a new power to the federal government, which has never been there before, in terms of its ability to prohibit and issue orders when in the national interest and to actually do a complete ban?

The bill does not talk about the government's need to collaborate. It does not talk about consultation. It gives the federal government new powers and authority to completely override both the territorial governments and indigenous governments. Does that not create any concern for the member, given the nature of his speech in which he talked about the importance of collaboration?

Government Orders

Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette: Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that all indigenous governments were involved in negotiating this agreement with Bill C-88, as well as the Northwest Territories government. It has the support of all of these governments because they will be at the table.

Obviously, governments can take actions to try to negate the rights of indigenous peoples. It depends on the government of the day. However, I know that the inherent policy of this government is to work with indigenous peoples. It is not to negate their rights, but to work with them in a collaborative approach.

Perhaps future governments of Canada will move forward in a different manner and try to negate those rights. However, I know that our government is committed to working with indigenous peoples.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the words of the hon. member on the other side about the need for new measures to show that the government is sincere about reconciliation and about honouring the rights and interests of indigenous peoples.

Surely, then, the member would support the amendment we are calling for, to actually entrench the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the bill. Of course that would deliver on the Prime Minister's promise, from quite some time ago, that he would in fact take action on all 93 of the calls to action by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. One of those calls to action is exactly that. It is to move forward and entrench those rights in the UN declaration in all federal laws going forward.

Is the member willing to accept that amendment and entrench the United Nations declaration in Bill C-88?

Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette: Mr. Speaker, I was very proud to have the opportunity of trying to get Bill C-262 passed in the House of Commons. It was a great opportunity. I remember speaking with many of my colleagues, the indigenous caucus, and trying to work with the member for Thunder Bay—Rainy River, to ensure that UNDRIP passed in the House of Commons. I know it is before the Senate and the document is not yet law. The senators in the other place have to decide on what will actually occur with that bill and I hope they are able to come to a final conclusion on that.

For me, I think the bill already does incorporate the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the law. It ensures that there is respect and self-determination of government. I talked about principles 1 and 5, which recognize self-determination and the right to self-government, which I think is central to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This goes, part and parcel, with all the other policies we have been doing in the budget, for instance, with water, health, education, economic prosperity, a new fiscal relationship with urban indigenous peoples, and even with emergency management. All of these things are about ensuring that we have an implemented UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, human rights for all peoples across Canada.

• (1250)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to join the debate on Bill C-88.

I would like to tell my friend from Winnipeg Centre that I certainly support the bill. I worked in the House along with the

former member for Northwest Territories, Dennis Bevington, who was mentioned earlier in debate, and we miss his voice here, to try to stop the changes that were made in 2014.

I think returning to the status quo, while laudable, is not as good as taking a step forward while we have the chance. Would the hon. member for Winnipeg Centre reconsider? The bill is certainly consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, but the bill does not commit Canada to exercise its rights in respect of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette: Mr. Speaker, I disagree with the hon. member.

This is giving life to UNDRIP in an actual bill before Parliament, Bill C-88. It ensures that UNDRIP is fully respected. UNDRIP, in Bill C-262, is a document that governs all of the Canadian government, ensuring all policies and laws come into accordance with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and also with an annual report. I remember putting forward a private member's bill of my own that would require reporting to the House of Commons on an annual basis.

Nonetheless, I still believe that the bill is a good way forward. It was negotiated in full accordance with all the indigenous peoples concerned by the bill. That is what we call respect. That is what we call self-determination: sitting down, having a conversation, talking. That is how we make treaties.

The difficult part will come in the future when we need to make sure that these treaties are respected. That involves the government of the day and making sure that we have a good government that will respect those rights into the future.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Bill C-88, another Liberal anti-resource development policy that is driving investment and businesses out of Canada, costing Canadian workers their jobs, costing indigenous people jobs and undermining their aspirations, work and their hopes for self-sufficiency, and increasing poverty rates in the north and in rural and remote regions.

Like the Liberals' no more pipelines Bill C-69, their Arctic offshore drilling ban, and their oil shipping ban bills, Bill C-48 and Bill C-86, Bill C-88 would further politicize resource development by expanding the powers of the cabinet to unilaterally block economic development and would add to the mountain of red tape proponents must overcome before they can get shovels in the ground.

The bill is also a full rejection of calls from elected territorial leaders for increased control over the development of natural resources in their territories and would cede more power and control to the federal government. Bill C-88 would reverse Conservative measures to devolve power to the territories and puts new powers in the hands of the federal cabinet. The Liberals clearly believe that Ottawa knows best.

Government Orders

At the AME Roundup in Vancouver in January, I was in a room full of northerners who were unanimous in their opposition to the Liberal government's "one big park" agenda for the north. There were elected officials, Inuit business leaders and corporate executives with decades of experience working with first nations in resource development in the north.

In Canada, it can take 20 years to get from the discovery of a mineral deposit to a functioning mine. The challenge in the north is that most of the mines are in the final decade of production and no new mines are in the approvals process. Resource projects and communities and residents in the north have to overcome big challenges: geography, climate, distance, access to land and a lack of services and infrastructure in the many remote and rural regions in which these projects are located. The north will pay for the Liberals' mistakes with the loss of an entire generation's economic advancement as mining completely leaves the region.

The previous Conservative government rightly viewed the north as essential to Canada's sovereignty, as a key area at stake in global security and as a place of real potential for significant economic activities today and for decades to come. Conservatives know resource development is often the only source of jobs and business potential in remote and northern regions where they are already scarce.

The Liberals meanwhile are arbitrarily creating huge swaths of protected land with little consultation. The regulatory uncertainty caused by their many bills and policies is making capital harder to access. These actions are challenging meaningful engagement and relationships with first nations in the north, including the Inuit, indigenous people and Métis communities. The Liberals' top-down paternalistic actions rob northerners of opportunities and of decision-making authority and do nothing to reduce poverty in remote northern regions of Canada.

Conservatives, by contrast, have sought to devolve power over and ownership of natural resources to the territories, enabling and empowering their abilities and their authority to manage and benefit from their rich and diverse natural resource opportunities.

In 2007, Neil McCrank was commissioned to write a report on improving the regulatory and environmental assessment regimes in Canada's north. That report, "Road to Improvement", found the regulatory process in the Northwest Territories at the time was complex, costly, unpredictable and time-consuming. The merging of the three boards into one was a key recommendation. The report said that this approach would address the complexity and the capacity issues inherent to the current model by making more efficient use of expenditures and administrative resources.

Importantly, the report also said that this was not meant to diminish or reduce the influence that aboriginal people have on resource management in the north; rather, it was meant as an attempt to allow for this influence in a practical way, while at the same time enabling responsible resource development.

The option to merge the three separate indigenous boards into the single unified board was also included as an available option in the three modern land claim agreements signed with the first nations in the Northwest Territories.

In 2013, the previous Conservative government introduced Bill C-15 to implement that approach. That bill received overwhelming support in the House. We would not know it from the heckling across the aisle, but including from the Liberal Party. The Liberals and the NDP voted for the bill at the final stage in the House of Commons, but now the Liberals have decided to reverse it, to return to the job-killing overly complex and disjointed "Ottawa knows best" approach, setting back the hopes and aspirations of northern communities that are desperate for natural resource jobs.

● (1255)

It is a myth that indigenous communities, particularly in the north, are opposed to natural resource development. This myth is perpetuated by the Liberal left and elected politicians even in this House of Commons. Indigenous leaders are speaking out against anti-resource activists and in favour of the many benefits and potential for their communities. Bob McLeod, premier of the Northwest Territories, said:

All too often...[indigenous people] are only valued as responsible stewards of their land if they choose not to touch it. This is eco-colonialism.

He went on to say:

...it is oppressive and irresponsible to assume that Indigenous northerners do not support resource development.

PJ Akeagok of Qikiqtani Inuit Association said, "Absolutely we want to participate in these industries. There's some real exciting benefits that are out there." Lee Qammaniq, a heavy equipment operator at Baffinland's Mary River mine, says, "I'm doing it so [my son] can have a better life."

That ideological and heavy-handed "one big park" agenda in the north is being implemented often without consulting northerners on the use of the land around them. It is threatening the way of life of many Inuit and indigenous communities.

A little farther south, Isaac Laboucan-Avirom, chief of the Woodland Cree First Nation, says:

It frustrates me, as a first nations individual, when I have to almost beg for monies when we're living in one of the most resource-rich countries in the world. Why should our people be living in third-class or second-class communities when we are surrounded by natural resources that go into paving our roads, putting in rec centres, and so on?

In northern Saskatchewan, English River chief Marie Black, speaks about mining for many across the country in her direct assessment, saying, "It is very, very important that we go ahead and work with industry. This is for jobs."

So many indigenous leaders are speaking out. They are leading the fight, really, about the importance of resource development to their communities to meet their needs right now and for future generations. They are fighting against the layers of Liberal anti-resource development policies and laws that violate their abilities to make decisions about their resources on and around their lands and about which they were not consulted by the Liberals in the first place.

Government Orders

Indigenous communities support sustainable and responsible natural resources development in their territories because it offers a real path to self-sufficiency and a real opportunity for actual economic reconciliation. It damages reconciliation when politicians make promises they do not keep, set expectations and then do not deliver, or pass laws in the apparent best interests of indigenous Canadians without actually fully consulting them.

There is no stronger example of the patriarchal, patronizing and quite frankly colonial approach of the current Liberals than their treatment of first nations who want to develop, provide services, and supply and transport oil and gas. When this Liberal Prime Minister vetoed the northern gateway pipeline, he killed benefit agreements between the project and 31 first nations that were worth \$2 billion. Those 31 first nations said:

We are deeply disappointed that a Prime Minister who campaigned on a promise of reconciliation with Indigenous communities would now blatantly choose to deny our 31 First Nations and Métis communities of our constitutionally protected right to economic development.

The Liberals' shipping ban, Bill C-48, is opposed by more than 30 first nations in B.C. and in Alberta because it would kill economic opportunities for their communities. Chief Isaac Laboucan-Avirom says, "What I don't understand about this tanker moratorium is that there's no other tanker moratorium on other coastlines in Canada. You have oil coming in from Saudi Arabia, up and down the St. Lawrence River right now."

Gary Alexcee, deputy chief of Eagle Spirit Energy Holding Ltd., said:

With no consultation, the B.C. first nations groups have been cut off economically with no opportunity to even sit down with the government to further negotiate Bill C-48. If that's going to be passed, then I would say we might as well throw up our hands and let the government come and put blankets on us that are infected with smallpox so we can go away. That's what this bill means to us.

He went on to say:

Today, the way it sits, we have nothing but handouts that are not even enough to have the future growth of first nations in our communities of British Columbia.

Then, there is the targeted northern offshore drilling ban, incredibly announced in southern Canada by this Prime Minister without any real consultation with the most directly impacted indigenous communities, their elected leaders or indigenous-owned businesses.

Duane Smith, chair and CEO of the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, says:

We are sitting on nine trillion cubic feet of gas and it doesn't make sense for the community to truck in its energy source from 2,000 kilometres away when we should be developing these.

Northwest Territories premier, Bob McLeod, said, "It feels like a step backward." He went on:

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

He confirmed that this Prime Minister only informed him about the decision two hours before he made the announcement.

● (1300)

Nunavut's former premier, Peter Taptuna, has said, "We have been promised by Ottawa that they would consult and make decisions based on meaningful discussion. So far that hasn't happened."

Even Liberal Yukon Premier Sandy Silver, whose territory is not affected by the bans, sided with his northern counterparts, saying, "When you have unilateral decisions being made in any topic on considerations that affect the North, you need to have northerners in those conversations."

There was also, of course, the announcement made in Washington, D.C. that a large portion of Canada's territories will be prohibited from development, again with minimal or no consultation with actual northerners.

The mayor of Tuktoyaktuk recently said at a House of Commons committee:

We're proud people who like to work for a living. We're not used to getting social assistance and that kind of stuff. Now we're getting tourists coming up, but that's small change compared to when you work in oil and gas and you're used to that kind of living. Our people are used to that. We're not used to selling trinkets and T-shirts and that kind of stuff.

He specifically took issue with matters addressed by the bill, saying, "the Liberals should be helping us. They shut down our offshore gasification and put a moratorium right across the whole freaking Arctic without even consulting us. They never said a word to us."

The Liberal approach to the north is not empowering first nations. It is trapping the Inuit and indigenous people of the north in poverty by blocking their best opportunities for jobs, for government revenues and for social services to deal with all the needs that colleagues here are raising in this debate, for healthy living and to help make life more affordable.

Northerners know that Bill C-88 would add another roadblock to resource development on top of the Liberals' "no more pipelines" Bill C-69.

While co-management of the assessment process limits some of the damage of Bill C-69, this legislation would still have a significant impact on resource development in the north. Whether it is changes to the navigable waters act, falling investment dollars in natural resource projects across Canada or limited essential services, equipment and expertise to develop projects in the north, this flawed legislation would damage the north.

Dozens of indigenous communities, along with the National Coalition of Chiefs, the Indian Resource Council, the Eagle Spirit Chiefs Council, Alberta's Assembly of Treaty Chiefs and the majority of Treaty 7 first nations, as well as hundreds of indigenous companies, are joining premiers and industry leaders in opposing Bill C-69.

Government Orders

Experts in indigenous law and rights are clear. Bill C-69 does nothing concrete to improve indigenous consultation, either by expanding the scope of indigenous rights or by practically increasing the measures, expectations and standards for the Crown's duty to consult. In fact, it actually weakens indigenous voices in the assessment process by removing the standing test and opening up project reviews to literally anyone, anywhere, instead of focusing on input from locally impacted Canadian citizens, indigenous communities, and subject matter and technical experts.

Mark Wittrup, vice-president of environmental and regulatory affairs at Clifton Associates, has said, "The proposed [impact assessment] process will create significant delays, missed opportunities and likely impact those that need that economic development the most: northern and Indigenous communities."

Indigenous leaders have also noticed. Roy Fox, chief of the Blood Tribe first nation and a former CEO of the Indian Resource Council, has said, "I don't have any confidence in Bill C-69. I am fearful, and I am confident, that it will keep my people in poverty."

Stephen Buffalo, the president and CEO of the Indian Resource Council, which currently represents more than 100 indigenous oil and gas developers, has said, "Indigenous communities are on the verge of a major economic breakthrough, one that finally allows Indigenous people to share in Canada's economic prosperity. Bill C-69 will stop this progress in its tracks."

The more than 30 first nations in the Eagle Spirit Chiefs Council say they will take the government to court over C-69, because the bill could make it "impossible to complete a project" and because the removal of the standing test could lead to foreign interests "overriding the interests of aboriginal title holders" in Canada.

Bill C-88 is yet another example of the Liberals' pattern of adding red tape and roadblocks to resource development, which is something a Conservative government will reverse to help northern indigenous communities, all northerners and all Canadians get ahead.

The future of mining in Canada is very much related to opening up the north. Conservatives know how crucial infrastructure is to this ambition, as it can cost up to six times more to explore, and two and a half times more to build mines in remote regions. The Liberal-imposed carbon tax will hike the already expensive cost of living and cost of operations in the north even higher.

The Conservative Party has long believed that this means giving northerners the autonomy to make decisions based on their priorities and to benefit from those decisions the same way the provinces do.

● (1305)

In natural resources, mining is one of the areas where first nations are the most active, having secured 455 agreements in the sector between 2000 and 2017, often including priority training, hiring and subcontracting commitments. In 2016, indigenous people working in the mining sector had a median income twice as high as workers in their communities overall and nearly twice as high as that of non-indigenous people as a whole.

The problem is that mines are currently in the later years of their productive life, and there are no new mines in the approvals process.

By reverting to the old, convoluted impact assessment and approvals process, the Liberals are reintroducing a major barrier to proposing and then actually completing projects in the Northwest Territories. Therefore, as I said before, the north will pay for Liberal mistakes with the loss of an entire generation's economic advancement as mining completely leaves the north.

However, there is hope. Conservatives will work to cut unnecessary red tape to bring investment and jobs back to Canada, while maintaining, enhancing and protecting Canada's reputation. Our reputation is second to none as a global leader in environmental standards, performance, and community and indigenous consultation for responsible resource development.

Conservatives know the reality is that when a resource project gets shut down in Canada, the most regulated and environmentally responsible major resource producer in the world, all it means is that the money, the businesses and the jobs go to countries with lower environmental, civil and human rights protections and standards.

The world needs more Canadian resource development, not less of it. Canada can and must still protect the environment while getting to a "yes" on major projects. When approval is given, the projects must be able to get built. Instead of turning the north into one big park, the Liberals should listen to northern first nations and hear their call for empowerment to develop their natural resources in a responsible and sustainable way.

This bill represents a major regression in the ability of northerners to manage their own natural resources to the benefit of their communities and in the best interests of the entire country. This legislation is yet another example of the Liberal government believing it knows better than local communities, indigenous communities, regions and provinces, resource developers and private sector proponents.

Conservatives will work to reverse these damaging legislative changes, eliminate the roadblocks that the Liberals are putting in the path of northern resource projects and of indigenous communities, and help northern Canadians and all Canadians get ahead.

● (1310)

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of my most cherished times in this House was when I got the Tlicho land claim and self-government agreement, which is referenced in Bill C-88, through the House of Commons. It was a very exciting day for the Tlicho people, but there were some objections from the Conservatives.

I would like to ask the member if the Conservative Party now agrees with the Tlicho self-government and land claim agreement.

Government Orders

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Mr. Speaker, the changes that the Liberals made to YESAA and that they made in the Yukon actually have exactly the same impact as Bill C-88 and other legislation, which is a regression of the empowerment of territorial and local decision-making over responsible resource development.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the people of the Northwest Territories know best how their resources should be used and managed. By eliminating the regional land and water boards, the Conservative government ignored the spirit, intent and words of the constitutionally-protected land claim and self-government agreements. They failed to listen to first nations and northerners and it led, as we know, to a lengthy legal battle.

I have to ask my colleague and friend from Alberta why the Conservatives are continuing to weaken the rights of indigenous people. That is what they are doing by challenging this very important piece of legislation.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Mr. Speaker, we are challenging this piece of legislation because in part 2 it gives unprecedented and unilateral power to the federal cabinet to do exactly the opposite of what the member is talking about, by completely unilaterally blocking and banning economic oil and gas development in these territories.

This is the challenge of the Liberals, who constantly say they believe a bunch of things and are putting forward this suite of policies and different legislation. They are probably well intentioned, but the outcome, consequences and the way it actually works defeat the very objectives they said they stood for in the first place.

That is the same with Bill C-88. Members cannot really, in good conscience, stand up here and pretend that this legislation gives further authority to indigenous communities in the north and to territorial leaders, while right in the legislation is an unprecedented granting of power to the federal cabinet to make unilateral decisions that will destroy economic development in those regions.

Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will give the House a bit of personal history.

Back when I was a young biologist, I spent time in the Mackenzie Valley doing some of the initial environmental impact assessment work. I stayed in the community of Norman Wells, which has been producing oil since the Second World War with zero environmental impact. I also lived in the community of Fort Simpson for a while, so for a southerner, I know the area somewhat, and I can guarantee that any project proposed there is done under the most strict environmental standards. In fact, the standards that were in place back in 1973 were world-class even then.

I would like to quote a couple of newspaper articles for the House.

On June 5, 2018, the Edmonton Journal writes, “Investor flight from energy sector is a national embarrassment”.

The CEO of the Royal Bank of Canada said, “Our competitiveness is challenged. Our capacity to grow and advance the economy is stalling.”

The C.D. Howe Institute writes, “C.D. Howe blames Canada’s sclerotic regulatory regime for the killed and stalled projects and the flight of investment capital.”

Can my friend and colleague comment on the downward spiral of the Canadian economy as a result of the sclerotic regulatory regime that the government has implemented?

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Mr. Speaker, my colleague is exactly right. The devastating losses of energy projects and energy jobs are a direct consequence of the Liberals’ policy and their legislative agenda. The only oil and gas industries in the entire world that are not thriving are Canada’s and Venezuela’s. The risk is that Canada is being left behind in its potential as a leading global energy producer and exporter, which harms all Canadians and all indigenous communities.

The reality is that the amount of investment that has been lost in Canada’s energy sector under these Liberals is more than at any other time in more than seven decades. It is not a matter of external factors; it is a direct consequence of their decisions.

Further to my colleague’s experienced, direct and informed comments on Canada’s track record, it is not just Conservatives saying it. It has actually been benchmarked in exhaustive and comprehensive comparisons of Canada to the other top 10 major oil and gas-producing countries in the world in 2012 and 2014. The conclusions were that on every single measure—including expertise, independence, consultation, evidence, science-based decision-making and the incorporation of traditional knowledge—Canada’s track record and role are second to none among every other major producer on the planet. Canada can do better and strives to always do better, but Canada is already a world leader on exactly all those points my colleague mentioned.

• (1315)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member, like many members on her side of the House today, speaks about the energy sector as though energy can only be the kind that is derived from fossil fuels. When they talk about loss in energy sector jobs, they are actually not being entirely truthful, because the green energy sector, which is also an energy producer, is up 37% over the last five years. There are now more people employed in Canada in the green energy sector than in the oil sands. As a matter of fact, 23,700 people work in the green energy sector, whereas 23,340 work in the oil sands. In Alberta specifically, the number of people employed in the green energy sector is doubling every year.

Can the member comment on the fact that the rhetoric we continually hear from the other side of the House when we talk about the energy sector seems to be focusing only on oil-producing energy sectors?

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Mr. Speaker, first of all, just to be clear, in case the Liberals do not know, the energy sector is the number one private sector investor in the Canadian economy. It is Canada’s biggest export. He is quoting oil sands jobs, but that is not the totality of the energy sector; in fact, the total job numbers are close to a million.

Government Orders

The Liberals are doing everything they can to vaporize those jobs and businesses. There are probably more than 200,000 job losses under their government alone, but contractors and self-employers cannot be included in the statistics.

However, the fact is this. Of private sector investors in alternative and renewable energy technologies, the number one investor right now and for decades, aside from the public sector or public utilities, has been oil sands and pipeline companies. They are major multi-energy integrated companies. They are the innovators and companies that will lead the long-term transition and technological development to alternative and renewable energies in the future.

That is why it makes no sense for the Liberals to keep going down their path of stepping on the throats of oil sands and conventional oil developers and destroying the oil and gas sector. Those are the private sector risk-takers and inventors that can also achieve their long-term transition goals.

What very much worries me every time these Liberals stand up and say something like that is that they seem to have no clue about how the energy sector actually works or where this technology and innovation comes from.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I represent a very large mining region, where we are seeing a number of new mining operations coming on stream. What has become really clear for the success of mining in the north are the indigenous agreements, which are very much tied to an environmental plan. People are being employed and there is new investment, but the other element is that companies are trying to deal with the need for a green footprint. For example, Borden mine has gone 100% green. It is getting rid of diesel underground and going electric. It is much safer for the workers and it actually lowers costs.

I would ask my hon. colleague about the importance of making sure that natural resource projects are tied to an environmental plan and to making sure we are getting the maximum benefit from the resources by limiting greenhouse gas. It is innovative and creates a better profit for companies and communities in the long term.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Mr. Speaker, all Canadians want Canada to maintain the highest standards of environmental responsibility, protection, operations and performance. Indeed, I agree with my colleague that it is wonderful to see the countless examples in the mining sector of companies taking measures that make economic sense to them, as they have been doing for decades.

The mining sector is really a leader and role model in terms of engaging and employing indigenous people, as well as in working with indigenous communities and people as owners and partners in responsible resource development. Just as in the energy sector, where a single oil sands company happens to be the largest private employer of indigenous people, the mining sector is the largest employer as a whole. In the same way, oil and gas companies in Canada are world leaders in innovation and technology in protecting the environment, including the major investments in clean technology by a consortium of oil sands companies over the last several decades.

• (1320)

Mr. Nick Whalen (St. John's East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today on the traditional territory of the Algonquin

people in support of a bill that proposes to strike a more appropriate balance between environmental protection, social responsibility and economic development in Canada's north. As my hon. colleagues recognize, Canada is blessed with an abundance of natural resources, and throughout Canada's history these resources have been a cornerstone of the economy.

While the national economy grows ever more diverse thanks to the rise of other sectors, resource development remains crucial to our national prosperity. Resource development projects create jobs and export sales and stimulate technological innovation. Tempering these benefits, however, are the environmental and social impacts of resource extraction and development. These include pollution, destruction of ecosystems and changes in the fabric of communities and traditional indigenous ways.

Throughout much of our nation's history, while we relied on resource development for prosperity and growth, we often failed to appreciate and take into account its long-term environmental and social consequences. To strike a better balance between economic and environmental concerns, Canada has developed a unique regulatory regime that governs resource development projects in the north, a regime that is co-managed with indigenous partners.

The regime requires that proposed projects undergo stringent reviews of anticipated impacts. This regulatory regime helps to ensure that resource projects maximize potential economic benefits and minimize potential environmental impacts. In this way, the regime restores public confidence and creates certainty and predictability, which are so important in industry, and it sets the foundation for a sustainable and long-term natural resource industry in the north.

I am going to take the opportunity now to advise that I will be splitting my time with the parliamentary secretary, the member for Acadie—Bathurst.

To maintain an appropriate balance between these concerns, the regulatory regime evolves continually as Canada evolves and as our understanding of the environment and of resource development deepens. In the north in particular, the settlement of modern land claims has enabled the creation of unique systems of governance in co-operation with our indigenous partners.

Through the amendments proposed in Bill C-88, our government has established a clear path forward in managing land, water and natural resources in the Mackenzie Valley, one that respects indigenous inhabitants and is fair and equitable to industry. These amendments strengthen trust and provide certainty, and they provide an effective approach to natural resource co-management. They also support a modern regulatory regime that is stable, predictable, coordinated and balanced.

Government Orders

Bill C-88 responds to the concerns raised by indigenous governments and organizations in the Mackenzie Valley about the provisions of the 2014 Northwest Territories Devolution Act. That act devolved the administration and control of public lands and waters to the Government of the Northwest Territories and also made other amendments to the Mackenzie Valley Resources Management Act.

Those 2014 amendments to the Mackenzie Valley Resources Management Act included provisions to amalgamate the regional land and water boards in the Mackenzie Valley into a single board. While the government of the day argued that an amalgamated board structure would provide clarity and certainty to the regulatory regime in the Mackenzie Valley, the opposite occurred.

Instead of bringing certainty, the proposed amalgamated boards led to court challenges by indigenous organizations. Indigenous groups argued that their authorities in land and water management, guaranteed by their land claims and self-government agreements, were not being respected, and that their land and water boards could not be unilaterally abolished by the federal government.

A court injunction in February of 2015 halted the provisions of section 253(2) of the Northwest Territories Devolution Act, the section that included restructuring of the land and water boards. The injunction also affected important policy measures that are central to the regulatory regime, such as the use of development certificates and their enforcement scheme and inspection notice requirements on Gwich'in and Sahtu lands.

So much for bringing certainty to the regulatory regime. Stakeholders agree that the 2014 legislation has done the opposite; it creates a climate of uncertainty and discourages the responsible development of the Mackenzie Valley's natural resources.

The Government of Canada is committed to exploring ways to fix the restructuring provisions, resolve the legal proceedings and renew the government's relationship with indigenous peoples in the Northwest Territories.

• (1325)

Bill C-88 is the product of productive discussions with indigenous governments and organizations, the Government of the Northwest Territories, resource co-management boards, industry and other stakeholders. Input received has been carefully considered and helped shape the bill.

If passed, Bill C-88 will undo the controversial land restructuring provisions and reintroduce important regulatory improvement provisions from the Northwest Territories Devolution Act that did not come into force due to the court injunctions. Bill C-88 provides certainty to proponents, and it supports a modern-day regime that balances environmental, social and economic well-being.

My understanding is that the Government of the Northwest Territories supports the amendments proposed in Bill C-88, contrary to what the opposition has said. Indigenous governments and organizations in the Northwest Territories also want these amendments. The mining industry that conducts its business in the territory is not opposed to the board restructuring amendments, and supports anything that provides greater clarity and certainty in the regulatory process and gets us through these injunctions.

Companies with commercial interests in the north also understand the importance of protecting the unique arctic environment, while pursuing safe, responsible development, which creates jobs and economic growth right in the northern communities from whence the resources come.

Bill C-88 proposes to improve the regulatory regime in the north through a series of amendments informed by several important developments. These include the court challenges I mentioned earlier, as well as the accelerated impacts of climate change in the Arctic and the Government of Canada's commitment to foster reconciliation between indigenous peoples and the Crown.

The amendments proposed in Bill C-88 would increase predictability, consistency and timeliness of regulatory reviews in the north, while strengthening environmental protections. Northerners deserve a fully functional, modernized regulatory regime that meets their particular needs, the kind of regime that promotes growth and prosperity while at the same time safeguards the fragile northern ecosystem, the kind of regime that strikes the appropriate balance between economic and environmental concerns.

Bill C-88 would provide the clarity and certainty that the regulatory process needs in order to encourage industry investment in resource development in the Mackenzie River valley. I call upon all members of the House to support Bill C-88, which will enable us to balance the development of untapped economic potential in the north with strong partnerships and sound environmental stewardship.

One of the main issues that has arisen in my conversations with oil and gas companies around uncertainty, and I know the opposition shadow minister raised this point, actually relates to the uncertainty that arises out of the courts. The biggest fear of companies that have proposed to invest billions of dollars in resource development and extraction is that the courts will impose some type of an injunction late into their process, creating a great amount of uncertainty as to whether or not their capital can be effectively deployed. This is exactly what happened with TMX. It is exactly what happened with the previous 2014 legislation that this bill hopes to amend. It is the greatest source of risk that our government is trying to fend off.

Although some members of the House suggest that these injunctions occurred on our watch and, therefore, must be our fault, the exact opposite is the case. The injunction arose in the cases that I just mentioned from decisions that were made by the previous government and its failure to properly consult, to take indigenous concerns into account, to abide by our constitutional commitments and to abide by the duty to accommodate.

Government Orders

This is what so much of our focus has been on for the last four years, to get our environmental regulatory regime back in line with our constitutional and economic commitments, to help make sure indigenous communities thrive. In this particular instance, we have the right balance and we know we do because the groups that have brought forward the injunction are in favour of the changes.

• (1330)

Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to my colleague's speech. I was shocked at the very beginning of his speech when he implied that sound environmental technology is just a recent thing. As someone who has been in the business since 1973, and part of the Mackenzie valley pipeline assessment, I can tell him that we have had 40 years of continuous environmental improvement.

I want to talk about what is happening to the Canadian economy because of what the Liberal government is doing. Interestingly, in March of this year, the United States economy added 196,000 jobs, while in the same month, employment in Canada fell by 7,200. Back in the day, the Canadian and American economies were in lockstep. If the U.S. grew 200,000 jobs, we would grow 20,000. Now our economies are starting to diverge, strictly because of the regulatory regime that the Liberal government has put in place.

C.D. Howe reports that during this time investment in the Canadian oil and gas sector fell from \$125 billion in 2014, under the watch of the great former prime minister Stephen Harper, to \$75 billion in 2018. This was during a period when global investments in oil and gas have increased, especially in the U.S., which had a 50% rise in oil and gas sector investment in 2017.

How can the member defend this shabby record?

Mr. Nick Whalen: Mr. Speaker, as the member knows, the regulatory regime that we are living under is the regulatory regime that the Conservatives put in place. The legislation that we are trying to get through the House today, as well as Bill C-69, which is before the Senate, is our attempt to fix the regulatory system. If the member's complaint is that our regulatory system does not work, then he only has his own party to blame.

Having said that, we do not pick one month and base the entire job-number argument on it. Since we have been elected, there have been 900,000 new jobs and 825,000 people lifted out of poverty. We are looking forward to getting a number of environmental assessment processes through what we consider to be the failed 2012 process but it is the process we have, with full indigenous consultation where indigenous peoples have been funded for their participation. We are so excited that the Newfoundland offshore will have an opportunity, hopefully, to avail itself of that this summer.

Of course, we look forward to a final decision on an improved process for the NEB, which, again, if it had been done right the first time, we would have had four years of pipeline to our coast to B.C. However, we did not because of the previous government's ineptitude.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am so pleased to see that Bill C-88 is revisiting the principle of self-determination of indigenous peoples. However, the concept of self-

determination of indigenous peoples applies to many other areas, including housing, for example.

The minister responsible for housing put forward a housing strategy over a year ago, but we still do not have a targeted housing strategy for indigenous people. I would argue that self-determination should form the foundation of that strategy.

I would like to know whether my colleague would commit to putting some pressure on his colleague, the minister responsible for housing, first, to bring forward a targeted housing strategy for indigenous people, and second, to ensure that strategy is squarely based on self-determination.

Mr. Nick Whalen: Mr. Speaker, if I understood correctly, the question relates to our efforts with respect to housing for indigenous peoples.

My neighbour, the Minister of Indigenous Services, is handling the housing situation in indigenous communities. While the strategy may not have been presented by a member from Quebec, it is coming from the Minister of Indigenous Services. Budget 2019 includes a many new investments in that regard.

[*English*]

We are not going to simply enforce our own view of what a housing strategy for indigenous people will look like. Our indigenous services minister will work with indigenous people to make sure that the money in budget 2019 for indigenous housing is deployed in a way that helps them, as I am sure the member will appreciate and respect.

• (1335)

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: Before we go on, I would like to thank the hon. member for St. John's East for mentioning that he will be sharing his time.

There have been more than five hours of debate since the debate began. Accordingly, all speeches from this point on will be limited to 10 minutes, and questions and comments will be limited to five minutes.

Resuming debate. The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence.

Mr. Serge Cormier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today in support of Bill C-88.

The Government of Canada, our government, is taking a new approach. We are currently conducting extensive consultations with indigenous governments and organizations as well as other key stakeholders on issues that will affect them. By working directly with indigenous governments and stakeholders on developing this bill, we can respond to concerns that are raised and ensure that the rights of indigenous peoples are respected. This process has helped create a law that will benefit all Canadians.

Government Orders

Bill C-88 amends the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act in direct response to comments from key stakeholders, as well as concerns expressed to the Government of Canada by indigenous groups affected by the previous piece of legislation.

Our indigenous partners have made their views quite clear. The Tlicho government and the Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated applied to the courts in 2014 and 2015 respectively for protection of their rights in accordance with their individual land claim and self-government agreements. The bill we are debating today corrects those problems and responds directly to the concerns expressed by indigenous governments and organizations.

As part of the ongoing reconciliation process, the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations asked departmental officials to initiate an ongoing dialogue with indigenous organizations and governments in the Northwest Territories to address their concerns.

On September 23, 2016, the minister sent letters to indigenous groups and stakeholders launching consultations on the draft bill to amend the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act in order to address these issues.

Bill C-88 is the result of consultations with indigenous organizations and governments in the Mackenzie Valley, trans-boundary indigenous organizations and governments, resource co-management boards, and oil and gas industry organizations.

In addition to indigenous organizations and governments, Canada consulted the Government of the Northwest Territories. Our government also consulted members of the mining and gas and oil industries, including the NWT & Nunavut Chamber of Mines, the Mining Association of Canada, the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada and the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers. The text of the bill was communicated to these groups to get their feedback, and several meetings were held to respond to their concerns.

Ongoing consultations over the long term with key stakeholders have provided Canada with invaluable insight into the practical nature of the bill before us today. The comments from our partners provided unique perspectives and useful guidance which, in the end, led to the drafting of this bill.

Canada recognizes that the previous legislation was drafted without enough consultation. This is why the government of Canada ensured that the voices of indigenous groups, the government of the Northwest Territories and industry representatives were heard at every stage of the process.

Bringing together stakeholders is the key to developing effective policies and practices. Our government is holding extensive consultations in order to create processes that satisfy the needs of all parties. That ensures that the final product serves everyone in a positive manner and gets rid of any possible uncertainty regarding natural resources.

In March 2018, the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations met with industry groups to better understand their opinion on developing and co-managing resources in the north. Industry plays a major role in creating a stronger and better relationship with governments and indigenous organizations when it comes to

protecting, managing and developing Canada's natural resources. In order to truly make progress on the path to reconciliation with indigenous peoples, industry must be taken into consideration as a key strategic partner alongside all levels of governments.

Consultation and engagement with stakeholders on Bill C-88 began in February 2017. A draft bill was distributed to participants for an eight-week review, during which two meetings were held in Yellowknife. At these meetings, departmental representatives from the former department of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada explained the content of the proposal and the accommodation measures in response to the participants' comments.

• (1340)

Throughout the consultation process, changes to the draft bill were clearly communicated to give stakeholders the opportunity to express their opinion.

By engaging stakeholders, we were able to address all concerns as they were raised. With our innovative approach to drafting this bill, we are improving how our government makes decisions, gathers information, and engages with different stakeholders. Today's bill reflects that process.

If passed, the proposed amendments would contribute to the efficient, predictable and coherent management and use of land, water and natural resources in the Mackenzie Valley. By charting a clearer course for governments and organizations with respect to natural resource management, industry will no longer have to contend with potential uncertainty that hinders its ability to invest in northern Canada.

This legislation will enhance economic opportunities and growth while protecting the environment for future generations. It addresses concerns expressed by indigenous organizations and governments and is consistent with constitutionally protected land claim and self-government agreements. It recognizes the importance of indigenous peoples' active participation in the co-management of natural resources and protects their right to oversee the future of their lands.

The environment, the economy and reconciliation go hand in hand. We need to create a more effective system for everyone, and that is exactly what Bill C-88 accomplishes. I invite my hon. colleagues to support it.

We will achieve reconciliation with indigenous peoples. We will work closely with indigenous peoples and all other stakeholders, whether from industry or other levels of government. It is a priority for our government, always has been, and we will stay the course and continue our work.

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is good that the Liberals have taken this step to repair some of the harm the Harper government inflicted on indigenous peoples. Of course, there is still a lot of work to be done on this file, especially when it comes to housing, infrastructure, drinking water, wastewater, education and the implementation of political rights.

Government Orders

Can my colleague tell us why the bill makes no mention of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples?

Mr. Serge Cormier: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Jonquière for her question. To come back to the bill, as I said earlier, the Government of the Northwest Territories and indigenous peoples have been calling for a bill like this. They want to develop their own natural resources and manage their land the way they see fit, based on their own needs.

As I said in my speech, we want to work very closely with indigenous peoples. We want to ensure that they can manage their land and have access to their resources as they see fit, with the co-operation of industry and the various levels of government. That is exactly what we are doing.

With regard to what we are doing for indigenous peoples, I think that our track record speaks for itself. We began the reconciliation process, while the former Conservative government completely ignored the rights of indigenous peoples. We believe that by working more closely with indigenous peoples, the various levels of government and industry on this bill, we will be able to implement the tools and processes necessary to enable them to develop their full potential.

• (1345)

[*English*]

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government talks about the importance of indigenous consultation, but what it is not reflecting on is that in part 2 of this particular bill, the federal government would have the ability to be arbitrary in terms of shutting down energy resource development projects.

The more important question is why it is more important for the government to debate this bill today, which would shut down energy resource projects in an arbitrary way for indigenous communities, than to debate what it says is its most important priority, which is the child welfare legislation.

The Liberals clearly believe that the federal government having the arbitrary ability to shut down energy processes without indigenous consultation is more important to debate today in the House than something it has told indigenous communities it would get done, which is the child welfare legislation.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Serge Cormier: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

When I hear the word “consultation” coming out of the Conservatives' mouths, I cannot help but chuckle. I did not think that word was in their vocabulary. In contrast, we have always consulted very closely with indigenous peoples.

The problem was created by the Conservatives in 2014 when they split up the boards. For 10 years, the Conservatives made it clear that they were not interested in working with indigenous peoples to fix this problem. The bill we are introducing today will fix the problem.

Again, the Government of the Northwest Territories asked for this bill. Indigenous peoples want to be able to access and manage their own resources. I think it is advisable to ensure that indigenous

communities can access and manage their own resources, but industry and the various levels of government also need to support the indigenous communities.

[*English*]

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the last question suggested that the government would be shutting down energy resources. However, this would actually allow the protection of existing energy leases.

To let the opposition know, this bill would just reverse an attempt by the opposition to ride roughshod over the rights of the Sahtu, Gwich'in and Tlicho people by making unconstitutional changes to an act. This bill would reverse that, as indicated by a court injunction. I assume that the member agrees that we should not try to override the constitutional rights of indigenous people by passing laws that are not constitutional.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Serge Cormier: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Yukon, who works very hard for indigenous communities in his region and across the country.

As I mentioned, this problem was created in 2014 when the Conservatives split up the boards. This bill seeks to put more power in the hands of indigenous communities. The Government of the Northwest Territories called for this bill. Indigenous communities want to be able to access and manage their own resources, but they also want the collaboration of the various industry players.

We are again putting indigenous communities at the forefront. With this bill, we are giving them greater assurance that they will be able to manage their resources and their affairs as they see fit.

[*English*]

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to be very clear about the government's instincts. When it comes to many pieces of legislation, the Liberals' instincts are wrong. Their instinct is to manage to bureaucrats and to the wealthiest few in this country.

I want to walk people who are watching through Bill C-88 as an example of why this is the case and also compare it to something that just happened in the last 24 hours that proves that the government really does not care about the environment but does care about bettering the interests of the Liberals' corporate donors and the wealthy companies in this country.

Part 2 of bill C-88 would amend the Canada Petroleum Resources Act to allow the Governor in Council to issue orders, when in the national interest, to prohibit oil and gas activities and freeze the terms of existing licences to prevent them from expanding during a moratorium. For those who are watching, what that means is that like Bill C-69, the no more pipelines act, the government is introducing yet another piece of legislation that would allow the cabinet or the Liberal Party of Canada to interfere politically in the review process, or essentially in the economy, in a way that is not positive.

Government Orders

What do I mean by that? Part of what we have seen in terms of the economic downturn in Canada, when it comes to the natural resources sector, and what we will hear from anyone who wants to look at Canada as a potential place to invest, is that the Liberal government, led by the Prime Minister, has made it uncertain and unstable for people to invest in Canada because of pieces of legislation like this.

If we were sitting around a board table or were a small business trying to decide whether to make an investment, one of the questions we would ask is what the government was going to do with regard to regulations or whether a project was going to go forward. What the government has done with bills like part 2 of Bill C-88, which we are discussing today, and Bill C-69 is say that it would politically interfere in their decision and make a decision that would be in the Liberals' best interests politically, whatever they might be. That would not help investment in Canada. That would not help protect the environment.

Liberals might say that this would help protect the environment, but it would not. All it would do is create an environment of uncertainty so that people could not and would not invest in natural resources projects in Canada. It is a convenient way for them to kick the can down the road.

Rather than standing up and saying that as a government, as a political party, this is what the Liberals' vision is for natural resource development in Canada, they are saying, "Maybe we will do something at some point. Why don't you invest? However, we may pull that football away through legal provisions" such as the one they are introducing in the bill. That is why it is important for Canadians to pay attention to this.

With regard to protecting the environment and perhaps protecting average Canadians, we saw something remarkable happen yesterday. The environment minister not only signed off on \$12 million worth of taxpayer money going to one of the wealthiest companies in Canada, Loblaws, to buy new fridges, she also staged a taxpayer-funded announcement at a Loblaws store. Twelve million dollars of taxpayer funds went to a company that makes hundreds of millions of dollars a year to buy fridges, and then tax dollars were used for the minister to get a photo opportunity for doing that.

One could argue that Loblaws is a very successful company. If everyone is so committed to protecting the environment, why could Loblaws not just buy those fridges itself? Why was the government's policy instinct not to incent the company, either through regulations or tax credits or something that would be better for everyone in the country and would put everyone on a level playing field? Why was the Liberals' instinct to give money to this company, which can afford lobbyists to fill out very complicated grant applications? Why was it the Liberals' instinct to give money to a wealthy company that could have done this itself instead of something that would have evened the playing field for all Canadians and incentivized business?

• (1350)

I like to call it "reverse Robin Hood". The Prime Minister has a really great track record of doing everything possible to take money away from Canadians. It includes this announcement and the SNC-Lavalin scandal and things like the carbon tax, which will never

reduce greenhouse gas emissions, as well as giving opportunities to wealthy companies that have lobbyists.

I believe in the economy. I believe that we should create an opportunity for companies to thrive. What I do not believe is that the government should be using tax dollars to pay for fridges for a company that has done three things that I will describe.

First, it makes hundreds of millions of dollars of net profit every year. It made about \$3 billion in net revenue and \$800 million in net profit last year. It is doing okay. I think can afford a few fridges.

Then this company was involved for years in a price-fixing scheme on bread that by all accounts impacted poor people in Canada the most.

Also, early last year, reports broke that this company was involved in a fight with the Canada Revenue Agency over \$400 million in claims over a bogus offshore account. That was a CBC headline.

What was the minister thinking? I know what she was thinking. I would like to chalk it up to incompetence, but when we look at SNC-Lavalin and this announcement, it is not as if she signed this accidentally. It was not, "Oh, no; I accidentally signed this." She scheduled a funding announcement for it. She took pictures with somebody.

When I talked about this issue yesterday, somebody named Amanda from Lundar, Manitoba, wrote to my office to say that the dairy cooler in the family grocery store she owns in her community had broken and that she cannot afford to replace it. She said she just cannot afford it. She asked why the government is so out of touch that it thinks the right thing to do is to give \$12 million to a big company that makes hundreds of millions of dollars and then increase her taxes to pay for it. That shows how out of touch the government is.

The government has no desire to fix the environment. It is like the Prime Minister saying he is a feminist. Now he is saying he is fixing the environment, but he is finding ways to give money to Loblaws.

Loblaws should be concerned. Loblaws should know better. In terms of any brand credit that Loblaws gets from this, I know the company is managing profit and loss for their shareholders, but did the board members think this was a good idea? Come on. There is \$12 million for new freezers when that company made \$800 million in profit. Why should Amanda have to go without a dairy freezer—

• (1355)

The Deputy Speaker: I see the hon. member for Yukon rising on a point of order.

Statements by Members

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Mr. Speaker, I know you are very liberal in your interpretation of relevance, but the member has been talking for many minutes about a freezer in southern Canada when this bill is about the mess that the Conservatives created in the Northwest Territories. Perhaps she could actually refer to the act.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Yukon for his attention to the relevance rule.

As he mentioned, this is something on which chair occupants generally provide members a degree of latitude and liberty. I have been listening to the hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill and noted her reference and comparisons early on. I am sure that with less than a minute and a half remaining, she will bring her speech back in line with the subject before the House. I did not note any particular concerns with relevance, broadly speaking.

The hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill.

Hon. Michelle Rempel: Mr. Speaker, this is such a perfect example of the Liberals trying to shut down debate on the hypocrisy of their policy. Everyone watching will note that a Liberal member just tried to shut me down when I started talking about how out of touch these Liberals are by bringing up Amanda's fridge. They know how wrong this is.

They took a glossy photo opportunity after giving \$12 million to a company. The Weston family is one of the wealthiest families in the country. I like seeing people create wealth; I do not like people taking tax dollars when we should be focusing on reducing taxes and creating economic opportunity for all Canadians. That is the difference between this side of the House and the government. I make no apologies for fighting for people like Amanda.

The Deputy Speaker: The time permitted for the speech portion of this intervention is completed. However, the hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill will have five minutes for questions and comments. I am sure the House will be interested to know that this time will be available when the House next gets back to debate on the question.

We will now go to Statements by Members, beginning with the hon. member for Repentigny.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Monique Pauré (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the fight against climate change is the challenge of the century.

When we celebrate Earth Day on April 22, we will have to remember that, in spite of the speeches, Canada is on the wrong side of history. Ten years ago, it promised to the G20 that it would gradually phase out its fossil fuel subsidies. Not only has Ottawa failed to even begin this process, but, since 2015, it has committed an additional \$19 billion to the oil industry. In fact, Canada is having a negative impact on the rest of the world. The Global Footprint Network estimates that every year humanity exceeds the earth's capacity to absorb pollution and begins living on credit on August 1. If everyone's statistics matched Canada's, overshoot day would

arrive as early as March and we would spend three quarters of the year mortgaging the future.

One thing is clear to Quebec: Canada is a petro-state and an adversary in the fight against climate change.

* * *

• (1400)

[*English*]

RICHMOND FIREFIGHTERS

Mr. Joe Peschisolido (Steveston—Richmond East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me give a big shout out to Cory Parker and Jim Dickson, who are both in Ottawa for the International Association of Fire Fighters Annual Legislative Conference.

Cory serves as president of the Richmond Firefighters Association and Jim as its union treasurer. Both are passionate advocates for their fellow firefighters in Richmond and right across Canada. I know I will likely see them flipping pancakes or burgers in support for the many local organizations in Richmond.

It is truly my privilege to stand in this House to recognize and thank Cory Parker, Jim Dickson and all first responders for their commitment and service and for all they do in keeping Canadians safe.

* * *

CANCER CARE IN SASKATCHEWAN

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on average, there are 15 new cancer cases diagnosed every day in Saskatchewan. For 85 years, the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency has provided leading-edge cancer treatment, prevention and education programs, along with world-class research, for the people of Saskatchewan.

However, in January, a new era of support for cancer care was ushered in with the launch of the Cancer Foundation of Saskatchewan. The foundation is the fundraising partner of the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency. Every dollar raised by the Cancer Foundation of Saskatchewan will stay in the province of Saskatchewan, supporting cancer patients for treatment and care.

I want to wish the board of directors and the staff of the new foundation the very best as they begin their work of raising money to support cancer care in my province of Saskatchewan.

* * *

SUDBURY LADY WOLVES HOCKEY TEAM

Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Sudbury, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a proud father and former coach to congratulate the Sudbury Lady Wolves Midget AA hockey team for winning the gold medal at the Ontario provincial championships this past weekend. The Lady Wolves finished the tournament with a perfect 6-0 record, besting the Stoney Creek Sabres in the finals.

Statements by Members

However, the Lady Wolves had already punched their ticket to participate at the national championships as the hosts of the Esso Cup. From April 21 to 27, the Sudbury Lady Wolves will be hosting the Stoney Creek Sabres, the St. Albert Slash of the Pacific Region, the Saskatoon Stars of the West Region and the Halifax Fire of the Atlantic Region.

[*Translation*]

The team that will represent Quebec at the Esso Cup will be revealed this weekend.

[*English*]

I thank the coaching staff for a great season and the girls for making us so proud.

Go, Wolves, go.

* * *

BATTLE OF VIMY RIDGE

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Battle of Vimy Ridge remains a defining moment in Canadian history, a battle whose outcome helped shape the identity of our nation.

In 1917, more than 15,000 Canadians stormed Vimy Ridge in defence of peace and freedom. Working together for the first time, the four Canadian divisions demonstrated incredible discipline and bravery. They accomplished what no other allied force had yet been able to do, but they did so at great cost.

Today, as we recognize the 102nd anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge, we remember the nearly 3,600 Canadians killed and the more than 7,000 wounded in the name of freedom. We also reflect on the work the Canadian Armed Forces continues to do to bring stability and peace across the world. The service and sacrifice of military personnel and their loved ones at home is recognized, respected, and admired, and it will never be forgotten.

Lest we forget.

* * *

CITY OF CALGARY

Hon. Kent Hehr (Calgary Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the reasons I decided to run in 2015 was that I felt the Conservatives had taken Calgary's vote for granted. I thought this was wrong. I thought it was about time that Calgary, Canada's fourth-largest city, received the decent funding it deserved.

In half the time, our federal Liberal government has brought nearly twice as much federal infrastructure funding compared with the previous Conservative government. Yes, in almost four years, we have nearly doubled the amount that the Conservatives invested in Calgary's infrastructure over their entire 10-year mandate.

This means federal support for things like the LRT green line, the Glamorgan affordable housing project, the National Music Centre, the Marda Loop eSPACE, flood mitigation and more. These investments directly impact Calgarians and help us continue to build a better city.

● (1405)

FIREARMS

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are continuing their campaign against rural Canadians and responsible firearms owners with their backdoor gun registry, Bill C-71.

They are targeting Canadians who have passed background checks, taken training courses, paid fees and followed the rules. However, the Liberals have failed to address gun violence in cities and the scourge of guns being smuggled into Canada. Yesterday we learned the Liberals are taking steps to introduce a handgun ban in Canada. Make no mistake, this bill is just the first step and a re-elected Liberal government would expand its gun ban.

Hunters and sport shooters in my riding have long been at the forefront of conservation and are the greatest stewards of the bounty we receive from the land. They have been villainized as backwards and dangerous from day one by the Liberal government. This backdoor gun registry would increase the cost of doing business for small retailers, punish law-abiding Canadians and do nothing to address gun violence.

Conservatives will scrap Bill C-71 and stand up for firearm owners.

* * *

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mrs. Alaina Lockhart (Fundy Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Siyabulela Mandela, great-grandson of the late Nelson Mandela, made his first stop on his cultural inclusion in political affairs tour to Fundy Royal's Town of Hampton.

This could not have been more fitting as it is the birthplace of John Peters Humphrey, who devoted his life to the advancement of human rights and, in fact, helped draft the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

While we were gathered at *Credo*, a monument to honour John Peters Humphrey, he shared these words of inspiration: "Human nature is to disagree. Our collective responsibility, regardless of race, creed, or nationality is to find common ground to build on the foundations laid by historical figures such as John Peters Humphrey and Nelson Mandela to build a more peaceful world."

I thank Mr. Mandela for reminding us that the most ordinary among us can indeed achieve extraordinary outcomes for humankind. His visit and his message will be long remembered by the people of Hampton.

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PARLIAMENTARY BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

Mr. Matt DeCoursey (Fredericton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, each year, Christie Lake Kids enriches the lives of hundreds of vulnerable children and youth. This safe, inclusive space gives kids the opportunity to make art, play music and enjoy time together at a beautiful summer camp.

Statements by Members

Sunday, at the eighth annual Parliamentary Basketball Tournament, teams of MPs, staff and media came together to raise money for Christie Lake Kids. The consolation game went down to the wire, with our NDP colleagues eking out a gritty one-point victory over the Press Gallery Pundits, yet we have not read any stories about it.

Down 13-0 to our Conservative opponents, only four minutes into the final, my friend, the member for Central Nova, and I subbed ourselves off the floor, spurring a Liberal charge that resulted in a thrilling back-and-forth final. The result was a two-point victory for the Liberal team, Hoops and Hard Work.

We are proud to have reclaimed the trophy, but what all parliamentarians can celebrate together is that our collective efforts helped raise \$25,000 for Christie Lake Kids to help transform lives.

* * *

TAXATION

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is a letter from Maureen of Abbotsford.

She writes, “My husband Darren works very long hours in sales to support our family. Last week when he received his pay cheque, he was absolutely shocked at the amount that was taken off.... Frankly, we both feel taxed to death.

“As the years have gone by, raising our family has been a struggle.... Both Darren and I have worked two jobs to support our family.... We have both worked long hours just to get by.

“Once our children became adults, we thought money wouldn't be so tight, but it still is because we pay more taxes than ever before. Neither of us have work pensions, and finding extra money each month to put away is becoming extremely difficult with the cost of living so high.

“Between income tax, carbon tax, gas taxes, property tax, GST, PST and all the other taxes we pay, I'm writing this letter to say 'Enough Taxes'.

“Sincerely, Maureen.”

* * *

• (1410)

VAISAKHI

Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.):

[Member spoke in Punjabi]

[English]

Mr. Speaker, on April 14, Sikhs from across the world will celebrate Vaisakhi, the most momentous holiday in the Sikh faith.

Vaisakhi commemorates the birth of the Khalsa Panth, the launch of a religious community that many in this chamber and across this country are proud to be a part of.

Sikh philosophy and teachings stress the importance of noble deeds, selfless giving and sacrifice. We are taught to treat everyone as equals, regardless of gender, race or faith, and to stand up for those values whenever they are challenged.

I am so thankful to live in a country that recognizes its diversity and that can appreciate that Sikh values can in fact be Canadian values too. A country wherein members of Parliament can share celebrations of Vaisakhi through our annual Vaisakhi on the Hill Akhand Paath.

Diversity is our country's strength, and I look forward to continuing the essential work to move that reality forward.

[Member spoke in Punjabi]

[English]

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JAIME ADAO JR.

Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette (Winnipeg Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take few moments to recognize the life of Jaime Adao Jr.

Jaime was a 17-year old. The people who loved him most nicknamed him “Jimboy”. He was soft spoken, shy, loving, courteous and dutiful. He was the pride of his mother Mel and his father Jim Sr. He was set to graduate from Tec-Voc High School in Winnipeg Centre. He dreamed of going to Red River College to become an executive chef. His family ran a Filipino bakery, which eventually it was planned he would one day run himself.

On Sunday evening on March 3, Jaime was killed during a home invasion by someone high on meth. He died defending his grandmother. He was at home studying for school exams.

Over the past month, thousands of community members have come together to remember a life that touched so many and to demand an end to the violence reaching across Canada. This is a call to action for a safer society. We need more addiction treatment and greater security. The memory of “Jimboy” deserves no less.

* * *

CANOLA

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, everyone in this room knows that Canadian farmers produce the highest quality canola in the world. It is one of the most important crops of the western Canadian economy and that is why it was so shocking when we learned that China, to whom we export 40% of our canola, has blocked shipments.

What is even more shocking though is the Liberal government's reaction to this crisis. The Liberals continue to block our attempts to get answers for Canadians on this very important issue.

It is crystal clear that the issue is not about the quality of our canola. The real issue is the Prime Minister's weak leadership on the international stage.

The Prime Minister needs to start taking this issue seriously, rather than spending all of his time and attention on the SNC scandal and cover-up. The 43,000 canola producers deserve better than this.

WILBERT KEON

Mr. William Amos (Pontiac, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I join so many Pontiac constituents and the entire country in mourning the loss of Canadian heart surgeon and former senator, Dr. Wilbert Keon.

In 1935, Dr. Keon was born in the town of Sheenboro, and became the pride of the upper Pontiac long before he was awarded the Order of Ontario and the Order of Canada, and well prior to his appointment to the Senate in 1990.

He founded the University of Ottawa Heart Institute and performed over 10,000 open heart operations, pioneering many new surgical techniques. In 1986, he became the first Canadian surgeon to implant an artificial heart in a human.

His legend only grew from there. As a senator, he helped to establish the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and worked to build Genome Canada. He also played a key role during the SARS epidemic.

[Translation]

Today we pay tribute to one of the greatest residents of the national capital region. Dr. Keon leaves behind Barbara, his wife of 60 years, and their three children.

[English]

As I express these condolences to family and friends, know that the riding of Pontiac is reflecting on a great leader who will always be known as a “good Pontiac lad”.

* * *

PENSIONS

Mr. Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadian workers, retirees and seniors hoped their lives would improve with the election of a new government in 2015. Unfortunately, they have been let down.

While small changes to the GIS were helpful, changes to the CPP will cost workers a lot more and do not take full effect for another 40 years. It is not much help for those in need today.

Promises made to fix Canada's bankruptcy and insolvency laws to avoid another tragedy like Nortel or Sears have not been met. Instead we have an industry minister who likes to monitor the situation, a seniors minister who prefers endless consultation over meaningful action, and a Prime Minister who tells Sears workers facing loss of pensions, benefits and severance pay that they can rely on EI and CPP.

In the coming months, many more promises will be made. Again, Canadians will be told that help is on the way. However, as seen in the recent budget, the government has mastered the art of making bold gestures without any concrete plans to back them up. Canadian workers, retirees and seniors need action to protect their pensions, not more empty promises. I hope Canadians—

• (1415)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Barrie—Innisfil.

*Oral Questions***THE ENVIRONMENT**

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, nothing says working hard for the one per cent and those working hard to keep their 1% like giving \$12 million to a company that earned \$3.4 billion in profits in 2018.

Who can blame Loblaws? When Dalton McGuinty and Kathleen Wynne were handing out cash to corporations for their failed green energy policies, companies were happy to stand in line for taxpayer cash to pay for things that did not have to come out of their pockets but did come from the pockets of hard-working Ontarians.

The exact same failed McGuinty-Wynne playbook from the Liberals in Ontario that caused years of structural debt and deficits and an embarrassingly ineffective green energy plan is the exact same miserable playbook these Liberals and the Prime Minister are using.

Let this sink in: The Liberals gave Loblaws, a company with a market cap of \$24 billion that earned a profit \$3.4 billion in 2018, 12 million of our tax dollars to replace their fridges. We cannot make this stuff up.

* * *

[Translation]

BATTLE OF VIMY RIDGE

Mrs. Eva Nassif (Vimy, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, more than 100 years ago, on a ridge in France, all four divisions of the Canadian Corps, including the 4th Battalion of the Royal 22nd Regiment, which is in my riding of Vimy, combined forces for the first time in combat. These were extraordinary Canadians from across the country.

Today, as we gather to commemorate the 102nd anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge, we remember the thousands of Canadians who gave their lives far from Canada's shores. We pay tribute to them on the anniversary of a defining battle that has forever marked our history.

[English]

As the member for the riding of Vimy, I encourage us today and every day to pay tribute to every Canadian who answered the call to serve and sacrifice at the Battle of Vimy Ridge.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

JUSTICE

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for two months, the Prime Minister has been avoiding accountability in his involvement in the SNC-Lavalin corruption scandal, which has been engulfing his government now for months.

Now he has indicated that he wishes to sue the Leader of the Opposition for the criticisms that the leader made. Let us get the ball rolling. The reason being is, quite frankly, that these allegations can be tested in court, a place the Prime Minister cannot shut down.

Oral Questions

Would the Prime Minister tell us when he will commence the action?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we put the Leader of the Opposition on notice because he was making false statements and misleading Canadians.

The opposition leader and his party have a history of making false and defamatory statements. In December, he had to retract defamatory online statements he made against the Minister of Innovation.

He has done this repeatedly and now pretends that it is somehow virtuous for him to mislead Canadians.

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a piece of paper too. It is misinformation the Prime Minister gave both during the last election and more recently. Let us start with balanced budgets, or maybe electoral reform or maybe the \$10-billion deficit, all things that were promised to Canadians that did not come about.

Then we have the most recent crucial issues, for example, the Prime Minister indicating that the former attorney general never went to him about her concerns. We know that to be patently false.

Let us test this in court. When will the Prime Minister start this action?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is not the first time the Conservative leader and his party have misled Canadians with false and defamatory statements. As I have said, he has been forced to retract or cease making—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Carleton will come to order.

The right hon. Prime Minister has the floor.

• (1420)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, as I said, he has been forced to retract or cease making defamatory statements against members of our government repeatedly. The reason we put him on notice is that he is doing so again.

Members of the opposition should not have to mislead Canadians in order to make political points. They should stick to the facts. That is what Canadians deserve.

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will give some free advice to the Prime Minister. Yes, there has been a notice sent over, and the Leader of the Opposition has indicated that he stands by every single word in that press release. That is a problem for the Prime Minister. Therefore, I guess the ball is actually in his court.

He can stand up here, wave his arms around and talk about putting us on notice, but why does he not actually show us? Let us get it on.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, putting the Conservative leader on notice is something we did because the truth was important.

Here is the truth. After being asked directly to condemn white supremacists yesterday, the Leader of the Opposition—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. I had no trouble hearing the question. I should be able to hear the answer equally well.

The right hon. Prime Minister has the floor.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, after being asked directly to condemn white supremacists yesterday, the Leader of the Opposition not only refused to do so, but refused to even say the words.

I will give him another opportunity to do so today through his deputy leader. Will he denounce white supremacy, the alt-right movement and finally apologize for sharing a platform with it?

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on March 29, our leader issued an official statement in a press release in which he said that the Prime Minister engaged in political interference, personally gave orders, denied the truth, and had therefore lost the moral authority to govern. Our leader stands by everything he said and even reiterated it yesterday.

If the Prime Minister has the slightest sense of leadership, will he proceed with his lawsuit so we can all find out the truth of this matter?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, here is what I have to say about the truth: We put the Leader of the Opposition on notice because he was making false statements and misleading Canadians.

The opposition leader and his party have a history of making false and defamatory statements. In December, he had to retract statements he made online about the Minister of Innovation. He has done this repeatedly and now pretends that it is somehow virtuous for him to mislead Canadians. Misleading Canadians, as the opposition leader has done, is never virtuous.

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is rather ironic that the Liberal Prime Minister is trying to lecture parliamentarians here in the House when he himself violated the Conflict of Interest Act four times. The Prime Minister is claiming that what our leader said is false. He reiterated that yesterday evening.

If he wants to demonstrate even a little bit of leadership, will he follow through on his threat so that he can testify under oath in court, yes or no?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we put the Conservative leader on notice because the truth is important. The truth is that, after being asked whether he would condemn white supremacist movements yesterday, the Conservative leader not only refused to do so, he refused to even say the words. We will give the Conservatives another opportunity to condemn white supremacist movements.

Will they denounce them and apologize for sharing a platform with those who hold such beliefs?

*Oral Questions**[English]*

The Speaker: The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan was yelling throughout the answer. He knows it is against the rules to interrupt.

The hon. member for Burnaby South.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a new report points out that the Prime Minister's actions against former senior ministers is unprecedented in Canadian history. It has not been seen in a century.

Senior former Liberal staffer Penny Collette points out how this is highly unusual. The women ministers who spoke up about the truth about interference in criminal prosecution were kicked out for speaking up. The Liberals claim that there is nothing to see here. Clearly there is, and Canadians disagree with the government.

Why will the government not call a public inquiry?

• (1425)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as everyone well knows, we spent many weeks working to try to find a positive resolution on this issue. This is something that we understand had very strong opinions on multiple sides and we wanted to work forward and demonstrate that we truly believed that differences of opinion and diversity was a source of strength and resilience for an organization and for our country. That is what we worked very hard on. Unfortunately, we could not get to that place. The will of caucus was clear that those individuals could no longer be in caucus. At the same time, we are going to continue focusing on what matters to Canadians.

[Translation]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, speaking of the truth, the Prime Minister said today that we cannot lie to Canadians. Obviously not, but the Prime Minister's own story has changed since the beginning. He himself admitted that his story was not accurate.

If the Prime Minister thinks that Canadians want to know the truth, why is he refusing to launch a public inquiry?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have always been very clear about this issue from the beginning. We are going to do two things at once. We will always stand up for jobs for Canadian workers across the country and we will respect our institutions and the rule of law. That is exactly what we did.

We have a great deal of respect for the work that our parliamentary committees do and we also respect the Ethics Commissioner, who is looking into the matter. We will always participate in investigations because we know that we, on the government side of the House, are defending our institutions.

* * *

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, high-speed Internet and cellular services are a necessity, but access is anything but affordable and reliable. A single mother told me that she pays \$102 a month for unreliable service. People deserve a

government that has the courage to stand up to telecommunications companies.

When will the Prime Minister find the courage to stand up for people and cut these costs?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to point out that we appointed a minister for rural communities who is responsible for ensuring that the entire country has access to affordable, high-speed Internet services. Along with the private sector, we will continue to make investments across the country to provide all Canadians with this vital access to services that have the quality and speed to meet the demands of the future.

* * *

*[English]***FINANCE**

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, after the biggest drug money-laundering case in Canadian history, the federal government is still not doing its part. Expert Peter German's report points out that no federal resources are being used. Literally, in the federal money-laundering unit, no one is working on money laundering. No wonder there are so few federal prosecutions.

Drug money laundering is fuelling organized crime and putting communities at risk. Why have the Liberals failed to act?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have seen the consequence of what happens when members opposite do not want to talk about the budget and do not even want to read the budget. They do not notice what is in the budget, including unprecedented measures to move forward on countering money laundering and the impacts of organized crime in the housing sector, particularly in British Columbia.

We continue to work with our provincial counterparts and, indeed, with partners right across the country and around the world to crack down on money laundering, tax evasion and avoidance and to make sure our system works for everyone.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is threatening a lawsuit to shut down the opposition from holding him accountable for his attempts to interfere in the criminal prosecution of SNC-Lavalin. He says that it is libellous to say that the former attorney general told him and his top officials that their actions were "political interference" and "entirely inappropriate". However, the taped phone call, texts and notes show that it is all true.

Canadians look forward to the Prime Minister being forced to testify in open court under oath. When will the Prime Minister follow through on his threat?

Oral Questions

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us be clear. To ensure that Canadians could hear the truth, the Prime Minister waived solicitor-client privilege as well as cabinet confidence. These meetings took place at the justice committee. They took place in public. That is exactly why the member is able to refer to them. It is important that Canadians be able to decide for themselves.

Yes, we have put the leader of the official opposition on notice. That is because he is misleading Canadians. This is not the first time we have done so. We have done so previously because he was misleading Canadians when it came to the Minister of Innovation. Once he was put on notice, he deleted and retracted those comments. Once again, on March 31, he did the same thing afterwards—

• (1430)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Lakeland.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, indeed, let us be clear. The Prime Minister has said that it is libellous for the opposition leader to say that the former attorney general was pressured by him and then fired for resisting. However, on the taped call, the clerk said that the Prime Minister was “determined”, “in a firm frame of mind”, that they were on a “collision” course and that he was going to get it done “one way or another”.

When will the Prime Minister follow through on his threat to sue or will he just finally admit that everything the opposition leader said is totally true?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the leader of the official opposition was put on notice on March 31. That very same day, he deleted tweets and then edited them because he knew he should be more judicious in his words. His actions are clear. The Conservatives talk a tough game.

The same thing happened with the Minister of Innovation. The Conservatives made those statements in the House. When they were asked to take those statements out of the House, they would not. Do you know what happened after they were served notice in December, Mr. Speaker? The leader of the official opposition retracted those comments. He deleted those tweets.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has sent a letter to our leader in which he threatens to sue him.

In the letter, he states that the Leader of the Opposition accused him of having “personally subverted the judicial process to interfere with a criminal prosecution”.

He seems to understand the situation, and the leader stands by what he said. When will we be going to court?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yes, we did put the Leader of the Opposition on notice because he was making false and misleading statements to Canadians. On March 31, they received a notice and on the same day the Leader of the Opposition deleted his tweets. He knows that he made defamatory remarks. He knows that he must not do this. He was put on notice so that he makes more judicious decisions that are more befitting of his position.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, they are twisting the truth. The problem is that the Prime Minister put our leader on notice for the statement he made on March 29.

Stop sidestepping. Some facts were raised in the notice and we want to respond. The Leader of the Opposition is prepared to go to court right now.

Go ahead, Mr. Prime Minister, we are waiting.

The Speaker: I remind the hon. member that he must address his comments to the Chair.

The hon. Leader of the Government in the House of Commons.

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition and his party have a history of making false and defamatory statements. He had to retract some statements he made online in December about the Minister of Innovation.

We warned the Leader of the Opposition again because he was making false and misleading statements to Canadians. Once again, on March 31, the Leader of the Opposition deleted some tweets because he knows he did something he should not have.

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister now says that there should be consequences for lying to Canadians. I guess he will find out in October.

In his letter threatening to sue the Conservative leader, he says that the former attorney general never told him that the political interference in an ongoing criminal proceeding was entirely inappropriate. However, the Prime Minister admitted to the House last week that in fact she told him that directly to his face.

He says that there should be consequences for lying to Canadians. When will the Prime Minister take us to court so he can experience just what those are?

The Speaker: I encourage members to be judicious in the words they choose in the House.

The hon. government House leader.

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate your reminder that members should be judicious in their wording. Outside of the chamber you are not always there to monitor the situation. However, that is exactly why Canadians can have confidence that when the leader of the official opposition is misleading Canadians, we will not stand idly by.

That is exactly why the leader of the official opposition was put on notice. After he was put on notice, he deleted tweets. He actually edited his wording to be more judicious, just as you, Mr. Speaker, have reminded all members to do. This is not the first time the Conservatives have done this. They did this in December after the Minister of Innovation had served them notice.

Oral Questions

•(1435)

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in the letter where the Prime Minister threatens to sue the Conservative leader, he says that it is a lie that the Clerk of the Privy Council pressured the former attorney general and made it clear that her job was on the line. Well, Canadians could hear clearly on an audio recording that the Clerk of the Privy Council said exactly that.

Truth is an absolute defence, and every word of the Conservative leader's statement on the Liberal's SNC-Lavalin scandal is true. If the Prime Minister believes otherwise, when will we see him in court?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to once again remind Canadians that all information is public. Why is that information public? Because the Prime Minister waived solicitor-client privilege as well as cabinet confidence. All meetings of the justice committee that were on this issue were in public so Canadians could decide for themselves. They know very well who is misleading Canadians.

That member talks a big game, but in February, when it came to comments on this file, it was his leader, the leader of the official opposition, who actually retracted that statement.

Ms. Tracey Ramsey (Essex, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there have been expulsions from caucus, shutting down debate in committees, a lawsuit, a leak of confidential information about a chief justice Supreme Court application and two months of Liberals doing everything they can to change the channel on the PMO scandal. However, leaking confidential information, that is a serious breach.

The Minister of Justice does not seem to understand the seriousness of this act. Is the Attorney General comfortable with a leak that was intended to smear the former attorney general? The integrity of our courts is at stake. Will the Attorney General launch an investigation into this serious breach?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, obviously leaks concern us. I can assure the House that leaks did not come from my ministry and I trust my colleagues when they tell me that leaks did not come from theirs.

This is a situation of obvious concern and we are doing our best to make sure it does not happen in the future.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, someone obtained confidential information on the Supreme Court vetting process to smear Chief Justice Joyal and the former attorney general. There are political fingerprints all over this hatchet job, but the new Attorney General of Canada refuses to investigate. Why? He says he trusts the Prime Minister's Office and he trusts it will never happen again.

God help the rule of law when we have an Attorney General who thinks his job is damage control. His job is to protect the integrity of the process. When will he launch an independent investigation into finding out who launched that leak and who ordered it?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said in the House, Canadians should have complete confidence in the integrity of our Supreme Court nomination process. It is merit based. It has led to the

appointment of two exceptionally high-quality candidates thus far as well as a chief justice.

Obviously, these leaks are of great concern to me. As I assured the House yesterday, I am confident that these leaks did not come from my office and the Prime Minister has assured the House that the leaks did not come from his office.

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has been caught misleading Canadians. Having been caught, now the Prime Minister is trying to sue his critics.

In his letter, he disputes the fact “the Prime Minister had been informed by [the former attorney general] that his actions were ‘entirely inappropriate’ and amounted to ‘political interference’”. Every single Canadian understands that this is in fact exactly what happened.

When will the Prime Minister move forward with his threat to call a court case and get to business?

Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of International Development and Minister for Women and Gender Equality, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I believe my hon. colleague's question has been answered. I imagine as the critic for the status of women, she is interested in what is happening to women in Canada. I am proud to report that there are more women working in Canada now than ever before. More indigenous people—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

•(1440)

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Lethbridge will come to order. Members need to be reminded, perhaps, that they will get other turns for questions and answers and to respond to arguments. However, I think they will want to be listened to when they are posing a question or answering a question.

The hon. minister has the floor.

Hon. Maryam Monsef: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, there are more women working in Canada now than ever before. More indigenous people have jobs. More persons with disabilities are working. More newcomers and young people are working now than ever before. Part of that, my hon. critic will want to know, is because we believe that gender equality is a driver for economic growth.

The Speaker: Order, please. I did ask the member for Lethbridge to come to order. I remind her not to interrupt when someone else has the floor.

The hon. member for Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek.

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians know what is happening to women under the Liberals. The former attorney general repeatedly said the pressure she was facing was inappropriate, yet the Prime Minister claimed no one had ever raised concerns with him. However, just last week he was forced to admit that was false. Now he is threatening to take our leader to court for pointing out that he has been misleading Canadians.

Oral Questions

When will the court case begin so the whole truth can come out?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague brings up the issue of women. I want to point out that I am extremely proud that at Transport Canada 47% of the very large number of nominations that have been done under Transport Canada in the last three and a half years are women.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister says that he is going to sue the Leader of the Opposition for saying, “[The former attorney general] repeatedly told the Prime Minister and his top officials that their actions were ‘entirely inappropriate’ and amounted to ‘political interference’.” For him to sue, it would have to mean those comments were wrong, but last week the Prime Minister admitted that it was true.

How can the Prime Minister sue someone for saying something the Prime Minister has already admitted is true?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the critic from Carleton knows that question has already been answered. What he is not asking about is the budget. Perhaps he does not care about what we are doing for seniors because he already has a million-dollar pension. Those seniors are going to be better off because of their ability to keep more money in their pockets and they are going to be better off in the future because of this budget.

For the member for Carleton, we know that the training benefit we are putting in place might help him when he looks for his next job. This is the sort of benefit that will help all Canadians.

The Speaker: Order, please. The hon. members for Chilliwack—Hope and Banff—Airdrie will come to order.

The hon. member for Banff—Airdrie just showed disrespect for the directions of the Chair. Does he wish to apologize right now? Otherwise, he can exit.

Order, please. The hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot can join him if he wants to.

The hon. member for Banff—Airdrie.

Mr. Blake Richards: Mr. Speaker, although I find the actions of that side completely wrong and reprehensible, I will apologize for the fact that I did show disrespect for the Chair.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Banff—Airdrie.

The hon. member for Carleton.

● (1445)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one cannot be a lawmaker if one is a lawbreaker.

We know that the Prime Minister has broken the law, not just the ethics law that he broke by accepting gifts from someone seeking a government grant, but he broke the Parliament of Canada Act to kick two of his members out of caucus as part of the cover-up in the SNC-Lavalin scandal.

If the Prime Minister is so confident that anything he said in this matter is true, when will he launch his lawsuit so we can put him on the stand and question him under oath?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the critic from Carleton knows that this question has already been answered.

What we want to do in the House is talk about the budget that we put forward for all Canadians. We put forward a budget that is going to help young people have the possibility of getting into their first home. We put in place a budget that is going to help students be able to retire their debt earlier in their post-student life. We put in place a budget that is going to help people get the sort of ability to face up to a changing world with the training that they need.

We are proud of what we put forward for Canadians and we look forward to talking about it more.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last week I asked the government to address urgent food insecurity in our north because of climate change.

Did it ever deliver, giving \$12 million to Loblaws, a company headed up by the second-richest Canadian. The Liberals also gave \$4.5 billion to a rich American oil company. In the eyes of the Liberal government, it is clear that every problem can be solved by giving money to its billionaire friends.

Meanwhile, first nations already hurting from climate change get nothing. Instead of favours for the billionaire friends, when will the government stand up for first nations and Canadians already hurting?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to actually talk about climate change and the action our government is taking.

We are phasing out coal, investing in renewables and having a just transition for workers. We are investing in clean solutions so innovators, entrepreneurs across the country create good jobs. We are of course investing in energy efficiency.

The program the member opposite is talking about was a fair and open competition. It was based on the most submissions, the most bang for the buck. It will remove 50,000 cars off the road. The company in question is paying three-quarters of the cost.

The real question Canadians want answered is—

The Speaker: Order, please. I would ask the hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot and others not to show disrespect to other members in the House.

The hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when the IPCC report gave us 12 years to take action on global warming, how did the Liberals respond? They purchased a pipeline. When we learned that Canada is warming at twice the rate of the rest of the planet, how did the Liberals respond? They released a budget that keeps giving oil companies billions of dollars. Now we have learned that our glaciers in the far north are disappearing and melting twice as fast as the others around the world. What are the Liberals doing? They are giving Loblaws \$12 million for refrigerators.

What exactly is it going to take for the Liberals to do something? Does one of their multimillionaire buddies need to move to the far north?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am always happy to stand up and talk about our ambitious climate change plan. We are eliminating coal. We are investing in renewables. We are ensuring a just transition for communities and workers. We are investing in clean technology to create good jobs here. We are investing in energy efficiency measures.

Yes, we launched some competitions to determine who could achieve the greatest emissions reductions. That is why the company that won the competition is going to achieve carbon reductions equal to taking 50,000 cars—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Willowdale.

* * *

[English]

HOUSING

Mr. Ali Ehsassi (Willowdale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Toronto Community Housing Corporation is the largest social housing provider in Canada and the second-largest in North America.

Last week, the Prime Minister was in Toronto to make a \$1.3 billion housing announcement, the largest federal housing investment in Canadian history. Could the Minister of Families, Children, and Social Development inform the House how this record investment will provide tens of thousands of Toronto families safe and affordable homes?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Willowdale for his hard work on behalf of the people of Toronto.

We believe that every Canadian should have a safe and affordable home. That is why we launched the first-ever national housing strategy, a \$40 billion plan. Sorry, it is a \$55 billion plan because of budget 2019. That is why we were so pleased last Friday to announce a very historic investment in the city of Toronto, helping to renovate, renew and reconstruct the community homes of 58,000 families in Toronto. That is why we will keep working very hard to give every Canadian a safe and affordable place to call home.

● (1450)

[Translation]

JUSTICE

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's saga of corruption and political interference continues. After pulling out all the stops to kill the story and hide the truth from Canadians, the Prime Minister is now resorting to intimidation tactics in a bid to silence the Leader of the Opposition.

Will the Prime Minister make good on his threat as soon as possible? Canadians want the truth.

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister wanted to make sure Canadians heard the truth. That is why he waived solicitor-client privilege and cabinet confidence.

The Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights called witnesses, and the witnesses came and testified. All the facts are now public, and Canadians can hear them for themselves.

The interesting thing is that after the Leader of the Opposition was served notice last week, he deleted the tweets because he knows he cannot make defamatory statements.

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics is an excellent place to disclose new information on the Prime Minister's political interference, especially when that information will help the Ethics Commissioner in his upcoming investigation.

Will the Prime Minister waive any restrictions that might prevent witnesses from appearing and speaking freely before the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics? Canadians still want to know the truth.

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, ensuring that Canadians could hear and know the truth is precisely why the Prime Minister waived cabinet confidence and solicitor-client privilege.

All the facts have now been made public. Members of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights made their own decisions. That is how we operate on this side of the House.

We can see that the Conservatives get direction from the Leader of the Opposition, but our MPs can make their own decisions. Members of the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics will proceed as they see fit.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has shut down every parliamentary opportunity to examine fully his attempted interference in the SNC-Lavalin corruption trial. By threatening a lawsuit, he suddenly seems to favour litigating details of his scandal under oath in a public court—well, not really. We know it is just a desperate ruse.

However, there is another opportunity this afternoon. Will the Prime Minister encourage the Liberal members of the ethics committee to support my motion to invite him and 11 other witnesses to speak without constraint about this sorry affair?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this matter has been addressed numerous times in the House, but I will definitely answer it once again.

We believe that Canadians should get to hear the truth. That is exactly why the members of the justice committee themselves set parameters for a discussion: to ensure the truth could be shared with Canadians. That is exactly why the Prime Minister waived solicitor-client privilege as well as cabinet confidence. This is the first time in the history of the country that this has been done.

However, it is important that Canadians get to know. That is exactly why all the facts are now public. The Conservatives are misleading Canadians, and that is what they continue to do. That is why they were served notice and then all of a sudden made some changes.

The Speaker: Order. I know that the hon. member for Lévis—Lotbinière got everyone excited. That is no ill reflection on the hon. member for Thornhill, of course, but let us remember that each person has to be listened to.

The hon. member for Thornhill has the floor.

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has shown little regard for anyone but himself in this ever-deepening scandal. The banal excuses and empty platitudes about his respect for the rule of law and the independence of committees stand in stark contrast to the trail of resignations, removals and character smearing left in his self-serving wake.

Again, will the Prime Minister finally order his minions to stand down and encourage the Liberal members of the ethics committee to freely vote their conscience?

• (1455)

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what is clear is that the member is projecting. That member and his benches are minions of the leader of the official opposition.

Rather than point fingers, the member should know very well that when it comes to our members, they make their own decisions. The Conservatives cannot fathom that people do not agree with them. They have not had to endure them often, but we in the Liberal benches have tough conversations. We agree to disagree and we try to find compromise where it is possible.

It is with those qualities that we know that Canadians are better off today than they were under 10 years—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. I do not know that I have heard of “minions” described as unparliamentary, but people should be judicious, and I think we should be careful how we describe each other. There are members in the House—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. Order. The hon. government House leader and the member for Thornhill will come to order. Let us have a little order.

The hon. member for Trois-Rivières.

* * *

*[Translation]***RAIL TRANSPORTATION**

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, while Trois-Rivières is still waiting for an announcement on the high-frequency rail project, Transport Canada is funding a feasibility study on the Hyperloop project in Canada. Transport Canada has yet to publish the results of the studies on the HFR. The Hyperloop project is decades away from practical application, while the HFR is closer to reality.

Since the minister is currently exploring the future, could he get back in his DeLorean, return to 2019 and tell us whether there is a high-frequency rail project on the horizon?

Hon. Marc Garneau (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know that my colleague is anxious about HFR. I keep telling him every week that we are working on this important file. When we have news, we will be sure to let my colleague know. In the meantime, we are interested in technologies of the future. We are a government that believes in science and research, and we want to explore all options for transportation in the future.

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*[English]***CANADIAN COAST GUARD**

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we found out yesterday that the Canadian Coast Guard is ill-equipped and does not have a concrete plan to deal with an aging fleet. This has resulted in “reduced search-and-rescue coverage, ferry-service disruptions, cancelled resupply runs to Arctic and coastal communities and nearly \$2 million in lost navigational buoys”.

The government's lack of funding for the Coast Guard is leaving coastal communities at a real risk. When will the government finally make sure that our Coast Guard is properly equipped, and why has the safety of our coastal communities not been a priority?

Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Coast Guard members are at work every day across the country, and our government will continue to provide them with the tools that they need to keep Canadians and our waters safe and our economy moving.

Oral Questions

During the 2018 Arctic season, the Coast Guard was faced with more unusually difficult ice conditions than in other years, which led to some delay in resupply and escort missions.

Canadians can be proud of the men and women of the Canadian Coast Guard and the important work that they do from coast to coast to coast.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last year Loblaws made \$3 billion in profit, yet yesterday the Minister of Environment gave Loblaws \$12 million. To do what? It was to buy fridges. This money came from hard-working Canadians, seniors and low-income families who struggle to make ends meet.

You tell me. How many Canadians can walk into the Prime Minister's Office and ask him to pay for a new fridge? How many? Why is it always the wealthy and well-connected who get handouts from these Liberals?

• (1500)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Abbotsford, my good friend, seems to be asking me a question, but I think he knows he has to ask questions to the other side. I am happy that members are in a good mood, at least for a moment.

The hon. Minister of Environment.

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was so excited when I saw the member stand up because I thought he was going to talk about the Conservatives' climate change plan. It has been 345 days since they announced a climate change plan.

What is our plan? We are phasing out coal, investing in renewables and providing a just transition for workers. We are investing in public transportation across the country. We are investing in clean-tech companies, and yes, we are investing in energy efficiency. This was an open tender, open to any company or organization across the country, to get bang for the buck, because guess what? Canadians want to reduce their emissions.

It is only the party opposite—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill.

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am so glad that the minister talked about her plan, a plan that taxes Canadians for committing the sin of heating their homes in the winter, which will do nothing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and then gives that money to Loblaws to buy freezers. I am really, really good with that not being our plan. I am proud to say we will not do that.

Why is the government so hell-bent on taking from the poor to give to the rich?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. I had no trouble hearing the question.

Order. Do not tell me it was the member for Lévis—Lotbinière that members are going to blame for still being this excited. I hope not.

The hon. Minister of Environment.

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it seems like the party opposite wants to “sticker” it to Canadians like Doug Ford, but let us talk about what we are doing.

We are putting a price on pollution and giving it all back to Ontarians. What does that mean? It means 90% of the money goes right back to families. A family of four will get \$307, which is more than 80% of what families will pay.

However, I have a question. The member for Milton was on television the other day and was asked if Conservatives would commit to meeting the Paris Agreement targets. She could not answer.

Everyone in this House, except for one Conservative, voted for it. Will—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. We should have as much ease in hearing the answers as in hearing the questions.

The hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill.

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, they stick it to Canadians.

Amanda Stevenson, in Lundar, Manitoba, had her dairy fridge quit last week. She has watched these Liberals take money from her in the form of a carbon tax and increase taxes on her small business, and now she had to watch them give money to her competitor for the same thing she cannot afford. That is wrong. We are proud to stand for Amanda, not for SNC-Lavalin and for Loblaws.

Why is the government so hell-bent on taking from the poor to give to the rich?

Hon. Catherine McKenna (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, why does the party opposite not stand for the planet? Why does the party opposite not stand for our children and grandchildren? Why does the party opposite not stand for climate action that is creating good jobs and preparing us for the future?

To the woman in Manitoba that the member opposite is misleading, let me tell her that a family of four in Manitoba will receive \$339, more than 80% of what families will pay. We can take action on climate change and we can do it in a way that is affordable.

* * *

HEALTH

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, health care is something all Canadians are proud of, and no individual should be left behind when it comes to making sure they get the services they need. Sunday, April 7, was World Health Day, and the focus was on universal health coverage.

Oral Questions

Can the Minister of Health please advise this House on how she plans to make Canada's health care system even better?

• (1505)

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on World Health Day, we celebrate universal public health care, something that Lester Pearson provided to all Canadians more than 50 years ago.

We recognize that in Canada people are proud of their publicly funded health care system, one that is based on need and not on their ability to pay, and this government wants to strengthen that. That is why we are making historic investments in the area of mental health and home care, and we have just laid the foundational piece for a national pharmacare program.

This government will continue to fight for a publicly funded health care system.

* * *

[Translation]

JUSTICE

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our Prime Minister is trying to intimidate our leader with threats of legal action. He wants to beef up his credibility because his lack of leadership is causing the government to make mistakes.

He hid the truth from Canadians for weeks, if not months, but now we have the perfect opportunity to find out everything. He needs to present his evidence in court, follow through on his threat and testify under oath. When will he do that?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is not the first time this Conservative leader and his party have misled Canadians by making false and defamatory statements. As I have already said at least twice, he was forced to withdraw or stop making defamatory statements about members of our government.

We had to warn him because he did it again. We know the Conservatives have a history of doing this. It is important for the Conservatives to remember that this is not the right approach.

* * *

[English]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, climate leaders do not buy pipelines. Feminist prime ministers do not turf female colleagues because they speak truth to power. Humanitarian leaders do not shut their borders to asylum seekers during a refugee crisis. Now the Liberals have snuck in changes to refugee laws in the budget bill. That means people like Seidu Mohammed, an LGBTQ man from Ghana, whose asylum claim was accepted after he crossed irregularly from the U.S., will not even get a chance to apply.

Lives are at risk. Will the Prime Minister do what is right and suspend the safe third country agreement?

Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of Border Security and Organized Crime Reduction, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we remain committed to maintaining a well-functioning refugee system, and that is why we have made significant investments in budget 2019 to improve the

efficiency of the IRB in holding these hearings and to bring in regulation to encourage people to use the appropriate ways of entry to immigrate to this country. We will continue to invest in that system.

We have achieved a significant level of success in significantly reducing the number of people who have presented themselves irregularly at our borders while maintaining a robust and efficient system of refugee determination.

* * *

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians have a long and proud history of medical developments and discoveries, like insulin and vaccines, which have saved lives at home and abroad.

Can the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development please tell us what investments our government is making in cutting-edge research and facilities to pave the way for new medical breakthroughs and to make treatments even more effective?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the member for Cumberland—Colchester and thank him for his 30 years of outstanding service to Canadians. He has been a strong advocate for diversifying the local economy and is very passionate about growing the life sciences sector, particularly in producing life-saving treatments for serious illnesses. That is why, most recently, the Prime Minister made the announcement on BioVectra for \$37.5 million, which helped leverage \$144.6 million. More importantly, 450 good-quality, middle-class jobs were created.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister and those Liberals talk about letting members on their side of the House make decisions without direction from the PMO. That certainly was not the case when the Prime Minister unilaterally turfed two female caucus members, in the process breaking the laws of this place. We know what the Prime Minister does to people who do not agree with him. He pressures, intimidates and then threatens them if they do not fall in line, and then he throws them out.

Since the leader of the opposition will not be intimidated, and the Prime Minister cannot kick him out of caucus, the Prime Minister has threatened him with a lawsuit. Here is a simple question. When are we going to see you in court?

Oral Questions

The Speaker: Order. I know that the member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes is new to the House, relatively speaking, but I think he knows the rule that one has to direct their questions and comments to the Chair.

The hon. government House leader.

● (1510)

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, you should be able to confirm that you received a letter to inform you of the will of caucus on these measures. It is up to the Liberal caucus to decide our own affairs. I would encourage that member to focus on his caucus and its caucus matters. We have caucus discussions, and we know that what happens in caucus stays in caucus, but to satisfy the rules, Mr. Speaker, you were provided with a letter.

What is clear is that we have gone through a whole question period, and the Conservatives will continue to focus on us. We will continue to focus on Canadians, and that is why we are so proud to be talking about the budget. We look forward to being able to share how we are going to improve the lives of Canadians.

* * *

[*Translation*]

INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the member for Mount Royal finally dissociated himself from the shameful statements his friend, the mayor of Hampstead, made comparing secularism to ethnic cleansing. The Minister of Justice was asked to condemn the statements yesterday, but he chose not to.

Insulting Quebec is apparently okay with the Minister of Justice.

Will the minister condemn the statements made by the mayor of Hampstead and pledge not to challenge the secularism bill in court?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said yesterday, our government has always stood up for Canadians' fundamental rights and will continue to do so. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms protects the rights of all citizens. We cannot choose which to protect and which to limit. Our position is clear. The state must not dictate what people can or cannot wear regardless of their beliefs.

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, every time we ask a question we see the Minister of Justice and Attorney General pick up his notes and repeat the answers written by the Prime Minister's office. That says a lot about the independence of the new attorney general vis-a-vis the Prime Minister. Could we please get a straight answer to a simple question?

Will the Minister of Justice challenge Bill 21 or support a legal challenge, yes or no? It seems to me that he does not need notes to answer the question.

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I stated yesterday, Canada is based on the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It is not up to the state to determine what people can or cannot wear no matter their beliefs. We have institutions to protect Canadians' fundamental rights. As Attorney General of Canada and Minister of Justice, I will support and protect these laws.

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in 2018, Quebec took in roughly 22,000 asylum seekers. The Quebec government housed them, cared for them and looked after them. The budget does not offer Quebec a single cent for refugee settlement. In the budget implementation act, the Liberals do not address the problem of Roxham Road.

Instead of making minor adjustments, why did the Minister of Immigration not just announce the suspension of the safe third country agreement?

[*English*]

Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of Border Security and Organized Crime Reduction, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to acknowledge the excellent partnership we have with the Province of Quebec and the City of Montreal. I wish to extend my sincere appreciation for that partnership and for their hard work.

Canada has experienced an increase in people coming to this country as a result of situations going on all over the world. People are fleeing war and persecution. It is in partnership with municipalities and the provinces that Canada remains a welcoming country as we work to ensure that these individuals enjoy the full benefit of the rule of law in Canada and that at the same time, the system is operated—

* * *

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of the Hon. Bill Oliver, Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure for the Province of New Brunswick.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Scott Reid: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

In her response earlier, the hon. government House leader made reference to a piece of correspondence she had given you. I do not believe that the rest of us have seen this letter, but as you know, Mr. Speaker, and as she knows, any letter or any document that is made reference to in the House must be tabled for the benefit of all of us. We would now like to see this letter to determine whether this actually demonstrates that the Liberal Party was in fact in conformity with the Parliament of Canada Act. She was very careful not to make that clear in her comments, so we would like to see it for ourselves.

● (1515)

The Speaker: Is the member asking for unanimous consent for this? Otherwise, I am not at liberty to disclose communications from caucus or members individually.

The hon. member for Lethbridge is rising on a point of order.

Ms. Rachael Harder: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. During question period, a falsehood was spoken, and I just wish to draw some attention to that.

Privilege

The Minister for Women and Gender Equality said that women are actually participating in the workforce to a greater extent. I have a document from the Library of Parliament that actually shows that women participated in the labour force to a greater extent when the former government was in place, and that number has declined since this new government came to power.

I would ask for unanimous consent to table the document.

The Speaker: Does the hon. member for Lethbridge have unanimous consent of the House?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order arising out of question period.

I would have risen if I could have at the moment this event occurred, but under our standing rules, there are no points of order during Question Period. Under our standing rules, we are not to interrupt members when they are speaking. We are not to heckle. We are not to create a din.

Just as a point of reference for you, Mr. Speaker, at the point that you were trying to bring the House to order, when the Minister of Finance was speaking, with the volume at my desk at full, as high as I could listen to it, as far as our technology would take it, I was unable to hear the minister over the heckling. That is just unacceptable, and I wish that we would find a way. We have the Standing Orders.

It is disrespectful to this institution, to democracy itself and to our constituents that we allow this sort of bad behaviour to continue at high volume.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, who has raised a very important point that I have brought attention to numerous times. Members often do not recognize it.

In a democracy, we need to hear things that we do not like. We need to respect the opinions of others and listen to them, whether we like it or not. I would like to see more of that practised here. I continue to look for ways to advance that end.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Government House Leader has an argument in relation to a question of privilege that has been raised.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

ALLEGED PROCESS USED TO DETERMINE LIBERAL CAUCUS MEMBERSHIP

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to respond to the question of privilege raised this morning by the hon. member for Markham—Stouffville. In her intervention, the member referenced an alleged breach of the Parliament of Canada Act.

As the Chair stated in a ruling on April 8, 2019, asking the House to deal with the possible expulsion of a member from caucus is not a proper subject for a question of privilege. The Chair stated that if a member believes that the House needs to put in place certain

practices, perhaps by way of additional Standing Orders, this should be done through a substantive motion following proper notice.

The Chair also made reference earlier today, as well as in the April 8 ruling, to the Speaker having no role in the interpretation of statute nor in the conduct of changes that were made to the Parliament of Canada Act. As the Chair pointed out, all that is allowed under subsection 49.8(5) of the Parliament of Canada Act is that the Speaker be informed of the results of the caucus decision.

As the hon. member pointed out, the Speaker confirmed on December 10, 2015, that all actions required by the Speaker as it relates to subsection 49.8(5) had been taken, which she stated is indicative that the chair of the Liberal caucus did indeed inform the Speaker of the decision of the Liberal caucus.

Just to be absolutely clear I will state that, pursuant to subsection 49.8(5) of the Parliament of Canada Act, the chair of the national Liberal caucus sent a letter to the Speaker over three years ago outlining the decisions of the Liberal caucus as they relate to sections 49.2, 49.3 and 49.4; subsections 49.5(1) to 49.5(4); and section 49.6 of the Parliament of Canada Act and their application to the 42nd Parliament. The Liberal caucus decided that the provisions would not apply for the 42nd Parliament. Given the fact that the Liberal caucus did not adopt these provisions, the points raised by the hon. member on this issue are moot.

The hon. member also states that her question of privilege is with respect to which rules apply with regard to the expulsion and readmission of caucus members. I would contend that, given the Liberal caucus decided that the provisions of the Parliament of Canada Act would not apply for the 42nd Parliament and sent the Speaker a letter to confirm this, there is no confusion around which rules apply.

Furthermore, as I said earlier, it is not the role of the Speaker to adjudicate these matters.

● (1520)

The Speaker: I thank the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, on the same question of privilege, I am quite surprised by the position the government is taking. Apparently, the Liberal caucus reached a decision that the law did not apply to it and because it made the decision, the law does not apply. I would be very interested if the hon. member could provide the legal rationale.

As a member of this place who was part of the discussion and debate on the Reform Act to change the rules under the Parliament of Canada Act, I have consistently bemoaned, and I know it may or may not be a matter for the Speaker to look at this, the larger question of how much power leaders of organized parties that are recognized have over the conduct of their individual members. However, the principle of Westminster democracy in this place is that all members are equal and the Prime Minister is merely first among equals.

Government Orders

I assumed, when we passed the Parliament of Canada Act and the amendments found in section 49, that the recognized parties would comply with the requirements of section 49 in the Parliament of Canada Act and that surely they applied to every party once the law was passed and in place. It is quite distressing to hear now from this member that the caucus decided for itself to ignore the requirements of the law and feels that it has met all the requirements by sending a letter to the Speaker that details the caucus's decision to ignore the law.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands. I will come back to the House in due course with my decision.

CIRCULATION OF COMMITTEE DOCUMENT—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I am now ready to rule on the question of privilege raised on March 19, 2019, by the hon. member for Milton, concerning an alleged leak of proceedings at the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

[Translation]

I want to thank the hon. member as well as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, and the members for Essex, St. Albert—Edmonton and Cariboo—Prince George for their comments.

[English]

In her intervention, the member for Milton alleged that earlier that day the text of a motion that was to be debated in camera by the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights was leaked to members of the media by Liberal staff. While the member acknowledged that it is normally committees themselves that must regulate such issues, in her opinion this disclosure of the work of the committee was egregious enough to constitute a breach of privilege that requires the Chair's intervention.

[Translation]

In response, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons insisted that no rules were breached in making public a motion not yet moved in committee since this act is not part of a committee's proceedings.

[English]

To begin, the Chair would like to confirm that, despite what has been reported in the media, it has not been clearly established when exactly this motion was shared with the media. To that end, it is my understanding that the chair of the committee has committed to investigating this issue.

[Translation]

Nonetheless, both the member for Milton and the parliamentary secretary were right to cite *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, at pages 1089 and 1090, which states:

Divulging any part of the proceedings of an in camera committee meeting has been ruled by the Speaker to constitute a prima facie matter of privilege.

Of note, though, is that the sentence that follows, on page 1090, is equally instructive. It reads:

However, if a committee does not report a divulgence of in camera proceedings, a Speaker has ruled that there are no procedural grounds on which to intervene.

●(1525)

[English]

It seems to the Chair then that these two principles must be considered together, rather than separately. For to consider only one could very well lead to a misinterpretation of what the House has accepted as its principles and practices. In ruling on a question of privilege concerning an alleged breach of confidentiality of in camera committee proceedings, Speaker Milliken stated on February 25, 2003, at page 3986 of the Debates:

In the absence of a report from the committee on such an issue, it is virtually impossible for the Chair to make any judgment as to the prima facie occurrence of a breach of privilege with regard to such charges.

The message is simple and steadfast: Committees are the masters of their proceedings. The Speaker must not supersede their judgment unless and until the circumstances are serious or extreme enough to warrant an intervention by the Chair in the absence of a report from a committee.

This in no way diminishes the importance of confidentiality of in camera committee proceedings. In fact, it is this insistence on confidentiality that breathes life into and sustains the very nature and value of such proceedings. Members and staff alike who are privy to these confidential discussions must assuredly continue to do their utmost to respect and protect this important obligation.

[Translation]

From the evidence presented and studied thoroughly, the Chair could not find any indication, nor reasonably conclude, that this was an exceptional situation requiring an intervention in the absence of a committee report. Accordingly, in my view as Speaker, there is no question of privilege.

I thank all hon. members for their attention.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

MACKENZIE VALLEY RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-88, An Act to amend the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act and the Canada Petroleum Resources Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill had completed her speech. It is now time for questions and comments.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in listening to the debate thus far, it is important to recognize that as a government we have put a very high priority on northern Canada and wanting to ensure that we get it right.

Government Orders

The legislation would allow for more empowerment within the local communities. It is something the former government was really unable to do. This is positive legislation that will in fact make a difference. What we are hoping to see is that the official opposition will recognize the importance of northern Canada by getting behind this legislation and recognizing its value in terms of such a wonderful concept as the environment, the economy and our natural resources working together to advance the best interests of not only northern Canada but Canada as a whole.

Therefore, I would ask to what degree the Conservative Party is prepared to bring forward amendments. I understand Conservatives are opposing the legislation, but to what degree are they prepared, at the very least, to bring amendments forward, or do they feel that there are no amendments to be advanced at this point?

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, part 2 of this legislation amends the Canada Petroleum Resources Act to expand the power of cabinet to interfere in the decisions surrounding natural resource projects. This is not helpful for the communities of the north, any of its peoples or for economic growth. In fact, this is the exact type of legislation that is imbedded in Bill C-69 and other bills that do nothing to protect the environment but everything to create uncertainty and instability in the investment climate for natural resource development.

The question is not “Can we protect the environment?” or “Can we have a proper resource development process?” It is ensuring that we have a stable process that the government and the Liberal Party are not interfering in politically depending on whatever way the wind is blowing. That is no way to create an investment climate and that is no way to partner with communities in the north.

This legislation is, again, another overreach of the government's desire to interfere in the natural resource sector in Canada and to stymie jobs and growth in that area.

•(1530)

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for a very powerful speech outlining the devastating potential effects of the passing of this legislation, not only for the specific resource commitments in the north but also for the precedents that it will set for future legislation and the overreach of the cabinet.

Could the member expand on why this is such a big deal, the severity of the economic impact and the severity of the constraints that this will put on the future of resource commitments in Canada?

Hon. Michelle Rempel: Madam Speaker, the Liberals went in and politically vetoed the northern gateway pipeline after it had been reviewed extensively and had over 200 recommendations attached to it, conditions that were required for the build-out. When the government went in and said “no”, it showed that a company can spend millions and millions of dollars for the natural resource review process but a group of politicians can sit around and decide that they do not like the politics of it at a given time and say “bye”.

Guess what happens. Industry looks at Canada and thinks that it is a non-stable place to do business. This is not about getting a “yes” and it is not about getting a “no”. This is about creating a system investors can look at and see that there is a clear arm's length path that is free from political influence.

What the government is doing with this particular bill is to enshrine that principle into more legislation. That is wrong. What they have done is say that, over an environmental review, over any investment, over any other principle, the principle most important to them is to be able to politically interfere in a decision so that they can manipulate the situation for their electoral prospects. That is what is wrong with Bill C-69. That is what is wrong with part 2 of this legislation and, frankly, that is what has ruined the economy in my province.

We have to depart from this ideology that somehow a group of politicians can sit around a table and dictate the investment climate, because then one gets into situations where people and lobbyists start looking at how they can influence the political situation in other ways, which is what we are seeing with SNC-Lavalin. This particular principle is exactly why the government needs to go. We need to have a reset of the government so that we can get back to our democratic processes, arm's length processes, and jobs and growth in Canada.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I wish to focus my comments on the first part of Bill C-88, the amendments to the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act. However, I cannot resist adding that contrary to the remarks the hon. member just made, it was the Harper government that took the power away from the National Energy Board to make the final decision of nay or yea for a pipeline and gave it to the cabinet, so the statement lacks a certain level of credibility.

Forty-five years ago, the federal government commissioned Judge Thomas Berger to lead an inquiry to investigate the social, environmental and economic impacts of a proposed gas pipeline that would run through the Yukon and the Mackenzie River Valley of the Northwest Territories. The Berger inquiry set the bar for proper consultation with communities, in particular with indigenous communities, on proposed major energy projects.

Justice Berger heard testimony from diverse groups with an interest in the pipeline. The inquiry was notable for the voice it gave to aboriginal people, whose traditional territory the pipeline was intended to traverse.

Berger travelled extensively in the north in preparation for and during the hearings, visiting all 35 communities along the Mackenzie River Valley, as well as other cities across Canada, to gauge public reaction. In his travels, he met with Dene, Inuit, Métis and non-aboriginal residents. He heard from experts. He held community meetings across the Northwest Territories and Yukon. This played an important role in shaping his views.

Sadly, despite my request, no similar community-level process was agreed to by the parliamentary committee on review of Bill C-69.

Government Orders

For the first time, intervenor funding was provided to aboriginal communities to ensure their voices would be heard. This inspired many of us to pursue similar rights and open processes for energy reviews in my province of Alberta and before the NEB. My Canadian environmental bill of rights, Bill C-438, is premised on these same basic rights and principles.

The commission recommended that no pipeline be built through northern Yukon and that a pipeline through the Mackenzie Valley should be delayed for 10 years.

His report's first volume, entitled "Northern Frontier, Northern Homeland", highlighted the fact that while the Mackenzie Valley could be the site of the biggest project in the history of free enterprise, it was also home to many people whose lives would be immeasurably changed by the pipeline.

Berger was quoted as saying this:

The North is a frontier, but it is a homeland too, the homeland of the Dene, Inuit and Métis, as it is also the home of the white people who live there. And it is a heritage, a unique environment that we are called upon to preserve for all Canadians.

The commission found no significant economic benefit to northerners from the pipeline. The report was prescient in concluding that large-sale projects based on non-renewable energy sources rarely provide long-term employment and that those locals who did find work during construction could only find low-skill, low-wage positions.

In addition, Berger feared that the pipeline development would undermine local economies, which relied on hunting, fishing and trapping, possibly even increasing economic hardship. Berger ultimately found that the economy of the region would not be harmed by not building the pipeline.

The commission believed that the pipeline process had not taken native culture seriously and that any development needed to conform to the wishes of those who lived there.

Berger predicted that the social consequences of the pipeline would not only be serious; they would be devastating. The commission was particularly concerned about the role of indigenous peoples in development plans. At the time the report was released, there were several ongoing negotiations over native land claims in the area. Berger suggested that the pipeline construction be delayed until those claims were settled.

The commission found that the local population would not accept development activity without some control. In addition, land claims were part of a broader native rights issue that needed to be settled between the government and the first nations.

In Berger's view, rapid development in the north would preclude settlement of these important issues due to the influx of non-native populations and growing business interests.

The north today bears little resemblance to the north of Berger's time. The land is the same and the resources are still there, but the people of the north have changed. Most land claims have been settled. For many, the traditional ways of life have waned, and indigenous peoples are seizing control of their own destinies. Many who fought so fiercely against the Mackenzie Valley pipeline now favour building one, or building other developments, including a

highway, but on their own terms, which include making sure the benefits flow to their communities over the long term.

In the previous Parliament, the Conservatives tacked on to a devolution bill regressive measures that directly contradicted any of the lessons of the Berger inquiry. Those measures also undermined rights within the constitutionally entrenched land claims and self-government agreements or modern treaties. These first nation final agreements provide that those communities most impacted by developments must have a direct voice.

● (1535)

The Conservatives' Bill C-15, contrary to the wish of northerners, eliminated four regional land and water co-management boards created under carefully negotiated first nation final agreements. Lawsuits successfully filed by the Tlicho and Sahtu First Nations succeeded in stopping these measures.

The bill before us, Bill C-88, restores the co-management boards, providing more effective voices for first nations in the development reviews and approvals. However, as my colleague, the MP for South Okanagan—West Kootenay, has pointed out, Bill C-88 could fully recognize and strengthen indigenous rights by entrenching the UNDRIP in this proposed law.

A few years back, I had the honour of attending a Dene gathering in Fort Providence with my former colleague, Dennis Bevington, the then Northwest Territories member of Parliament. I heard first-hand concerns from northerners about an oil spill that was discovered on the land by indigenous hunters and their struggle to receive the necessary assistance to monitor the cleanup of the disaster, so the struggle continues to have a true voice.

However, I also experienced the joy of seeing the mighty Mackenzie River running along the shores of Fort Providence, a magnificent transboundary river basin relied upon by many communities that have long deserved a greater voice in decision-making.

I look forward to supporting the bill before us.

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her excellent speech on this topic and I appreciate her support.

The member has been here long enough to know that the Conservatives tried to abrogate the Yukon land claim environmental process. That attempt was turned back. I think the member would agree that we are again turning back an effort by the Conservatives to abrogate the land claims, in particular the Tlicho and Sahtu, with an act. Those land claims, both the ones that occurred in the Yukon and the ones in the Northwest Territories, were constitutionally protected, so we cannot just pass a law that overrides that.

Government Orders

• (1540)

Ms. Linda Duncan: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for the question, and also for allowing me to go before him so that I could go to my meeting. It is very gracious of him.

Indeed, it is very important that this measure has come forward. It is regrettable that it has taken this long, but finally we are moving forward with this legislation.

The hon. member represents the Yukon, and I had the pleasure of living and working there for three years. Everything one does in Yukon touches on first nation land claims and final governance agreements.

Nothing could be more important than reversing the changes made by the Harper government. Those land claims and self-government agreements were constitutionally entrenched, and the move the Conservatives made in their bill to erase them was reprehensible.

I look forward to the opportunity to finally have third reading on the bill before us, and I also look forward to the Liberal members at committee accepting that the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, UNDRIP, must be added into the bill.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciated the member's opening remarks about Mr. Harper's record and what he had instructed in the legislation.

My question is specific to the obligation of government, especially in taking into consideration indigenous people as a stakeholder, or rather, indigenous people not as a stakeholder but more as an equal partner in terms of how we can best develop our northern region. There are many different interests out there. I think this legislation, in good part, allows for greater flexibility in having more people engaged in the process. I wonder if the member could provide her comments with respect to that.

Ms. Linda Duncan: Madam Speaker, my understanding is that the concerns raised by the Conservative members goes to the second part of the bill, which is not a part that I have analyzed in depth. I quickly looked at the bill, and I think there are concerns that the federal government would be given unilateral power over the petroleum resources, and it will be important that the indigenous people of the north, particularly the first nations under their first nations final agreements, be given the opportunity to voice their views.

However, I have a slightly different view. Yes, development should proceed in partnership, but there is a higher level of responsibility: It is to make sure that the voices of those people who are going to be most impacted by the development will rule. They are the ones who will have to deal with the impact of the developments. That is exactly why those water and land boards were created to begin with, and to some extent negotiated, many years ago.

Perhaps we need provisions in law to further protect those rights and ensure that development in the north ends up being for the benefit of the people of the north.

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Madam Speaker, just to clarify part 2, Conservatives have been saying it inhibits oil and gas rights, but it

actually protects them. It protects those leases by freezing them, the ones that were affected by the moratoriums, so again it is not accurate information.

Ms. Linda Duncan: Madam Speaker, I am not sure that was a question. These matters obviously will be deliberated at committee, and I am hoping that the Liberal majority will be open to amendments. I know that will be an unusual situation, but we remain hopeful.

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.):

[Member spoke in Dene as follows:]

Naya dak gwandii

[Dene text translated as follows:]

Territory

[English]

Madam Speaker, I stand today on the traditional unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe people to express my support for Bill C-88, which proposes to modernize the regulatory regime governing resource development projects in the north.

Before I start, one of the last Conservative speakers said the decision should be made in the north. The northern governments—the Sahtu, the Gwich'in, the Tlicho, the Government of the Northwest Territories—are all in agreement with this legislation. I assume that unless they are going to contradict their own speaker, the Conservatives will be supporting this bill, which leaves the decisions in the north as they were negotiated in the constitutionally protected land claims.

The key reason I support the legislation now before us has to do with the proposed enforcement system. As my colleagues know, the effectiveness of any regulatory regime depends largely on the quality of its enforcement system. As it stands today, the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act lacks an effective enforcement system when it comes to assessments of environmental impacts.

While the amendments to the Northwest Territories Devolution Act did create an enforcement system, the court challenges initiated by northern indigenous groups on the decimation of their boards effectively eliminated it. Bill C-88 would amend the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act to establish an enforcement system based on development certificates.

A development certificate is a form of authorization, a permission slip of sorts. For a project to proceed, an environmental assessment body must first issue a development certificate to the proponent. The Nunavut Planning and Project Assessment Act follows a similar approach.

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Under such a system, that environmental assessment body can include specific mitigation measures in the development certificate. The proponent might be authorized to drive heavy vehicles only on frozen winter roads, for instance, or be banned from designated areas during the time of year when caribou typically birth and nurse their calves, which I wish the Trump administration would do in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Under Bill C-88, the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board would be authorized to issue development certificates listing mitigation measures within the jurisdiction of the responsible ministers. After completing an environmental assessment or environmental impact review, the board would issue a certificate to the proponent.

Under the enforcement system envisioned in Bill C-88, it would be a violation to proceed with a project without a valid certificate or to contravene the conditions of a certificate. These and other violations could lead to an administrative monetary penalty, or AMP. An AMP is a fine imposed by an inspector. It is a civil sanction imposed through an administrative process, rather than a criminal sentence imposed by a court.

Bill C-88 would amend the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act to provide all the necessary and appropriate authorities for AMPs and associated regulations. The regulations would specify penalty amounts, as well as the method of calculating penalties for each type of violation. The amendments also specify the maximum fine would be \$25,000 for individuals and \$100,000 for organizations. A violation that continues for multiple days would be subject to a separate AMP for each day. I am convinced that the threat of such potentially large fines would promote compliance with the proposed legislation.

There are many advantages to an enforcement system based on development certificates. The threat of a hefty fine removes the potential financial benefit of non-compliance, for instance. By imposing particular restrictions on a project through a development certificate, the system helps regulators to achieve particular goals, such as environmental protection. Civil sanctions such as AMPs tend to be more efficient than criminal prosecutions, which can be lengthy and expensive undertakings.

The enforcement system proposed in Bill C-88 is consistent with those authorized in other federal legislation, including the Environmental Violations Administrative Monetary Penalties Act, the National Energy Board Act and the Nuclear Safety and Control Act.

Another worthwhile feature of the proposed enforcement system is that it features many effective checks and balances. Development certificates, for example, could not include measures within the jurisdiction of a designated regulatory agency, such as the National Energy Board or the Tlicho government. Anyone issued an AMP could seek to have the notice investigated by an official review body. The review would determine whether the penalty was issued in accordance with the regulations, whether the person committed the violation, or both.

• (1545)

For violations related to part 5 of the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act, which pertains to environmental assessment, the

federal minister would be empowered to act as a review body. For violations related to part 3 of the act, which deals with land and water management, the board that issued the original authorization would serve as the review body. If a violation was related to an activity that did not involve an authorization, the board responsible for the region where the violation occurred would serve as the review body.

The enforcement system would also include a reconsideration process. A proponent could request an adjustment to a development certificate to address changing circumstances, ineffective or unclear project conditions or new technologies. Reconsideration would be limited to the area of change and to any effects the change may have had on the project. The proponent would not be required to complete another full environmental assessment, and the original decision to authorize the project could not be challenged under reconsideration.

Inspection is another important aspect of the proposed enforcement system. Qualified persons, such as federal or territorial officers, would be authorized under the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act to inspect projects for compliance with the conditions of development certificates. The inspectors would have broad authority to enter and examine premises. They could also prohibit or limit access to premises. If an inspection uncovered evidence of an activity that contravened part 5 of the act, the inspector could issue an order to cease the activity and to mitigate the effects of the activity.

To deter proponents from interfering with the work of inspectors, this part of the enforcement system would include more stringent measures. Rather than civil sanctions, violators would be subject to criminal prosecution. It would be a criminal offence to obstruct inspectors, for instance, or to knowingly provide them with false or misleading information. It would be an offence to carry out development without the proper authority or to contravene an order to cease an activity.

Offenders would face stiff penalties. Conviction for a first offence, for example, could lead to a fine of up to \$250,000 and a one-year prison sentence. The maximum fine for subsequent offences would rise to \$500,000. This part of the enforcement system would also feature important checks and balances. For instance, an action could not be subject to both an AMP and a criminal sanction.

As my hon. colleagues can now appreciate, the legislation before us envisions an effective enforcement system. Proponents would be required to abide by specific conditions set out in development certificates. To promote compliance, the system would include sanctions corresponding to the seriousness of a violation or offence. As well, the system would incorporate a series of checks and balances to prevent potential abuses of process.

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I am convinced that such an enforcement system would enable northerners to maximize the potential benefits of resource development and to minimize the potential environmental impacts. I will vote in favour of Bill C-88 at second reading, and I urge my hon. colleagues to do the same.

The years involved in negotiating these settlements, land claims and self-government settlements are a remarkable testament to parliamentarians and to Canada. These agreements are working very well. As I said previously, one of my greatest moments in Parliament was to get the Tlicho land claims and self-government agreement through Parliament.

We have to maintain the honour of the Crown, maintain respect for those constitutionally protected agreements and make sure that we do not pass legislation that would infringe on those agreements.

• (1550)

Mr. Chris Bittle (St. Catharines, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Yukon for his work in advancing the interests of his constituents. On the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, the hon. member is always talking about his constituents and speaking very highly of them.

I was wondering if he could speak about the response from local governments, territorial governments and indigenous people in his riding and how they see this bill. What are they telling him on the ground?

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Madam Speaker, my constituents are not telling me much about this bill, because as the Conservative member referred to obliquely, it is not related to Yukon. It is not in Yukon. I asked the Conservative member a question about the Tlicho, and she answered that the Tlicho are in the Northwest Territories.

That being said, there was a similar situation recently where the same thing happened in Yukon. There was a constitutionally protected land claim and a process requiring consultation and working with first nation governments, as constitutionally protected in the land claim. There was a bill by the previous government that abrogated the spirit, if not the letter, of the law in those agreements. The same thing happened, and it was replaced. In this particular case, the first nations went to the government and won an injunction. What this law does is basically reinstate the law so that it stays in the spirit of the injunction and allows the land claim and self-government agreement to exist as it was originally created.

• (1555)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I first want to compliment my colleague for his general attitude in being a strong advocate for the north.

Even in the days when the Liberal party was the third party, my colleague would contact me and others within the Liberal caucus just to make sure that we had a better sense of the negative impact the Harper government was having through legislation. This spoke to the member's character and to his desire to ensure that northern interests were protected at all times. He has been a valuable asset in our caucus, as he has ensured that the north is always top of mind in many different situations.

It is questions and comments, and that was more of a comment.

As to a question, could the member note the different styles of this government and the former government, as I know that he kept his finger on the pulse when Stephen Harper was the prime minister?

Hon. Larry Bagnell: Madam Speaker, the land claims in the north are a remarkable achievement of successive federal governments, in spite of some opposition. They are unique, so we should apologize for the Conservatives, as they may not understand the differences or may not understand that those agreements are constitutionally protected. We cannot abrogate constitutionally protected land claims by passing a law that changes what has already been protected.

The difference is that the Liberals observe those land claims agreements as they have been negotiated. Ours, in particular, took over 30 years just to negotiate. We respect them with the honour of the Crown. We try to have them as living documents in a government-to-government relationship with first nations people so that we can work out any kinks in those agreements and in the implementation of those agreements.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marc Miller (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Madam Speaker, thank you for giving me the opportunity to express my support for Bill C-88 and explain why I approved it at second reading stage.

First, I want to congratulate the hon. member for Yukon on his fine speech and thank him for his support for a region of this country that I rarely get to visit. I also want to thank the member for Northwest Territories, who is also a very strong advocate for that region. Goodness knows that they have approached me as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations with many requests. I am well aware of how passionately these two individuals advocate in favour of that beautiful part of our country, which is so rarely visited by most Canadians. I would like to take this opportunity to encourage all my fellow members to visit the far north. It is a beautiful place that reinforces and reminds us what it means to be Canadian.

I would like to use my time to draw the attention of my hon. colleagues to the authorization of regional studies. Although this may be a lesser-known aspect of Bill C-88, regional studies should have a significant and positive impact on the review process at the core of the regulatory regime governing resource development in Canada's north.

The changes proposed in the bill before us would allow the Minister of Intergovernmental and Northern Affairs and Internal Trade to establish committees to conduct regional studies. These studies could take very diverse forms. They could, for example, be as narrow as a documentary analysis or as broad as in-depth research to create databases on a body of water or a land mass. The relevant text of the proposed bill is purposely broad in order to allow for a variety of scopes and activities.

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One of the reasons why the bill uses non-specific language is that science and scientific knowledge are expanding and becoming increasingly sophisticated. It is impossible to accurately predict today what kind of regional study will be most beneficial 10 or 20 years from now. That said, regional studies can generate valuable environmental and socio-economic information about the potential impacts of a proposed project. The Northwest Territories' regulatory boards would definitely find that kind of information useful.

Although the proposed bill does not specify the form, scope, or subject of the studies, it clearly sets out what these studies and committees are not. Regional studies are not a substitute for the regulatory boards, for example, or any of the roles these boards play in the regulatory regime. The bill also states that a committee has no other role than what is set out in its terms of reference. Asking a committee to undertake a study essentially means hiring an expert or consultant to prepare a report. Under this bill, regional studies would be subject to the general principles of the integrated co-management regulatory regime authorized by the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act.

The value of including regional studies in environmental impact assessments has long been recognized. For example, the 1992 version of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act referred directly to regional studies. Under subsection 16(1), proponents had to consider the cumulative environmental effects of their projects, while section 16(2) emphasized the role and value of regional studies, outside the scope of the act, in considering cumulative effects. Parliament repealed the act in 2012, replacing it with a new version that explicitly authorizes the minister of the environment to establish committees to conduct regional studies.

Regional studies also feature prominently in a 2009 publication issued by the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment. The publication, which is entitled "Regional Strategic Environmental Assessment in Canada: Principles and Guidelines", lists the benefits of regional studies. These include analyzing, identifying and managing cumulative environmental effects at a more appropriate, regional scale.

• (1600)

According to this publication, regional studies can also contribute to the discussion of alternative sustainable future scenarios and key environmental goals and objectives for a region.

Studies can save time and resources by avoiding environmental effects early on, rather than mitigating cumulative effects much further down the line. Regional studies establish regional environmental targets, limits and thresholds against which to monitor and evaluate subsequent development and management actions. In this way, studies support effective project-based performance assessment. Lastly, the publication suggests that regional studies can provide an early indication of public interest in regional environmental issues.

It is clear that the value of regional studies to environmental impact assessments is increasingly being recognized. Many regulatory regimes in Canada use them as a way to collect environmental data and analyze environmental effects. Besides the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, provisions authorizing regional studies also appear in section 5 of Saskatchewan's

Environmental Assessment Act and section 112 of the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act.

Many other jurisdictions in Canada incorporate regional studies into impact assessments even though those studies are not explicitly mentioned in the legislative measure in question. The simple truth is that regional studies are becoming increasingly popular because they are useful. They can provide accurate, up-to-date, relevant data. They are versatile and can be adapted to specific, practical circumstances. For example, a regional study may analyze potential impacts from the perspective of an ecosystem or region as a whole, rather than solely from the perspective of a particular project. Regional studies can provide necessary baseline data from which to analyze the impact of future development projects. These studies can also help to determine environmental thresholds. Ultimately, the reliable data and analyses generated by regional studies help board members make well-informed decisions. That is very important.

By authorizing regional studies, Bill C-88 will make this valuable tool available to regulatory boards in the Northwest Territories. The studies can be used to support project reviews and potentially speed up environmental assessments and environmental impact reviews. By referring to regional studies, the boards would be better able to properly review complex data that exceed the technical expertise of their members. Regional studies can also be used to gather and analyze baseline data, which is not part of the boards' responsibility.

The government is committed to maintaining strong legislation that protects Canada's rich natural environment, respects the rights and interests of indigenous peoples and supports Canada's resilient natural resources sector. Bill C-88 makes a number of significant improvements to the system.

In addition to authorizing the use of regional studies, the bill restores the regional land and water boards and creates a law enforcement system comprising inspections and revised penalties. Other changes will allow the boards to request extensions of their members' terms and enact regulations governing how governments and proponents consult indigenous peoples during the process to issue licences and permits and the environmental impact assessment process under the law.

All these improvements will strengthen northerners' ability to maximize the benefits of resource projects while minimizing their negative impact.

The bill before us deserves the support of the House. I encourage my hon. colleagues to join me in supporting Bill C-88 at second reading.

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• (1605)

[*English*]

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I expected the member to talk about the relationship with first nations and the importance of the honour of Crown and having a trusted relationship. He has good relationships in his riding, and I know that has been assisted by the fact that all parliamentarians have agreed to having indigenous languages spoken in the House of Commons and at committee. The indigenous languages act would increase the trust and reconciliation.

Could the member give us any experiences from his riding of how important this trust and these relationships are with first nations and their governments?

Mr. Marc Miller: Madam Speaker, language is very important. Language is a core element of people's identity and a key to who they are. We should know this, particularly people who come from Quebec and have fought so long for the French language. For indigenous peoples, particularly those in very difficult situations where languages have been ripped from them, it is exceedingly clear how important vitalization of languages is.

For my part, learning a language puts one on a playing field that is equal insofar as learners are able to look at something from a position where they are trying to understand languages, ways of thinking and where people are coming from. That is key to understanding what "honour of the Crown" means in the first place.

Honour of the Crown is a duty that is incumbent upon every single member of Parliament, particularly those in government when negotiating relations with indigenous peoples. As the member highlighted in his speech, a number of these relationships are treaty based. Therefore, it is not a question of enforcing and imposing federal law, which would then be unconstitutional. It is a question of perfecting those rights that have been acquired for a long time. This bill, when enshrined in law, will help perfect that relationship.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Madam Speaker, the NDP will support this bill, since it addresses a number of the Harper government's failures, which caused a lot of harm to indigenous peoples.

However, the bill is lacking some measures with respect to infrastructure, drinking water and education in indigenous communities in the Northwest Territories. When will the Liberals reinvest to improve indigenous education? For example, 400 students from Kashechewan First Nation have been waiting for a proper school for more than 10 years. The Liberals, and this member in particular, claim that their most important relationship is the nation-to-nation relationship with indigenous peoples, but this community has been without a proper school for 10 years.

When will they invest so that kids can go to school?

• (1610)

Mr. Marc Miller: Madam Speaker, as my colleague knows, in Canada, the gap between indigenous people and non-indigenous people is still quite wide, especially when it comes to education.

I am sure she read the budget in its entirety. She will have noted that 25% of the new spending is allocated to indigenous peoples, and rightly so. This is not something that can be accomplished in a four-year span, as many of us like to think. This has to be done in a spirit of reconciliation, in order to build something solid and long-lasting.

Our government is making record investments. We are talking about billions of dollars. We need to take a measured approach to this in collaboration with indigenous peoples.

We will welcome comments on this particular bill in committee.

[*English*]

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to speak to Bill C-88, an act to amend the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act and the Canada Petroleum Resources Act, and to make consequential amendments to other acts.

I say it is an honour, but I really question that when I take a look at what this bill is proposing to do. I say "proposing" because I hope we can make changes to it. What we see in this bill is what we have seen in other bills and in actions by the government. Basically, they are anti-resource actions.

The first action we saw on this was in November 2015, barely a month into the government's hopefully very short reign, when the Prime Minister decided to shut down the northern gateway project that would have taken oil resources from northern Alberta to tidewater. Rather than working with the challenges that were identified in that project, the Prime Minister decided, basically unilaterally, without debate in the House and without any criticism of his actions, to shut that down.

People in the north were looking forward to those jobs. People in ports and people right across the country could have benefited from those jobs. However, the Prime Minister made the decision almost single-handedly. Was it single-handedly, or was it a decision by his senior advisers? There was certainly very little input or debate in this House on that decision.

Next was the energy east pipeline, which would have taken high-quality Canadian products, produced and refined in Canada, to meet the fuel needs of eastern Canada. However, instead of allowing that project to proceed, the Prime Minister canned it as well.

Where are we now? We are still bringing in billions of dollars' worth of foreign oil. This foreign oil is produced in countries with lower environmental standards than we have in Canada, with lower human rights standards than we have in Canada and with lower technologies than we have in Canada.

That is the type of choice the Prime Minister and the government have been making. They have been penalizing Canadian resource workers and the companies and businesses that supply the resource sector from right across the country.

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A lot of people think that the only jobs affected are those in Alberta or those in the oil sands projects, but those jobs stretch far further than that. I live in the North Okanagan—Shuswap, the south central part of British Columbia, a long way from the Alberta oil sands, but it is very close for some of the businesses and workers in my communities. I visited a machine shop that builds the highest-quality parts and pieces for the oil sector, everything from pipefittings to brackets and attachments used in the oil sector.

When I visited that machine shop and talked to the managers and people there, the pride they took in the quality of products they built, because of the technology that is developed out of the resource sector in Canada, was second to none. They manufacture and machine to a higher quality than anywhere else in the world, and it is because of one thing. It is because we have a strong resource sector in Canada.

They have seen their technology work. They have continuously improved on it. They have decided to go into a niche market of only looking at that top-end, high-quality, high environmental standard, high safety standard product, because there are people and businesses all over the world competing for the 20-year-old technology that is used in some of those countries I just referred to, which have lower environmental standards, lower human rights standards and lower worker safety standards.

The government continues to penalize Canadians for being innovative, for being creative and for taking the risk. They sometimes risk millions of dollars, their personal investments and their family homes to build a business or an industry that is reliant on the Canadian resource sector.

•(1615)

This bill is another step in that direction. The government is taking what we had done in a previous government in reducing the size of bureaucracy, making it easier for projects to move forward still with our the same high environmental standards. Now the Liberals are splitting it up, making it so that a major project like the Mackenzie Valley pipeline would have to go through multiple individual steps all the way through. The bill would do that kind of thing. As I mentioned, Bill C-88 is similar to many other bills in some other ways.

I am very familiar with Bill C-55, the Oceans Act, and the unilateral power that that bill would give to the minister, the unilateral power to shut down activities in an area, regardless of whether there would be scientific evidence as to the effects or not. Bill C-68 does much the same thing.

Bill C-69, which has been referred to as the “never do anything ever again” bill, is now in the Senate, I believe.

Those bills would give unprecedented unilateral power to ministers to make a decision to shut down activities without it being based on science, without it being based on debate.

The other one, which we saw for the first time, was in Bill C-68, the Fisheries Act. There is a paragraph in there that says that the minister on making decisions on a project must consider the intersection of sex and gender into his decision-making process. We saw that clause and it baffled us. What does that mean in a Fisheries Act bill? We also have to wonder what it means in a resource act bill.

The briefing that we received, to summarize and really simplify it, meant that any project moving forward had to look at the impact of outside workers coming into a community, for example, the impact of growth in the community, the impact of, as I said, sex and gender in the project. That did not seem too bad, all in itself, until the Prime Minister actually was questioned on it and started referring to resource and construction workers as a threat to communities. I believe he called them “dangerous” and said that they could present a danger to those communities. We heard the outcry from people in communities where they had seen the benefits of those projects. They absolutely could not believe those construction workers could be considered a threat.

We see this trend continuing, with the government attempting to shut down anything that resembles a major resource project. Those projects are going to be needed if Canada is to continue to prosper and thrive as we move forward. We know countries with strong economies create the best environmental conditions and protect their environments better than others. However, the government seems to want to take away anything that would allow benefits and prosperity in our country. We have seen it in the government's previous budgets, in which it attempted to attack small business or attack family farms and the succession planning of small business to pass their family businesses and farms on to their family members. It would cost them as much as four times higher to sell the family farm to a family member than to a total stranger or a foreign entity. It is an absolutely atrocious attack on small business and family farms.

•(1620)

Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP): Madam Speaker, the Conservatives had a member of Parliament for the riding Kootenay—Columbia for 21 years up until the election of 2015. One of the reasons I am standing here today is because my constituents were concerned about the attack, and it really was an attack, on the environment by the Harper government. It attacked the federal Fisheries Act, the Navigable Waters Protection Act and other legislation.

I am curious as to why the member does not support local people being able to make local decisions around their resources, which is one of the things the bill would do, and why the Conservatives oppose proper environmental protection going forward.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Madam Speaker, the member's question relates to the changes to the Fisheries Act. Before that bill came before the House, I had foreseen that there would be questions around the changes that were made in the 2012-14 period to the Fisheries Act. I posed an Order Paper question to the government to identify anywhere that changes made to the Fisheries Act actually had negative impact or any harm caused.

The answer from the government was “absolutely none”. The false assumption that the changes by the previous government to the Fisheries Act had decimated the protection of fish and fish habitat was an absolute farce and a manufactured untruth.

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Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate the member on his tone. I want to make a clarifying comment.

In earlier comments it was suggested that this act was detrimental to oil and gas. In fact, the opposite is the case. Certain oil and gas leases would have expired in the next few years and the act would freeze them so they would not expire. Therefore, when activity becomes available again, they will still be eligible for that. That was created in discussions with those companies.

• (1625)

Mr. Mel Arnold: Madam Speaker, the references were to how the government had continuously shut down any resource or oil and gas development. The Prime Minister basically shut down any oil and gas development in the Beaufort Sea and very much angered the premier of the north for not even consulting with northern premiers on that shutdown. We have seen it time and time again.

I did not get to it in my speech about how the Liberals basically shut down the Trans Mountain pipeline. Earlier in this parliamentary session, the Prime Minister stood in the House day after day and said “the pipeline will be built”. We are almost through this session and the pipeline has not even been started, let alone built. I really doubt whether it will ever be built under the Liberal government.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we do know one thing. Stephen Harper failed at building any pipelines and 99% of the oil went through to the U.S. when Stephen Harper was prime minister. When he left office, still 99% went through to the U.S.

Could my colleague across the way explain to us why the Harper government was such a dismal failure at getting our oil to markets outside of the U.S.?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sure that the member for North Okanagan—Shuswap is able to respond to this very well.

The hon. member for North Okanagan—Shuswap.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Madam Speaker, the Harper government completed four pipelines. When there was a change in government, there were three major pipelines in the works. Right now, we stand at the big zero.

I thank the parliamentary secretary very much for giving me the opportunity to correct the record.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Darrell Samson (Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Bill C-88, an act to amend the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act and the Canada Petroleum Resources Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts. I would like to acknowledge that we are gathered on the traditional lands of the Algonquin people.

The bill before us today would not only resolve the litigation resulting from the attempt to amalgamate land and water boards in 2014, but also improve the regulatory regime. The Northwest

Territories Devolution Act made a number of changes to the Mackenzie Valley Resources Management Act, which provides the legislative framework for the regulatory regime.

One of the changes was to amalgamate the Northwest Territories' four land and water boards into a single entity. Two indigenous governments challenged the amalgamation in court, and the Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories granted an injunction that halted amalgamation and other changes designed to make the regulatory regime more effective.

As my hon. colleagues know, in order to work effectively, a regulatory regime must continually earn the trust of project proponents and the general public. It does that by working in a steady, fair, reliable and predictable manner.

This description applies to the resource development regime in the Northwest Territories. The current four-board structure works wonderfully. However, there is always room for improvement. This bill ensures that the current structure will be maintained and adds improvements that were proposed over four years ago.

In reality, the changes proposed in Bill C-88 seek to make the regime more fair, reliable, predictable and efficient. It clearly serves the interests of northerners and all Canadians.

One example of how the changes will improve the regime relates to the members of the boards responsible for reviewing proposed projects.

There are five boards in all: the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board, the Sahtu Land and Water Board, the Gwich'in Land and Water Board, the Wek'èezhii Land and Water Board and the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board. One or more of these boards can be authorized to conduct a regulatory review, depending on the nature and location of the proposed project.

The Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act sets out the quorum required for some of the boards' activities. For example, a board cannot issue a permit unless it has the minimum number of members. That is completely appropriate because the boards' decisions often have significant consequences. To ensure that the five boards always make sound decisions, each one is made up of members from various backgrounds with different perspectives. This diversity is one of the boards' greatest assets. It helps them consider every nuance from different angles.

The members' diversity also fosters strong public trust in the boards' decisions. Naturally, in some cases, a member may not be able to participate in certain board activities because of illness or some other legitimate reason, but that should be the exception, not the rule.

The Government of Canada realizes it can be difficult for northern boards to maintain a quorum, partly because of how hard it is to recruit and retain members with the necessary experience and expertise.

Government Orders

•(1630)

To help the boards overcome this challenge, Bill C-88 would authorize them to extend the terms of individual members if the term expires during a review. That would help guarantee that the boards maintain a quorum throughout the reviews.

The bill states that the board must request the extension at least two months before the day on which the member's term expires. The request must be submitted to the minister. The temporary extension of the board member's term will end when the review that is in progress at the time of the request is concluded.

The Northwest Territories' five regulatory boards are responsible for conducting complex reviews that often include hearings, scientific reports and economic forecasts. The reviews can take months to complete. It is common for new information and perspectives to emerge during a review. Board members who have been continuously involved in a review are better equipped to understand and contextualize new information and perspectives.

The five boards make decisions that can have a profound impact not only on ecosystems, but also on local and national communities. Given the magnitude of these decisions, the boards need to be part of a modern, functional regulatory regime.

Not only does Bill C-88 propose a mechanism to support continuity, but it also makes a number of other improvements to the regulatory regime. The bill currently before the House establishes an efficient inspection and enforcement system. Under that system, proponents would be required to abide by the conditions imposed by a board when it approves a project following an environmental assessment. These conditions would be clearly set out in a document called a development certificate.

To ensure that proponents are fulfilling their obligations, inspectors would be authorized to carry out activities like site visits. Proponents who do not use valid development certificates, who fail to comply with the conditions set out in the certificate or who interfere with the work of inspectors could face stiff penalties, including fines and imprisonment.

As my hon. colleagues must understand by now, Bill C-88 proposes a long list of measures that will considerably improve the regulatory regime in the Northwest Territories. The bill currently before the House makes improvements to a regime that is already functional and efficient. Such a regime will help maintain the respect and trust of Canadians, proponents and investors. It will help ensure that resource development projects strike an appropriate balance between economic, social and environmental goals. For all these reasons, Bill C-88 deserves the support of the House.

•(1635)

[*English*]

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am not sure if anyone else in the House finds it a bit ironic that the Liberals are voting wholeheartedly for both parts 1 and 2. They criticize the former Conservative government, saying that we did not do the proper consultation process, even though it was supposedly part of the treaties that were going to be available. It was part of the McCrank report, but there was some concern.

They criticize us for what we did in part 1 in the past, yet what they are doing in part 2 is equally as bad or worse. What they are doing is giving the federal government powers it has never had before to completely deny a project on the basis of national interest. This is without consultation. It is consistent with what the Liberals did regarding Beaufort. It is consistent with what they did regarding the moratorium for tankers. It is consistent with them and northern gateway.

I would like to ask my colleague this. Where is his consistency? How can he criticize a former government regarding its consultation with indigenous peoples and its resolution of the process, yet in part 2 have something that, in my opinion, is far worse with respect to trodding on rights?

Mr. Darrell Samson: Madam Speaker, I do not think we have any lessons to learn from the former Conservative government; that is for sure.

When it comes to consultation, Conservatives did not even know what the word “consultation” meant for 10 years. When the Prime Minister of the country is going to various provinces to speak to people without letting the premiers of the provinces know that he is going to be in town, that is just disrespectful. It was definitely not consultation.

Again, the injunction was in place because of the lack of consultation. The Conservatives tried to eliminate, so to speak, the responsibilities of indigenous peoples in the north without consulting with them. Conservatives tried to control regional representation so that indigenous peoples would not have a voice.

On this side of the House, we believe indigenous peoples are Canadians. We are very proud of all Canadians and we will move forward with this very important legislation.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo that she had an opportunity to ask her question. If she has anything further to add, she should wait until I ask for questions and comments and attempt to be recognized.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot.

•(1640)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Madam Speaker, we will support this bill. I thank my colleague for his clear, detailed description of the bill.

Since we passed my colleague's bill to recognize the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, it is important that all bills affecting indigenous communities mention compliance with this declaration.

Government Orders

Does my colleague not think that the bill should be improved by including a reference to compliance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples?

Mr. Darrell Samson: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

It is clearly very important that we support the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This bill certainly emphasizes the principle of consultation and close collaboration with indigenous peoples and northerners. We want to ensure that these consultations bring out their knowledge, advice and wisdom. We believe that this bill complies with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Vancouver East, Status of Women; the hon. member for Drummond, Official Languages; the hon. member for Courtenay—Alberni, Transportation.

[English]

Mr. Dan Vandal (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am thankful for the opportunity to speak on this traditional Algonquin territory to explain my support for Bill C-88, an act to amend the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act and the Canada Petroleum Resources Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts.

The legislation before us proposes to strike a more appropriate balance between economic development and environmental protection in Canada's north.

As my hon. colleagues recognize, Canada is blessed with an abundance of valuable natural resources, vast forests as well as deposits of minerals, oil and gas. Throughout our history, these resources have been the cornerstones of the economy and while the national economy grows ever more diverse thanks to the rise of other sectors, resource development remains crucial to national prosperity.

Resource development projects create jobs, generate export sales and stimulate technological innovation. Tempering these benefits, however, are the environmental and the social impacts of resource extraction and development. These include pollution, destruction of ecosystems and changes in the fabric of communities and traditional indigenous ways. Throughout much of our nation's history, while we relied on resource development for our prosperity and growth, we often failed to appreciate and to take into account its long-term environmental and social consequences. Thankfully, this view is no longer prevalent.

To strike a better balance between economic and environmental concerns, Canada has developed a unique regulatory regime that governs resource development projects in the north, a regime that is co-managed with indigenous partners. The regime requires that proposed projects undergo stringent reviews of anticipated impacts. Review processes are structured for fairness, transparency, effectiveness and to consider traditional knowledge. Members of the public, along with stakeholder groups, are encouraged to participate in project reviews and the decisions of review boards are published for everyone to see.

The regulatory regime helps to ensure that resource projects maximize potential economic benefits and minimize potential environmental impacts. In this way, it restores public confidence, creates certainty and predictability, which are so important to industry, and sets the foundation for a sustainable and long-term natural resource industry in the north.

To maintain an appropriate balance between these concerns, the regulatory regime evolves continually as our country evolves and as our understanding of the environment and of resource development deepens. In the north in particular, the settlement of modern land claims has enabled the creation of unique systems of governance in co-operation with indigenous partners.

The proposed legislation now before us lays out a series of amendments to the regulatory regime that governs resource development in the Northwest Territories. The roots of Bill C-88 stretch back to a series of amendments made to the regulatory regime in 2014. Some of the amendments provoked indigenous communities in the Northwest Territories to initiate court actions against the Government of Canada. The Tlicho Government and Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated filed similar court challenges that effectively put a halt to some of the 2014 amendments.

Since 2015, the Government of Canada has launched a concerted effort to address the concerns that had provoked indigenous communities to initiate court actions. The primary issue is the amalgamation of four regional land and water boards into a single entity: the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board. To resolve this issue, representatives of the Government of Canada consulted with indigenous groups, the Government of the Northwest Territories and industry. The Government of Canada then drafted a legislative proposal, shared it with all interested partners and made changes to it in response to the feedback we received. The proposed legislation now before us is the product of this co-operative conciliatory process.

● (1645)

Among other changes, Bill C-88 would end amalgamation, reinstate the regional land and water boards and effectively end the court challenges.

The proposed legislation would promote reconciliation with indigenous peoples, a key priority for this country.

The proposed legislation now before us would also resolve a different problem created by the court challenges related to board amalgamation. To simplify a complex story, the court challenges effectively put a halt not only to amalgamation but to several policy measures that were central to the regulatory regime. These included the use of development certificates and the necessary enforcement scheme, inspector notice requirements on Gwich'in and Sahtu lands and other measures. Bill C-88 would reinstate these measures through specific amendments to the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act.

Government Orders

Another effect of Bill C-88 would be to further strengthen environmental protections in the Arctic, home to some of the world's most fragile ecosystems. The effects of climate change are more evident in the Arctic and appear to be progressing more quickly than anywhere else.

In 2016, Canada agreed to take a series of actions to better protect the Arctic. Chief among these was a moratorium on the issuance of new oil and gas rights in Canada's Arctic offshore region, subject to a five-year, science-based review. To ensure the appropriateness of these actions, the Government of Canada initiated year-long consultations with territorial and northern indigenous governments and with existing Arctic offshore oil and gas rights holders to discuss their interests. These consultations highlighted the importance of protecting the Arctic's unique offshore environment while pursuing safe, responsible activities that create jobs and economic opportunities in northern indigenous economies.

The consultations featured many discussions about how best to balance environmental and economic concerns. The result of the consultations was the series of amendments before us in Bill C-88 concerning the Canada Petroleum Resources Act.

First, to complement the moratorium on the issuance of new licences, which our Prime Minister announced in 2018, the amendments would allow us to prohibit any oil and gas exploration or development activities under existing exploration and significant discovery licences in the Arctic offshore.

Furthermore, the proposed amendments would fix a gap in the current legislative regime regarding existing licences and the five-year, science-based review. The legislation as it now stands does not allow licences to be suspended to allow for the review to unfold as required. In fact, some existing Arctic offshore oil and gas rights will begin to expire before the next review period is over. Bill C-88 proposes to resolve this issue by allowing the government to preserve existing rights until the review is completed. At that point, we would have a better understanding of the next steps for Arctic offshore oil and gas.

These amendments would be fair to the existing rights holders and would produce an effective compromise. The scientific research could be completed without any pressure associated with existing oil and gas activity in the region, while existing oil and gas rights could not expire in the meantime.

Bill C-88 proposes to improve the regulatory regime in the north through a series of amendments informed by several important developments, including court challenges, the accelerated impact of climate change in the Arctic and the opportunity to foster reconciliation between indigenous peoples and the Government of Canada. The amendments proposed in Bill C-88 would increase the predictability, consistency and timeliness of regulatory reviews in the north while strengthening environmental protections.

Northerners deserve a fully functional modernized regulatory regime that meets their particular needs, the kind of regime that promotes growth and prosperity while safeguarding fragile ecosystems, the kind of regime that strikes an appropriate balance between economic and environmental concerns.

• (1650)

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am hoping that one of my Liberal colleagues can actually answer the question, which I have asked a number of times. What they have done in part 1 is say that the former Conservative government did not respect rights, although certainly, there were a lot of conversations. What we were trying to do was not to diminish the ability of the communities to have influence. We were actually trying to remove red tape and complications from the process. That is part 1. If the Liberals want to criticize what we did in part 1, it is their right to do so.

What the Liberals have done in part 2 is a direct contradiction of what was done in part 1. They have given the federal government, without consultation with first nations, enormous power, not seen in any other legislation, to end development. If it something to facilitate projects moving forward, the government is against it. However, if it is something that gives the federal government power to stop projects, it does not seem to have any issue with it.

I would like the member to tell me how he can align the extraordinary power the federal government is taking in part 2, something that has never been done before, without consultation with indigenous communities and territorial governments, and justify it to the people, in light of what he said about part 1.

Mr. Dan Vandal: Madam Speaker, this bill is intended to fix a problem created by the previous Conservative government, move us ahead on a process that promotes reconciliation, and at the same time, create certainty for investments in the Mackenzie Valley and the Arctic.

It is clear to me that what is important is achieving a balance between the environment and the economy. The former government, not only on this file but on many other files, did not do the proper consultation necessary. In what little consultation it did, it paid no heed to the advice it was getting.

What we are doing is correcting a wrong that was mandated by the previous government, and we are achieving the right balance between the economy and the environment.

• (1655)

Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP): Madam Speaker, I think my colleague and I would both agree that the people of the Northwest Territories know best how their resources should be used and managed. I agree with his assessment of what happened with the previous Conservative government. It ignored the spirit, intent and the word of constitutionally protected land claims and self-government agreements. It failed to listen, and it has led to lengthy legal battles.

Generally we support Bill C-88. At the same time, there is an important opportunity here for the government to put into action the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Although it is not included in the bill, I would like to hear my hon. colleague's comments about his support for including the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in this bill.

Government Orders

Mr. Dan Vandal: Madam Speaker, I was very proud to stand in this chamber, as I believe all members on this side of the House were, to support UNDRIP, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. We studied it at committee. I was proud to support it there, as well as on the floor of this chamber, and we now await ratification in the Senate.

What this would do is wholly supportive of UNDRIP. What is most important to this government is reconciliation with indigenous peoples. We have had to clean up after the previous government. This bill strikes the right balance between the economy, the environment and respecting the rights of the indigenous peoples of that territory.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is my turn to rise in the House to speak to Bill C-88, an act to amend the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act and the Canada Petroleum Resources Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts, at second reading. This bill was introduced by the Minister of Intergovernmental and Northern Affairs and Internal Trade on November 8, 2018.

Before I begin, I would like to say that I have never had the opportunity to visit these northern territories, but I have made two trips to Nunavik, in Quebec's far north. Once someone goes to these areas and speaks with the people who live in Canada's far north, they gain a completely different view, a different perspective, of northerners' potential and desire for self-determination, their desire to take charge of their land. During my two visits, I felt that the people in this area truly wanted to look after their own affairs and contribute to Canada's social and economic development in their own way. They want to be a part of this great big country that we share.

The bill consists of two parts. Part 1 amends the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act. It repeals the provisions that would consolidate the Mackenzie Valley land and water boards into a single board. Those provisions were introduced by the previous Conservative government in Bill C-15. Part 2 amends the Canada Petroleum Resources Act to allow the Governor in Council to issue orders to prohibit oil and gas activities, freeze the terms of existing licences and prevent them from expiring during a moratorium, if it is in the national interest to do so.

Part 1 undoes what the Conservatives did, and part 2 announces that the Liberal government is going to make things worse. That is what I get from Bill C-88. Overall, what I get from Bill C-88 is that it is a Liberal anti-energy policy that will drive even more energy investments out of Canada. It will cost Canadian workers their jobs, and that certainly will not help improve the quality of life of residents of northern Canada. Bill C-88 reveals a full rejection of calls from elected territorial leaders for increased control of their natural resources.

The previous government believed the north would be a key economic driver for decades to come. Other Arctic nations, such as China and Russia, are exploring similar opportunities. Unfortunately, the Liberal government decided to take a different tack.

I was mayor of Thetford Mines for seven years. My community has grappled with major problems. It was an asbestos mining

community where companies dug up white gold, as it was known then, for years. We see asbestos in an entirely different light now. For years, we were exploited by outsiders who came into our community and left nothing but deep scars, from mountains of tailings to infrastructure that still mars the landscape. We wish we had had a say in all of those projects. We wish we could have played a role and worked with the people who operated the mines. We could have influenced how it was done, and we definitely could have told them where to put the massive piles of tailings, how to dispose of it all, and how to improve our people's quality of life.

In some territories, when one is elected to represent a community, the more control that territory has over its own affairs, the more one can contribute, the more decisions are made at the local level, and the more one understands the impact of decisions. Unfortunately, in this case, just before Christmas 2016, the Liberal government cavalierly decided to force the territories to do things its way.

● (1700)

During a trip to Washington, the Prime Minister took the opportunity to announce a moratorium. There was no consultation with people in the north, despite the same old tune from the Liberals that consultation is important. Despite the countless consultations that were held in this case, the Liberal government did not feel obliged to consult the people of the north. The decision was made unilaterally by the Prime Minister's Office. Then we learn that the leaders of these territories were informed just one hour before the government announced important changes that would affect them.

I will quote the leaders of the affected communities. The Premier of the Northwest Territories published a red alert for a national emergency debate on the future of the Northwest Territories. He said that the promises of the north are fading and the dreams of northerners are dying as we watch a resurgence of colonialism. Whether we are talking about ill-conceived ways to fund social programs or new, disconcerting restrictions on their economic development, he says, their spirit and energy are being eroded.

Then, he said that staying in the middle class or trying to join it is becoming a distant dream for many. He says that means that northerners, through their democratically elected government, have to have the power to determine their own destiny and that we can no longer allow the bureaucrats and governments in Ottawa to make the decisions. He says that decisions concerning the north have to be made in the north. He says that unilateral decisions made by the federal government without consultation to impose a moratorium on offshore oil and gas development in the Arctic is just an example of how their economic self-determination is thwarted in Ottawa.

Government Orders

The Premier of the Northwest Territories was rather quick to respond.

In an interview on national television on December 22, 2016, another premier, the Premier of Nunavut, said that they want to get to a point where they can make their own determination of their priorities, and the way to do that, he said, is by gaining meaningful revenue from resource development. Meanwhile, when one potential revenue source is taken off the table, it puts them back at practically square one, where Ottawa will make the decisions for them.

Those statements are rather clear. These are not extremists who wanted to attack the government. They just wanted to be consulted on important decisions related to natural resource development on their lands. It is important to hear those messages and act accordingly. When the government is making these kinds of decisions, it is even more important to avoid concentrating too much power within one office, in other words, the Prime Minister's Office. This helps ensure that decisions are not made for purely political reasons. That is unfortunately what happens when the PMO is given so much decision-making power that a moratorium can be imposed without having to consult.

On October 22, 2018, the mayor of Tuktoyaktuk said the following to the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs:

I was talking to [the Liberal member for the Northwest Territories], and he said, "Yes, Merven, we should be doing something. We should be helping you guys."

I agree the Liberals should be helping us. They shut down our offshore gasification and put a moratorium right across the whole freaking Arctic without even consulting us. They never said a word to us.

We're proud people who like to work for a living. We're not used to getting social assistance and that kind of stuff. Now we're getting tourists coming up, but that's small change...[We don't just want to sell] trinkets and T-shirts and that kind of stuff.

Those messages are clear. I hope that the government will listen to elected officials from these territories and reconsider Bill C-88.

• (1705)

[*English*]

Mr. Michael McLeod (Northwest Territories, Lib.): Madam Speaker, while I can appreciate that the member has never been in the north, he seems to say quite a bit about this legislation, which has been worked on for many years. Some of the work started during the days when the Conservative government was in power. Therefore, a lot of the pieces in the bill were started many years ago.

I have been hearing quite a bit from the indigenous governments in my riding. They want the bill to move forward. I have also been contacted, probably on a monthly basis, by the Government of the Northwest Territories. The premier's office is saying that it wants it to move forward. We need the bill to move forward so we can get on with dealing with the issues challenging us in the Northwest Territories, especially in the area of devolution.

The indigenous governments and the Northwest Territories are in a position to negotiate land claims and issues of compensation. It is also moving forward on discussions of self-government. It is able to share in resource royalties. It holds 50% of the seats in the regulatory process. That will also help it move forward on many of the areas that were left hanging from the time the last government was in place.

I want to ask the member this. Could he tell me why he will not support the bill? It supports decision-making being done in the north and he has raised that as an issue. Will he support the bill since it would help the people in the north and the indigenous governments make the decisions that impact them in the Northwest Territories?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's question.

I think that everyone involved should have a say on the future of their territory and on natural resource development. Bill C-88 calls for exactly that; it would let those involved decide.

However, in Bill C-88, some decisions are already made without consultation with these same governments and are inconsistent with what they want. This is what we want to avoid.

The government cannot do things and then say it will consult these governments for everything else. Unfortunately this is what happened with Bill C-88. This is unfortunate and is why we cannot agree with or adopt a bill like this. In retrospect, it is easy to support something when you have not been consulted and then pick up the pieces afterwards.

This is quite unfortunate for elected officials in these territories, which is why we will stand with them on this matter.

• (1710)

[*English*]

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I congratulate the member for Northwest Territories. He has worked so hard to get the bill forward for his people, or as the Conservatives say, "the local people", who really want the bill.

I would like to ask the hon. member this. He is the second Conservative member who I heard say that he wants the decisions to be made by the local people. The vote on this bill is a decision that the local people want. The governments that it would affect are the Tlicho government, the Sahtu government, the Vuntut Gwitchin government and the GNWT. As the previous Liberal colleague from NWT mentioned, those governments were consulted extensively on the bill while it was being created. The member wanted the decision to be made by local people. The bill is totally about that. All of the local governments want the bill. Therefore, I assume the member would support it.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The member for Mégantic—L'Érable for a short answer.

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Speaker, it is difficult to give short answers because this is an extremely important issue that concerns the elected officials of the area.

When a bill seeks "to allow the Governor in Council" to issue orders, if in the national interest, to prohibit oil and gas operations, I find that this diminishes the legitimacy of local elected officials. We are fighting against the spirit of the bill that strips local officials of the ability to make decisions regarding their own lands.

Government Orders

[English]

Mr. William Amos (Pontiac, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today in support of a bill that would make a positive difference in the relationship between indigenous peoples and the Crown. In starting my speech, I acknowledge that I stand here on traditional unceded Algonquin territory.

Today we are holding a second reading debate on Bill C-88, an act to amend the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act and the Canada Petroleum Resources Act. I will use the time allotted to me to speak about the amendments to both of these and to speak a bit about the issue of Arctic offshore oil exploration.

First, I want to start with some context around the Mackenzie Valley. To understand the mess that we are fixing right now, one has to rewind the clock, back to the 1970s.

In 1974, the federal government, under the Right Hon. Pierre Elliott Trudeau, appointed Justice Thomas Berger of the Supreme Court of British Columbia to hold hearings into a proposed natural gas pipeline down the Mackenzie Valley.

At that time, the Dene and the Inuvialuit were asserting their claims to these traditional lands. The Berger Inquiry broke with tradition by hearing evidence, offered not merely by the pipeline companies but also by residents in more than 30 small communities in the Northwest Territories.

The Berger Inquiry heard from over 1,000 indigenous people in seven languages and over 500 southern voices were there as well to give their opinions. The process was groundbreaking. The federal government funded research by indigenous, environmental and community groups. Justice Berger enabled media participation that brought Canadians from far and wide, from coast to coast to coast, into the proceeding.

In May 1977, Berger recommended that, for environmental reasons, no pipeline should ever be built along the northern coastal plains. Although Berger concluded that an environmentally sound pipeline could be built through the Mackenzie Valley, he urged a 10-year moratorium on pipeline construction in the region to allow time to settle indigenous land claims. Ottawa, the federal government, endorsed his recommendations.

This concluded in the delaying of any construction on the pipeline in the Mackenzie Valley and was seen as a turning point in indigenous Canadian relations. In amassing over 40,000 pages of documentation, it also provided a unique and comprehensive window into the Dene and Inuvialuit political resurgence of the 1970s. There would be no turning back on consultations with indigenous people after this inquiry; the precedent was set.

Public sympathy and interest in both indigenous and environmental concerns were heightened as a result of the Berger Inquiry. It was a watershed event for reconciliation. It allowed first nations to speak about their history, their issues related to the land, their culture and the impacts that the southern man's projects would have on their communities.

What we have learned from the Berger Inquiry of the 1970s is that when we consult with indigenous people, we take a first step toward our commitment to reconciliation. We learned lessons that ultimately

led to regional land claims agreements and the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act of 1998.

• (1715)

[Translation]

The 1998 Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act put in place an integrated system for the co-management of the land and waters in the Mackenzie Valley in the Northwest Territories. This act established two boards with jurisdiction over the entire valley, namely the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board and the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board.

Three regional land and water boards were created for the Gwich'in settlement area, the Sahtu settlement area and the Tlicho settlement area, pursuant to the Gwich'in, the Sahtu Dene and Metis and the Tlicho land claim agreements, which conferred on these boards the responsibility for issuing land use permits and water licensing.

[English]

Fast forward to 2014, when the Harper administration passed the Northwest Territories Devolution Act, it consolidated four indigenous regulatory boards into one, without their agreement, and in so doing, stifled the voices of indigenous people. It flew in the face of lessons learned through the Berger Inquiry, where we learned of the importance of indigenous people's voices, of incorporating indigenous communities in governance processes.

That is why our government's bill, Bill C-88, is so important. We are fixing the mess of the Harper administration.

[Translation]

The Northwest Territories Devolution Act, the infamous Bill C-15 introduced by the Harper government, transferred land and water management to the Government of the Northwest Territories and amended three existing acts, including the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act. It included the restructuring of the land and water boards and the elimination of regional boards.

The Tlicho government was totally against those changes and filed a statement of claim before the Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories, stating that the Harper government had no right to unilaterally abolish the Wek'èezhii Land and Water Board because such action would go against its land claims agreement and right to self-government. It added that consultation had been inadequate and that the act violated constitutional promises made to that first nation.

The Tlicho government and Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated sought injunctions in July 2014 and February 2015 respectively in order to maintain their respective water boards until the major issues in their statements could be resolved.

[English]

I will cite the court decision on the injunction, because it is just so damning and clearly indicates why we had to come and clean up the mess. It says:

Government Orders

The Tlcho government has raised a reasonable possibility that Canada has overstepped the bounds of what it is permitted to do under the Tlcho Agreement. ... there is a reasonable likelihood the Tlcho Government will suffer...irreparable losses...as a result of a breach of a constitutionally protected right. ...irreparable harm could result from the breach of a constitutionally protected right. This is particularly so where the legislation...will have the effect of dismantling and disrupting existing infrastructure which will then have to be rebuilt.

[Translation]

The court granted an injunction suspending the application of subsection 253(2) of the Northwest Territories Devolution Act, which would have brought into effect the provisions related to the restructuring and other regulatory amendments.

In November 2015, the newly appointed Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, began discussions with indigenous organizations and governments in the Northwest Territories in order to make the legislative changes needed to resolve this issue. The amendments to the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act are the result of those discussions and discussions with other regional stakeholders.

• (1720)

[English]

We have learned from the past that an effective regulatory body and thorough consultation processes are necessary to consider the needs of those directly impacted by these projects. Transparent and thorough consultation also promotes sound decision-making, and it ultimately will help create better projects that will deliver more benefits to regional communities and to the workers.

This is why Bill C-88 seeks to consult with rights holders and northern indigenous governments when it comes to oil and gas projects in the northern offshore, by making consequential amendments to the Canada Petroleum Resources Act, or CPRA.

I will provide some context on the history of Canada's Arctic offshore oil and gas issue. Oil spills in offshore regions across the world have underlined the importance of a precautionary approach when operating in fragile marine ecological environments. The BP blowout in the Gulf of Mexico put Canada on alert, and Arctic offshore as a possibility was, and still is, seen in that light. We are aware of the vulnerabilities of any marine ecosystem to a potential blowout, and this is especially true for the unique and fragile marine ecology of the Beaufort Sea.

Canadians can be proud that our Liberal government collaborated with the Obama administration to establish a moratorium on Arctic offshore drilling and the issuance of more licences on the basis of the precautionary principle and of science and traditional knowledge.

We know that oil and gas exploration has been part of the northwest economy for many years, so much so that it is part of the 1984 Inuvialuit Final Agreement and the 1993 Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. However, at the same time, we know that northerners and southerners, indigenous and non-indigenous peoples, and all Canadians can agree that a catastrophic blowout in the deep water of the Beaufort Sea could cripple the Inuvialuit way of living and their future prospects. This is another reason this bill is important.

Mr. Michael McLeod (Northwest Territories, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member provided lot of information. The indigenous governments in the Northwest Territories have all done a lot of work

in moving toward land claims and self-governance. Many have signed agreements, expecting the Government of Canada to honour its portion of the agreements. Throughout the Conservative government, that did not happen. We even had the Auditor General's report, which said the government was not meeting its obligations.

On the section that governed the creation of land and water boards in each region, we saw the previous government step in and create one board that would be a superboard to cover all aspects of what we were doing, even though that breached the agreement.

We also saw the fiscal portion of the land claim agreements breached by a new policy that came in. The Harper government said that was what we were going to follow, regardless of what was in the land claim agreement.

I find it ironic that the Conservatives are saying this is not in the best interests of the people in the Northwest Territories, when they were the ones who refused to include the Beaufort Sea in the negotiations. That was hands-off. We could not even talk about it. I know, because I sat in the seat for the Northwest Territories in that government. We also could not include the royalties coming out of Norman Wells. Those things were left off the table. Now we are hearing that we are doing something wrong by letting the people of the Northwest Territories make decisions.

I want to ask the member whether he feel it is fair. The previous government created this really large confusion over this, to the point where it came to a standstill. Now that we have the indigenous governments of the Northwest Territories telling us they want to move forward, is it fair for the Conservatives to say we are doing something wrong?

Mr. William Amos: Madam Speaker, through you I will respond to my learned colleague. I appreciate these words, because they come from such a place of experience. Absolutely, I think northerners from the Mackenzie Valley have every right to be offended by the actions of the previous government. The Conservative members continue to articulate it to this day in debates in this House, treating land claims agreements as though they are red tape or something to be cut up and put in the paper recycling bin. It makes no sense. It is offensive to any Canadian who holds indigenous rights and the constitutional protections of those indigenous rights to heart.

At the end of the day, it now falls to our government to respect those agreements that were made and the history of the indigenous people from that region.

Government Orders

• (1725)

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have the same question again. The member talked about respecting indigenous rights and the rights of the people in the area to make decisions. We now know that part 2 amends the Canada Petroleum Resources Act to allow the Governor in Council to issue orders, when in the national interest, to prohibit oil and gas activities. That is in no other piece of environmental legislation, and it was not done either in consultation with the territories and indigenous communities or in Parliament. It is an order in council allowing the executive branch to take on powers it has never assumed before.

Therefore, how can he argue on the one hand about respecting and on the other hand say it is perfectly fine when it suits the government's interest to arbitrarily impose something like a moratorium?

Mr. William Amos: Madam Speaker, we are talking about a time-bound moratorium that is premised on traditional knowledge and science in a precautionary manner, to ensure we have a complete understanding of what further offshore drilling would entail, in particular where we are talking about deepwater offshore drilling. This will allow for the scientific and traditional baseline knowledge necessary to ensure we can discuss whether or not there is an actual bulletproof spill cleanup plan to account for a blowout that could occur under winter ice.

This was a crucial issue that was raised when I attended the Arctic offshore drilling review in Inuvik back in 2011. Many people up north were very concerned about that eventuality. This moratorium enables the right knowledge to be gathered prior to making decisions.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to speak to Bill C-88. Despite the use of time allocation, I appreciate that the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons earlier today said she would make efforts to give me a chance to speak and has done so. Even with abbreviated debate, I am therefore able to speak to this legislation.

I am also able to speak to what happened to this legislation when the Northwest Territories Devolution Act was brought forward in the 41st Parliament in 2014. It was something everyone wanted to support, but there were many measures with that act that were offensive to the foundational principles of self-government and respect for treaties.

In fact, the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board, the Gwich'in Land and Water Board, the Sahtu Land and Water Board and the Wek'eezhii Tlicho Land and Water Board, all of which were the result of treaty negotiations between the Crown and those nations, were callously, carelessly, disrespectfully and completely violated with the notion that we could replace them with something described as more efficient.

I protested those changes at the time, as did the previous NDP member of Parliament for the Northwest Territories, Dennis Bevington. We tried quite hard to persuade the 41st Parliament that it was wrong to change the law in this way.

Subsequent to the changes being made, a number of the boards that were impacted went to court to challenge what had just happened. The notion of a superboard was deeply offensive to the principle that had been there, which was that the land and water boards represented fifty-fifty decision-making between first nations and the federal government. It would have reduced the self-government that the Northwest Territories Devolution Act was supposed to respect. It would have taken away rights and reduced the scope of review by those various boards.

Earlier today in debate I heard a Conservative member say that Bill C-88 was another effort by the Liberal government to interfere with development, to thwart development and to drive investment away from Canada.

I am saddened by that kind of commentary. I agree with a number of criticisms of the Liberal government. There are a lot of measures being taken that I find far short of what is required, particularly when looking at the climate crisis, and far short of what is required when looking at the need for thorough environmental assessment. There was a commitment in the election to undo the damage that had been done by the Harper administration in a number of areas, and so far the Liberal government has done really well in some areas and less well in others.

It did extremely well in undoing discriminatory legislation towards trade unions, and that was done relatively quickly by the former member of cabinet responsible for labour issues.

The Liberal government did an extremely good job on a piece of legislation that is still before the Senate, Bill C-68, to repair the Fisheries Act. Bill C-68 not only repairs the damage that was done by the previous prime minister and his government and not only brings back protections for fish habitat. It also expands and improves other protections for habitat. It is an extremely important piece of legislation and I hope it passes quickly.

It is also complementary to a piece of legislation that I hope will be passed here. Earlier today in the House, the hon. member for Avalon, the chair of the fisheries committee, presented the report, and Bill S-203 is now back before the House. I hope we move to report stage and third reading expeditiously.

Bill C-68, which I am referencing, is also complementary in saying that we are now going to ban the taking of cetaceans into captivity in Canadian waters.

Again, all of these bills speak to undoing the damage done by the previous government, but Bill C-68 goes beyond that with more progressive measures.

Unfortunately, Bill C-69 is also before the Senate. I hope it will be amended and sent back here quickly. The Minister of Transport did an excellent job of repairing the former Navigable Waters Protection Act. There are some innovative changes to energy regulations. Unfortunately, the middle piece of legislation in that omnibus bill, the one on environmental review, does not undo the damage of the previous government, but rather keeps it in place.

Government Orders

• (1730)

However, this legislation is excellent in that it would actually undo the damage the previous government had done. It would set back in place the integrity of self-government, of decisions for land and water boards that reflect the negotiations under self-government agreements and treaties. Now that we are debating this bill at second reading, I would certainly like to see this bill in committee so that it could receive one or two additional amendments.

As was mentioned on the floor of the House earlier today when we started second reading debate of Bill C-88, given the content, the context and the need to take a step further and be more progressive than merely repairing, we should say that this bill operates under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. That would be a very welcome amendment and, assuming this bill gets to committee and we are in a position to put forward amendments during clause-by-clause consideration, it is one that the committee can expect to hear from the Green Party.

I certainly support this bill, including the provisions to allow moratoria on drilling to affect such decisions based on evidence. I do hope the bill passes. I would like to see it pass with an amendment to ensure that it operates under the terms of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Mr. Michael McLeod (Northwest Territories, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's history on this bill and the whole devolution process that happened in the Northwest Territories.

I still think the devolution process has a long way to go. As I mentioned earlier, there are certain parts of the Northwest Territories that were off the table during discussions for devolving responsibility. They included the Norman Wells oil fields and the Beaufort Sea. The regulatory process in the Northwest Territories is a model that the rest of this country could compare notes on to see how well it works when it comes to the inclusion of indigenous people. It is also high time that we start looking at the work that is being done on traditional knowledge and the scientific research that is being done on the Beaufort Sea. We also need to start looking the devolution of responsibility for decision-making on the Beaufort Sea to the Government of the Northwest Territories, along with the indigenous government.

I would ask the member to give her view on turning over all responsibilities to the people of the Northwest Territories.

• (1735)

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I agree with the hon. member that the process of devolution is incomplete. People in the north should have the decision-making responsibility over their resources, lands and waters. This is behind the principle of devolution, and to the extent that specific areas are excluded, that is an error and should be corrected.

We want to ensure that discussions in the territories represent the concerns of the specific first nations mentioned in this legislation, but much of the territory around our circumpolar north is under the jurisdiction of the Inuit. We need to pay attention to that.

We also need to make sure, as the hon. member mentioned, that we respect and engage indigenous knowledge and science. It is particularly compelling that we do so in the context of a climate

crisis in which we know that the warming in Canada's Arctic is occurring three times faster than the warming on the rest of the planet. We have known for quite a while that it was the Inuit and the peoples of the north who raised the alarm that sea ice is changing, that hunting is more difficult and that a way of life is basically at risk. Therefore, the more we consult and the more decision-making is led by northerners, the better our decision-making will be.

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's support of our first nations, particularly the battle we have had for over a decade in trying to prevent drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

She mentioned that we are taking back a law that was unfortunate or wrong, but I would say it was illegal, because land claims agreements are constitutionally protected. A law cannot be passed that retracts a constitutionally protected item.

There was a parallel exercise that happened in Yukon on the environmental assessment process. There they once again tried to make a change that was not in line with the spirit or the law of the constitutionally protected land claims, on which the member supported us. We have retracted that change and gone back to the spirit of the agreement and the letter of the law that was originally contemplated in 30 years of negotiation.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, absolutely, my language was too tepid. It is unusual, but that is the case. What happened under the previous Parliament was unconstitutional.

In regard to fighting together to protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, the hon. member said it has been a decade. I hate to correct the hon. member's math, but when I could not remember exactly what year I was in Washington, D.C., with the hon. member, fighting to protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, I made a quick reference to Google, and I found it was 2002. I remember I took my daughter and a young Gwich'in lad to see the opening of *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*.

It was in 2002 that the hon. member and I were together in Washington, D.C., and I want to pay tribute to him, because I know that all those trips to Washington were beyond his parliamentary budget. He paid his own way to go to Washington to work as hard as we could, and now we have to redouble efforts because the Trump administration once again wants to lift protection and allow drilling in the calving grounds of the Porcupine caribou, which are essential to the Gwich'in way of life.

The Deputy Speaker: I will let the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development know that there are only about five minutes remaining in the time for debate on the question that is before the House. I will give him the usual signal.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development.

Government Orders

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development (Housing and Urban Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to rise today to speak in support of the bill, but first I would like to share my recollections about visits to the Northwest Territories with the member who has spoken several times today so eloquently about the territories and the need for self-determination, in particular for the rights of indigenous peoples to be respected not just on this issue but on a broad range of issues.

In having the honour to go from community to community, to sit down with leadership in the indigenous communities in Behchoko and Yellowknife, to talk with families that are working in the resource sector and to talk to the Government of the Northwest Territories and the municipal leadership there, one thing becomes abundantly clear. Southerners who go north should go there to listen, and if they do, what they start to understand is that the importance that is placed not just on self-determination but on self-determination that respects the modern treaties and respects indigenous communities of the north is fundamental to making sure the progress that happens up there benefits the people who will not only be subject to the changes but also should be the main beneficiaries of whatever changes occur up there.

As we look at the agreement that was put in place, what we are building on is a flawed law that was passed in the previous session, which the Supreme Court struck down. I lost track of the number of laws that the previous government passed that did not make it through the Supreme Court. I think it was eight but it might have been nine. I am sure someone on the other side can correct me if there is a former AG over there, but the reality is that not obeying the law is something that the previous government set a high watermark on.

In the delay to obeying the law and the delay to writing good legislation and in not listening to the opposition as corrections were offered, the development of natural resources in the north was set back, but more importantly, the advancement of self-determination was set back. There are lessons to be learned in terms of how we proceed in the House and how we move with the Northwest Territories, with Yukon, with Nunavut, to make sure that the aspirations and the opportunities in the north are developed in a good way and a sound way.

One of the most important parts of this is that it is consistent with UNDRIP. One of the members opposite talked about why UNDRIP is not referenced in the body of the legislation. This is being asked in several other areas of legislation. UNDRIP has not cleared the other place yet. It has not received royal assent in terms of ratification and as a result we cannot reference a piece of legislation that technically does not exist yet because our system has not yet stamped it into law.

What we heard from representatives from the territories talking about this landmark piece of legislation is that it is consistent with the spirit of UNDRIP and it brings to bear those very principles as we take a look at how resources need to be developed carefully, but more importantly how water needs to be protected and most importantly, how traditional knowledge will be used to preserve and project a stronger future in the north.

The other thing that we need to come to terms with is the value of traditional knowledge. I was talking with one of the Arctic Rangers on a trip that I made to Iqaluit and he came from a part of the country that was even farther north than the maps of Canada often show. He talked to me about what is happening to snow and ice in the far north and how as exploration parties go up there to deliver everything from housing to roads to resources and to take a look at resource development, traditional knowledge is defining what is safe and what is not. Often safety is delivered not by someone from the geographic society but from elders who have passed on their knowledge as to what constitutes safe and unsafe passageway.

The bill recognizes the value of traditional knowledge and understands the value of engaging with all forms of scientific exploration and experience. That, too, is one of the reasons it is consistent with UNDRIP and is a good piece of legislation to be supported.

The most important part of this is that it allows the north to put a stamp of self-determination on its resource projects. It can look at the impact environmentally. It can look at the impact economically. It can look at the impact socially and it can make sure that the profitability of these projects is sustained in the north in a way that delivers sustainable, permanent, social transformation to one of the areas in this country that has the largest economic challenges facing any individual who resides in this country from coast to coast to coast.

● (1740)

This, in and of itself, is reason enough to support the bill, because it changes the nature of the conversation and the formula of the economics in the north to make sure that the process is a strong one.

We are also seeing that leadership from the indigenous communities and from the Government of the Northwest Territories have come to a consensus on how to move forward in a good way. As legislatures, when we see consensus emerge from outside the House and arms link in common cause, our job is not so much to legislate that into reality but to create legislation that dignifies, recognizes and supports that reality.

Another thing has been achieved here as well. Although we often have to lay our legislation onto existing circumstances, in this particular piece of legislation, existing rights holders have been recognized and brought into the legislation in a way that is consistent with not only good resource development but good environmental stewardship and truth and reconciliation.

For those reasons, I will be supporting the legislation and will be forever sad that I will not get to answer questions from the opposition.

● (1745)

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: It being 5:45 p.m., pursuant to order made earlier today, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill now before the House.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

• (1825)

[English]

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

(Division No. 1288)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Amos	Anandasangaree
Angus	Arseneault
Arya	Ashton
Aubin	Badawey
Bagnell	Bains
Barsalou-Duval	Baylis
Beaulieu	Bendayan
Benson	Bibeau
Bittle	Blaikie
Blair	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Boissonnault	Bossio
Boudrias	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Bratina
Breton	Brosseau
Caesar-Chavannes	Cannings
Caron	Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Casey (Charlottetown)	Chagger
Champagne	Chen
Choquette	Cormier
Cullen	Cuzner
Dabrusin	Damoff
Davies	DeCoursey
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Donnelly	Drouin
Dubé	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Dusseauult	Duvall
Dzerowicz	Easter
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Erskine-Smith
Eyking	Eyolfson
Fergus	Fillmore
Finnigan	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fragiskatos	Fraser (West Nova)
Fraser (Central Nova)	Fry
Fuhr	Garneau
Garrison	Gerretsen
Gill	Goodale
Gould	Graham
Hajdu	Hardie
Hajvey	Hébert
Hehr	Hogg

Holland
Hughes
Hutchings
Johns
Jones
Jowhari
Khalid
Kwan
Lametti
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
Lefebvre
Lightbound
Long
Ludwig
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Masse (Windsor West)
May (Cambridge)
McDonald
McKay
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
Mendès
Mihychuk
Soeurs
Monsef
Morrissey
Nantel
Nault
O'Connell
Oliver
Ouellette
Peschisolido
Petipas Taylor
Plamondon
Quach
Ramsey
Ratansi
Robillard
Rogers
Rota
Ruimy
Sahota
Sajjan
Sangha
Sarai
Schieffe
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Sikand
Singh
Sorbara
Stetski
Tan
Trudel
Vandenbeld
Virani
Whalen
Yip
Zahid — 205

Government Orders

Housefather
Hussen
Iacono
Joly
Jordan
Julian
Khera
Lambropoulos
Lamoureux
Lebouthillier
Levitt
Lockhart
Longfield
MacGregor
Maloney
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McGuinity
McKenna
McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendicino
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-
Morneau
Murray
Nassif
Ng
Oliphant
O'Regan
Pauzé
Peterson
Picard
Poissant
Qualtrough
Rankin
Rioux
Rodriguez
Romanado
Rudd
Rusnak
Saini
Samson
Sansoucy
Scarpaleggia
Schulte
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simms
Sohi
Spengemann
Tabbara
Tassi
Vandal
Vaughan
Weir
Wrzesnewskyj
Young

NAYS

Members

Albas
Alleslev
Anderson
Barlow
Benzen
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)
Brassard
Chong
Clement
Davidson
Diotte
Eglinksi
Finley
Généreux
Gladu
Gourde
Hoback
Kelly
Kmiec
Lake

Business of Supply

Leitch	Liepert
Lloyd	Lobb
Lukiwski	MacKenzie
Maguire	Martel
McCaughey (Edmonton West)	McColeman
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Motz	Nater
Nicholson	Nuttall
Obhrai	Paul-Hus
Poillievre	Rayes
Reid	Richards
Saroya	Schmale
Shields	Shipley
Sopuck	Sorenson
Stanton	Strahl
Stubbs	Sweet
Tilson	Trost
Van Kesteren	Vecchio
Warkentin	Waugh
Webber	Wong— 80

PAIRED

Members

Ayoub	Fortin
Goldsmith-Jones	LeBlanc
Moore	Paradis
Ste-Marie	Thériault— 8

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs.

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

* * *

[Translation]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—JUSTICE

The House resumed from April 5 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion of the hon. member for Portage—Lisgar relating to the business of supply.

May I dispense?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

[Chair read text of motion to House]

• (1835)

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

(Division No. 1289)

YEAS

Members

Aboultatif	Albas
Albrecht	Alleslev
Allison	Anderson
Arnold	Ashton
Aubin	Barlow
Barrett	Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu	Benson
Benzen	Berthold
Blaikie	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)	Boucher
Boudrias	Boutlerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brassard
Brousseau	Cannings

Caron	Carrie
Chong	Choquette
Clarke	Clement
Cooper	Cullen
Davidson	Davies
Deltell	Diotte
Donnelly	Dreeshen
Dubé	Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Dusseault	Duvall
Eglinski	Fast
Finley	Gallant
Garrison	Généreux
Genius	Gill
Gladu	Godin
Gourde	Harder
Hoback	Hughes
Jeneroux	Johns
Julian	Kelly
Kent	Kmiec
Kusie	Kwan
Lake	Leitch
Liepert	Lloyd
Lobb	Lukiwski
MacGregor	MacKenzie
Maguire	Martel
Masse (Windsor West)	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McCaughey (Edmonton West)	McColeman
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound)
Motz	Nantel
Nater	Nicholson
Nuttall	Obhrai
Paul-Hus	Paupé
Plamondon	Poillievre
Quach	Ramsey
Rankin	Rayes
Reid	Richards
Sansoucy	Saroya
Schmale	Shields
Shipley	Singh
Sopuck	Sorenson
Stanton	Stetski
Strahl	Stubbs
Sweet	Tilson
Trost	Trudel
Van Kesteren	Vecchio
Warkentin	Waugh
Webber	Weir
Wong— 121	

NAYS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Amos	Anandasangaree
Arseneault	Arya
Badawey	Bagnell
Bains	Baylis
Bendayan	Bibeau
Bittle	Blair
Boissonnault	Bossio
Bratina	Breton
Caesar-Chavannes	Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Casey (Charlottetown)	Chagger
Champagne	Chen
Cormier	Cuzner
Dabrusin	Damoff
DeCoursey	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Drouin
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dzerowicz	Easter
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Erskine-Smith
Eyking	Eyolfson
Fergus	Fillmore
Finnigan	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fragiskatos	Fraser (West Nova)
Fraser (Central Nova)	Fry
Garneau	Gerretsen
Goodale	Gould
Graham	Hajdu
Hardie	Harvey

Private Members' Business

Hébert	Hehr
Hogg	Holland
Housefather	Hussen
Hutchings	Iacono
Joly	Jones
Jordan	Jowhari
Khalid	Khera
Lambropoulos	Lametti
Lamoureux	Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
Lebouthillier	Lefebvre
Levitt	Lightbound
Lockhart	Long
Longfield	Ludwig
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)	
May (Cambridge)	
McDonald	McGuinty
McKay	McKenna
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendès	Mendicino
Mihychuk	Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Sœurs)
Monsef	Momeau
Morrissey	Murray
Nassif	Nault
Ng	O'Connell
Oliphant	Oliver
O'Regan	Ouellette
Peschisolido	Peterson
Petitpas Taylor	Picard
Poissant	Qualtrough
Ratansi	Rioux
Robillard	Rodriguez
Rogers	Romanado
Rota	Rudd
Ruimy	Rusnak
Sahota	Saini
Sajjan	Samson
Sangha	Sarai
Scarpaleggia	Schieffe
Schulte	Serré
Sgro	Shanahan
Sheehan	Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon)
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Sikand
Simms	Sohi
Sorbara	Spengemann
Tabbara	Tan
Tassi	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Vaughan
Virani	Whalen
Wrzesneski	Yip
Young	Zahid — 162

PAIRED

Members

Ayoub	Fortin
Goldsmith-Jones	LeBlanc
Moore	Paradis
Ste-Marie	Thériault — 8

The Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

It being 6:35 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed from November 26, 2018, consideration of the motion that Bill S-215, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (sentencing for violent offences against Aboriginal women), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin my remarks by recognizing that we meet today on the traditional and unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabe people. I hope that one day we will begin all of our daily proceedings in this place with this acknowledgement.

I also wish to acknowledge that my riding is situated in Treaty 6 territory and the ancestral homeland of the Métis.

It is an honour and a privilege to rise to speak on such an important topic as the mistreatment by our justice system of indigenous women and girls and to speak of a way that our justice system could make that change. I say that because we have a justice system that must do better for indigenous women and girls. We have a justice system that is just for some, but not for all Canadians.

Our Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees that everyone has the right to be treated equally before and under the law and that all Canadians have the equal benefit and protection of the law. However, that is not the case for indigenous women and girls in our country. Indigenous women and girls cannot count on a justice system that is fair and just, that provides them the full protection of the law and that is blind to race and gender.

That is why I am speaking in support of Bill S-215 and to support the leadership of Senator Dyck, whose work and advocacy on the issue of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls is to be commended and respected.

Bill S-215 is about bringing equality into our justice system for indigenous women and girls. The bill would amend the Criminal Code to make indigenous female identity an aggravating factor during sentencing. We need such a bill because we need to reform our justice system now. For too long we have tolerated the discrimination against indigenous women and girls. We need such a bill because the treatment of indigenous women and girls in the justice system reflects “societal indifference to the welfare and safety of Indigenous women [that allows] the perpetrators [of violence against them] to escape justice.”

We know the names of two indigenous women, Cindy Gladue and Betty Osborne, not because justice was served, but for the exact opposite reason. We know these women's names because of the unspeakable violence perpetrated against them in life and in death; a justice system that continued to degrade them as human beings, treated them as less than. We know their names because of the efforts of indigenous women and human rights advocates who demanded justice for Cindy and Betty.

The bill before us today is one measure to combat societal indifference to the lives of indigenous women who are more likely to be victims of violent crimes and their circumstances more likely to be taken less seriously by our justice system. We have systems of protection and justice in the country that effectively demonstrate that indigenous women's lives and their safety are less important and less worthy than non-indigenous women.

Private Members' Business

The family of Nadine Machiskinic know this fact all too well. In 2015, Nadine, a 29-year-old indigenous woman, was found in medical distress in the laundry room of the Regina Delta Hotel. She had fallen 10 floors down a laundry chute. Because of a justice system that did not value Nadine's life, her death was never properly investigated. It is because of her family's tireless efforts for more than three years that in 2018 the Regina police service's actions in this case were formally reviewed by the RCMP.

We know now all that was not done for Nadine by the hotel, EMS, police and investigators to help her, to determine the circumstances of her death and to find the perpetrators. We learned that her death was not reported to police for some 60 hours, that police took four months to send toxicology reports and that it was over a year before the police made a public plea for information about the two men on surveillance cameras and video who appeared with Nadine.

In her own words, Senator Dyck acknowledges that her bill is not the magic solution that will end the violent victimization of indigenous women and girls and it will not change how Nadine was treated by the system. The bill is intended to cause a ripple effect in the justice system by ensuring judges consider the unique circumstances of indigenous women and girls in Canada today.

● (1840)

Bill S-215 is needed because despite all our justice system is meant to be, it is failing to provide equal benefit and protection through the law.

Like many systems that are being challenged today by indigenous peoples and human rights advocates, our justice system has not escaped the historical influences of colonialism and racism; influences that continue to this day. These influences have led to what is the reality for indigenous women in Canada, a climate in which indigenous women are particularly vulnerable to sexism by the police and the court system. Indigenous women who are victims of violence are mistreated by the systems that are intended to protect them.

Senator Dyck's bill is a response to extremely high rates of murder and disappearances of indigenous women and girls. This legislation will help to ensure a justice system that provides equal protection under the law for indigenous women and girls as guaranteed by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

This legislation also responds to our legal obligations in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to protect indigenous women and girls from violence, victimization and the indifference by the state and society to their experiences of violence.

I had the opportunity to sit in on presentations by Senator Dyck on her bill and to also hear of her research initiatives in partnership with the University of Saskatchewan. Prior to being appointed to the Canadian Senate, Dr. Dyck was a professor in the neuropsychiatry research unit in the Department of Psychiatry and an associate dean of the College of Graduate Studies and Research at the University of Saskatchewan.

It is through her leadership and her support of current research that we are learning definitively of the detrimental impacts of the racism perpetrated on aboriginal girls.

Finally, Senator Dyck's bill would afford indigenous women and girls protection similar to that given to others in the Criminal Code, such as taxi drivers and transit workers.

In debate so far on this bill, we have heard technical legal arguments from hon. colleagues in the official opposition about how this bill is not an appropriate avenue for addressing the failings of the justice system to protect indigenous women and girls. To that I say that technically, the law is not to discriminate; technically, the law is not to be sexist or racist in its application; and technically, the law is to enforce the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. I rest my case.

We have heard from some on the government side, such as the special adviser to the Prime Minister on LGBTQ2 issues, the MP for Edmonton Centre, who in his speech during debate called for a broad-based, holistic approach as the best way to ensure better protection for indigenous women and girls.

First, I must object to the member's paternalistic tone and the choice of language in his comments. He stated that his way or the government's way is the best way—not a better way, but the best way. It is presumptuous of any member to state that his or her way is the best way. Further, terminology like “broad-based” and “holistic” are words that say to me that the government wants indigenous women and girls to continue to wait for justice and equal protection under the law.

Iskwewuk E-wichiwitochik, Women Walking Together, is a local women-led volunteer group in Saskatoon that has been supporting families and relatives of murdered and missing indigenous women and girls since 2005. Most recently, in 2018, the founders of the group, Darlene Okemaysim-Sicotte and Myrna LaPlante, received the YWCA Women of Distinction Award for their work.

Darlene and Myrna, along with the volunteer members of Women Walking Together, fully support Bill S-215. This endorsement must be respected and hold much weight in our deliberations on the bill, as it comes from women who know first-hand the impact of the epidemic of violence against indigenous women and girls and who combat every day the indifference of the institutions meant to protect women and girls.

Long before this chamber was talking about murdered and missing indigenous women and girls, these women were speaking out, helping families and getting results. This House can do something now to change the lives of indigenous women and girls. We can pass Bill S-215 and begin to see justice served to all Canadians; not just some Canadians.

● (1845)

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak today to Bill S-215, an act to amend the Criminal Code, which was introduced in the Senate on December 11, 2015, by the Hon. Senator Lillian Dyck. The bill's objective is to provide greater protection to indigenous women from certain violent offences.

Private Members' Business

I wish to note at the outset that this critical issue is currently being studied in the context of the National Inquiry into missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, which is examining institutional policies and practices that have been put in place as a response to violence, including those that have been effective in reducing violence and increasing the safety of women and girls.

As many of the constituents in my riding of Parkdale—High Park have indicated to me, indigenous women are disproportionately impacted by violent crime. Therefore, I know that we all support the pressing objective that Bill S-215 identifies.

[*Translation*]

Bill S-215 seeks to achieve its objective through new provisions that would require a sentencing judge to treat the fact that a victim is an aboriginal woman as an aggravating factor when sentencing an offender for certain specific offences, including murder, assault, unlawfully causing bodily harm and sexual assault. If a judge determines that an aggravating factor is present in a given case, a higher sentence is expected to be imposed.

• (1850)

[*English*]

Denouncing and deterring violent offences against indigenous women is critical. However, after significant reflection, it is incumbent upon us to express the government's concerns about the potential effectiveness of the bill's reforms in achieving the important objective which it targets.

Specifically, Bill S-215's proposed reforms may duplicate or conflict with existing sentencing provisions and may be under-inclusive in terms of protecting indigenous women, as well as similarly vulnerable victims, from all violent crimes.

[*Translation*]

Notably, the Criminal Code already requires sentencing judges to treat as aggravating factors the fact that an offence was motivated by hate based on gender or race or the fact that the offender abused a spouse, common-law partner or child. That is covered in section 718.2 of the Criminal Code.

Furthermore, the Gladue principle, which is entrenched in the Criminal Code as a sentencing principle at paragraph 718.2(e), requires sentencing judges to consider the unique systemic and background factors that contributed to the commission of the offence, as well as all reasonable alternatives to imprisonment, when sentencing indigenous offenders.

Bill S-215's proposed aggravating factor may complicate the application of the Gladue principle. For example, in cases involving a female indigenous victim and an indigenous offender, a sentencing judge would be required both to lengthen the sentence for an indigenous offender's criminal conduct against an indigenous woman and, at the same time, to consider alternatives to incarceration, particularly in cases involving less serious types of offences, such as simple assault.

Assault is one of the most common offences charged in the context of intimate partner violence, and we know that this type of violence occurs in all cultures.

[*English*]

Although interpersonal violence is always a serious matter, we must keep in mind that Canada's definition of assault is broad and applies to any intentional and non-consensual application of force. In some cases, especially those involving less serious forms of offending, incarceration may not always be the most appropriate response. Nor may it be the response supported by the victim, for example, in the context of intimate partner violence where the offender provides financial support to his family or takes care of the children while the spouse does so.

I am also concerned that the proposed aggravating factor may be too narrowly construed. Allow me to explain. For example, it would apply only to offenders sentenced for specific violent offences, such as uttering threats, assault, sexual assault and murder, but not to other types of offenders, such as those sentenced for human trafficking or other serious offences for which indigenous women and girls are overrepresented as victims.

These types of offenders are generally not indigenous themselves; rather, they may specifically target indigenous women because of their gender and ethnicity. For example, we know that indigenous women and girls are disproportionately represented among the vulnerable people who are sexually exploited in Canada. For that we can refer to the Department of Justice's 2014 technical paper on what was then Bill C-36, the Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act.

We also know that indigenous women and girls are targeted for this type of exploitation precisely because of their vulnerability such that applying the proposed aggravating factor to simple assault, but not to human trafficking, seems incongruous in this context.

[*Translation*]

Bill S-215's aggravating factors would also not apply to offenders sentenced for violent crimes committed against non-indigenous female victims, some of whom may be similarly marginalized and vulnerable to predation. My specific concern here is that this type of approach could create an unintended "hierarchy" of victimization. It is important to point that out.

Also, in certain types of cases, aggravating factors may be inapplicable or apply only in the determination of the period of parole ineligibility. For example, first degree murder, as well as second degree murder where the offender was previously convicted of murder, is punishable by a mandatory minimum penalty of life imprisonment without eligibility for parole until 25 years has been served. Otherwise, second degree murder is punishable by a mandatory minimum penalty of life imprisonment without eligibility for parole until at least 10 years and up to 25 years has been served.

Private Members' Business

Therefore, in murder cases, aggravating factors can only be taken into account in determining the period of parole ineligibility, i.e., 10 to 25 years, for an offender sentenced for second degree murder, as long as the offender was not previously convicted of murder.

• (1855)

[English]

For all these reasons, there are concerns about the potential effectiveness of Bill S-215's proposed reforms in achieving the bill's objectives. In certain situations, the proposed reforms may even create results that are inconsistent with their objectives. Therefore, I suggest that the bill's objectives and proposed reforms be further studied with a view to determining whether there are other ways to achieve its objectives, while avoiding the potential unintended consequences that I have just described.

Examining the impact of criminal legislation on indigenous persons is a critical part of ensuring that legislation responds appropriately to the unique lived realities, which are the result of a long history involving many different forms of abuse stemming from colonization.

In particular, indigenous persons are overrepresented as both victims and offenders. A piecemeal approach to law reform, given this complex social context, could have unforeseen and undesirable consequences.

The complexity of these issues is reflected in the January 2016 FPT framework to address violence against indigenous women and girls, which identifies principles and priorities to assist in improving how the justice system prevents and responds to this type of violence. The framework concludes with a poignant statement on the multi-sectoral response that is required:

Violence against Indigenous women and girls is a serious concern in this country. The causes of the violence are complex, but closely linked to historical government policies, which led to current conditions of low socio-economic status and vulnerability to violence. There is no simple or singular solution to this issue. Stopping the violence will require the combined efforts of multiple sectors and stakeholders.

I therefore stress the importance of taking into consideration all of the complexities of this issue when analyzing what can be done to improve the protection of indigenous women from violent victimization. Significantly, the missing and murdered indigenous women inquiry's report, which is expected to be released this spring, will provide important recommendations for concrete and effective action that can be taken to remove systemic causes of violence and increase the safety of indigenous women and girls.

The Deputy Speaker: Accordingly, I invite the hon. member for Winnipeg Centre to give his right of reply. The hon. member has up to five minutes.

Mr. Robert-Falcon Ouellette (Winnipeg Centre, Lib.):

[Member spoke in Cree as follows:]

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[Cree text translated as follows:]

Mr. Speaker, to all my relations, I say hello. I am very proud to be here.

[English]

Mr. Speaker, I remember back in 1995 or 1996, as a young child, watching some of the news surrounding indigenous status and the status of indigenous women in this country. I remember listening to an indigenous woman who said, "I am not just simply a second-class citizen in Canada. I am a third-class citizen, because I am a woman."

I have heard about equality in this debate. What does equality mean in this country, when the outcomes are so different? What does equality mean when we see the Gladue case in Alberta, where a woman in the justice system was treated very unequally? She was essentially cut up inside, with a six-inch gash in her vagina, and the judge let the perpetrator off. Only after an outcry did the prosecutor in Alberta actually take it back to court. That is a difference in outcomes.

I have heard lots of interesting comments in the House. One of the comments I heard was that because this bill does not deal with all of the justice issues related to the Criminal Code, then it should not apply, that it has no importance, that we need to deal with all of it at the same time. Well, let us take that first step.

I do not mean to get emotional about this, but I think this impacts a lot of people I know.

Bill S-221 was an act to amend the Criminal Code with regard to assaults against public transit operators. Now, from 1997 to 2011, there were 23 taxi driver homicides. Parliament modified the law.

In 2013 alone, just in RCMP jurisdictions in Canada, there were 42 recorded female homicide victims, and 17 of those were indigenous. That is 40%. That is a fact. Is that equality? We talk about equality, but the outcomes seem to be so different.

What are we actually doing? It is great to have some programs and spend some money. I wear the moosehide patch all the time, but what does that really change? I have people asking me all the time what it means. No one seems to know. It is about indigenous men and boys taking a stand against violence against indigenous women and girls, and children. How many people keep asking every day what I am wearing that for and what it means? Yet we have handed out a million of them across the country.

Do members know we also had a bill called Bill C-35, the Justice for Animals in Service Act? It was known as Quanto's Law. Quanto was a police dog. He was killed while on duty. This bill created a specific new offence prohibiting the killing or injuring of a law enforcement animal, and it created a minimum sentence. Who is worth more: Quanto, Tina Fontaine, Gladue, Helen Betty Osborne?

There are lots of organizations that support this bill. I could list them all. The First Nations of Saskatchewan and the Assembly of First Nations have passed resolutions in support of this, and there are women's groups across the Prairies that have asked for legislation on this issue. It deserves a full and wholesome debate in this House.

Adjournment Proceedings

I hope the government takes this bill and moves forward, because I am sure the missing and murdered indigenous women's inquiry will have something about the justice system. I hope we actually go ahead and change some of these laws so that equality means the equality of outcomes, so that people walking around the streets of downtown Winnipeg will know that they are just as valued as anyone else, no matter what their birth in this country.

• (1900)

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 93 the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, April 10, immediately before the time provided for Private Members' Business.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

• (1905)

[*English*]

STATUS OF WOMEN

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we knew the halls of power were rigged for wealthy and corporate insiders. What the scandal over SNC-Lavalin has revealed in detail is just how far the Liberal government has gone to put the interests of the corporate elite over Canadians.

The Liberal government keeps telling us how important an independent justice system is, but it all goes out of the window when it is their corporate friends in trouble.

We now know that over the course of four months, the former attorney general faced sustained ongoing organized pressure from the Prime Minister and his office, the Privy Council Office and the office of the Minister of Finance to politically interfere by granting a deferred prosecution agreement to SNC-Lavalin. This was so SNC would not have to go to court and face bribery and fraud charges.

As we all know, the Attorney General cannot be pressured by the Prime Minister to intervene in decisions of the Public Prosecution Service. It is entirely inappropriate. How many times did the former

attorney general have to say no before the Prime Minister and his team listened? She repeatedly said no, yet they repeatedly ignored her and were consistent in their attempts to improperly pressure her to change her mind for their well-connected friends of the Liberals.

The Prime Minister first outright denied this even occurred. Then smear campaigns began to undermine the credibility of the former attorney general. They tried to label her as “difficult to work with”. One Liberal MP said it was “sour grapes”. Then it was simply that she interpreted the matter differently. As well, every effort was made to shut down the justice committee and the ethics committee.

When the former president of the Treasury Board resigned because she had lost the confidence of the Prime Minister over this matter, the finance minister suggested that she resigned because of her friendship with the former attorney general.

A Liberal MP called her “pathetic” and a “traitor”. Then leaks from the Liberal machine suggested that the Prime Minister came into conflict with the former attorney general because of a judicial appointment. The individual in question responded “I fear that someone is using my previous candidacy to the Supreme Court of Canada to further an agenda unrelated to the appointment process.”

The Liberal government had also tried to claim that 9,000 jobs would be lost if SNC did not receive a deferred prosecution agreement. Then SNC-Lavalin actually came out in a public statement to contradict that claim. Not only did the government fail to do an assessment of any potential job loss, according to the Criminal Code, the Public Prosecution Service is prevented from considering the “national economic interest” as a reason for issuing a deferred prosecution agreement. This specific text was introduced to Canadian law under the current Prime Minister's watch in accordance with an OECD anti-bribery convention.

It seems pretty clear that the only job the Prime Minister is worried about is his own. What is clear is that the Prime Minister has continued to blame others and refuses to take responsibility for his actions. Both senior cabinet ministers now have been kicked out of the Liberal caucus and even after that, attempts continue to undermine the former attorney general.

Without a shred of evidence, the Liberal machine is suggesting that the former attorney general is trying to interfere with the new Attorney General's position on this matter. It is simply not credible. What we know from the Clerk of the Privy Council is that the Prime Minister was in a “mood” and that he was going “to get it done one way or another”.

It is time for a public inquiry. Canadians deserve to know the whole truth.

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Women and Gender Equality, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the hon. member's intervention. However, I am going to focus on the question the hon. member put to this House, according to the rules of the adjournment debate, and speak about gender equality and the place of women in this House.

Adjournment Proceedings

I am very pleased to highlight the many ways our government is putting gender equality at the heart of its decision-making, because our government knows that when we invest in women, we grow the middle class and strengthen the economy for everyone.

Since the first days of this government, our Prime Minister has showed incredible leadership and put equal representation at the forefront by appointing the first gender-balanced cabinet in Canada's history. Our Prime Minister knows that women must have more than just a seat at the table.

Since then, we have achieved a number of firsts: the first woman government House leader, who is sitting right in front of me; the first woman Minister of Agriculture in this country; the first ever federal strategy to prevent and address gender-based violence; gender budgeting, because we know that the decisions the government makes impact different people differently; and creating the Department for Women and Gender Equality, making Status of Women Canada a full department and ensuring its full and equal place within the government.

Our commitment continues through budget 2019, which delivered new measures to provide housing security for women, parental leave to address gender disparity in skills development, a strategy to combat human trafficking and a historic increase to support women's organizations and to help them through the social finance fund. With a framework to measure results, we are ensuring that we are accountable to Canadians.

For 10 years, the Conservatives undermined, underestimated and underfunded women's organizations and muzzled them so they would not be able to advocate for women's rights. Our government restored advocacy as an activity eligible for funding. While they closed regional offices at Status of Women Canada, leaving only four offices, we are restoring our presence across the country with 16 points of service. Our government has made the single-largest investment in the sustainability of women's organizations so that over 250 of them could keep their doors open and continue to save and transform lives.

Last week, these seats were filled by 338 young women from across the country, a clear example of what is possible when the federal government steps in and invests in creating spaces and opportunities for young women to take their rightful seats in places of power and influence.

Advancing gender equality is not just the right thing to do, it is the smart thing to do. We have come a long way in four years, but we know that there is more work to do to achieve gender equality. Our government is committed to doing that work. I hope the hon. member will join us in continuing that work. I want to thank her for her advocacy for women, not only on the east side of Vancouver but all across Canada.

• (1910)

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Mr. Speaker, last week in this House, I asked the Prime Minister this question and raised the fact that the Daughters of the Vote turned their backs to the Prime Minister, making it clear that they stood with the former attorney general and the former president of the Treasury Board. This was right on the heels of the Liberal government and the Liberal Prime Minister kicking out these two former senior cabinet ministers. Why? It was

because they dared to tell the truth. They dared to stand on their integrity and would not be bent by the government's pressure to change their position. That is what we are talking about.

The truth is that a real feminist would not try to do what the Prime Minister has done. A real feminist would not kick strong, independent women out because they stood on their integrity and wanted to ensure that the truth was understood. A real feminist would not kick someone out because she wanted to uphold the law and would not allow the government to continue to act and behave in the way it has.

That is what I asked. I did not ask the parliamentary secretary to brag about the government. I asked him to get at the heart of the issue at hand. The only way to do that is to have a public inquiry.

Mr. Terry Duguid: Mr. Speaker, I want to point out to the hon. member that under this Prime Minister's leadership, we have made historic investments in women's organizations, bringing their funding to unprecedented levels. We are ensuring that women can fully participate in the workforce, with parental leave options and investments in the creation of 40,000 good, affordable child care spaces.

Under this Prime Minister, we are ensuring that women receive equal pay for work of equal value. We are ensuring that women fleeing a violent situation have a safe place to turn. We have invested over \$200 million to end gender-based violence, including through the gender-based violence strategy, the first of its kind.

Our record is clear. It speaks for itself. This government and this Prime Minister are ensuring that all Canadians, regardless of gender, have an equal and fair chance to succeed.

• (1915)

[*Translation*]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House once again to talk about official languages and Franco-Ontarians.

Just this morning, we had a breakfast eat-and-greet here on the Hill, attended by many members of Parliament, in celebration of the Franco-Ontarian community.

On November 26, 2018, I asked the Liberal government a question about the importance of protecting official languages and the French language at every level of government. The provincial and federal governments have a collective duty to support our two official languages and, naturally, our minority communities. Unfortunately, the Franco-Ontarian community has been facing an injustice for some time now that is setting back their language rights. The cancellation of the French-language university project in Ontario was a serious blow to the vitality and development of Franco-Ontarian communities.

My question for the Prime Minister was:

Will the Prime Minister request an urgent meeting with the Premier of Ontario and commit to contributing his fair share to a French-language university in Ontario?

Adjournment Proceedings

Unfortunately, that did not happen. The federal government and the Ontario provincial government have some major differences of opinion, and the two sides were not able to come together and reach an agreement with respect to Ontario's French-language university. It is unfortunate, because the Ontario government is about to present its budget, probably tomorrow, if I am not mistaken. Stakeholders in the Franco-Ontarian community have high expectations for Ontario's French-language university, but unfortunately, they will likely be disappointed.

Beyond any partisan considerations, the federal government has a very important role to play in convincing its counterparts to comply with official languages legislation. The provinces also have a role to play in protecting and promoting the vitality of official language minority communities.

Today, ONFR and Benjamin Vachet reported that, on top of abolishing several positions at the Ontario ombudsman's office, the government has decided to dismantle the former team at the Office of the French Language Services Commissioner by eliminating two key positions. There will no longer be a legal counsel or a communications specialist, two positions that existed within the previous structure.

Let me quote what Linda Cardinal, a political scientist at the University of Ottawa who specializes in language policies, had to say about it: "The francophone community believes that the office's integrity should not have been attacked. Every person represented a link in the chain. There was a unique dynamic that helped everyone work together." She went on to say that moving the legal counsel to the ombudsman legal team takes him out of his natural environment, adding, "From an administrative point of view, it may be more functional to have all the lawyers working together, but it is going to change the dynamic of the commissioner's office. It will impact the work that is done."

We expected better leadership from the Liberal government. In order to demonstrate such leadership, the Liberals should have called a federal-provincial-territorial forum on official languages and invited all the ministers and premiers. Unfortunately, the Liberals did not do that.

What is the government waiting for? When will it organize a federal-provincial-territorial forum on official languages?

[*English*]

Mrs. Alaina Lockhart (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism, Official Languages and La Francophonie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member's question allows our government to bring to this House an update on the issue. Post-secondary institutions play a crucial role in the vitality and enhancement of our official-language minority communities.

[*Translation*]

Last November, Doug Ford's Conservatives launched a direct attack on the Canadian Francophonie. We, on this side of the House, will always be willing to defend and promote the French fact across the country.

● (1920)

[*English*]

Our government is fully prepared to support the province in this project. We have said it many times. We will contribute up to 50%. The money is on the table, but the provincial government is leaving it on the table. Since the Government of Ontario publicly announced its decision to suspend the funding for l'Université de l'Ontario Français in November 2018, our government has taken every possible step to move this agenda.

[*Translation*]

In addition to the many communications between our two levels of government to advance this file, the Minister of Tourism, Official Languages and La Francophonie has twice written to Ontario government ministers to offer federal support and indicated many times that our government was open to working with the Ontario government to support this major project.

[*English*]

On January 13, 2019, she also publicly announced \$1.9 million in funding directly from the budget of the action plan for official languages 2018-2023 to ensure the business continuity of the start-up activities of the l'Université de l'Ontario Français until January 2020.

[*Translation*]

This funding will support their preliminary work to establish the Francophone knowledge and innovation hub in Toronto and develop close ties between the agencies and organizations that support the francophone community.

This hub could host l'Université de l'Ontario Français once it is established, as well as over a dozen partners. This funding will be part of the total federal contribution to the project.

[*English*]

It is now up to the Government of Ontario to make an official request and to take this project seriously. Any contribution by our government to the establishment of the l'Université de l'Ontario Français is conditional on the provincial government submitting a funding application for our federal support programs and committing to at least 50% of costs.

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Choquette: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying earlier, we had an eat-and-greet this morning with the Assemblée francophone de l'Ontario to celebrate Ontario's Francophonie. One of the guests was Lydia Philippe, the new president of the FESFO, the Fédération de la jeunesse franco-ontarienne. She shares our young people's desire to have a future and continue studying in French. That is why we need the French-language university in Ontario.

Adjournment Proceedings

Lydia Philippe is just 17 years old, but she is already very involved and has a vision and ambitions for Canada. She wants to protect Ontario's Francophonie and promote diversity in Canada. We must stand up and show leadership for young people like Lydia. Young people in Ontario and across Canada want our government to take concrete action to give them hope that they will be able to study in French at this French-language university. There are approximately 800,000 francophones in Ontario, but we do not even have one French-language university. That is not right.

Mrs. Alaina Lockhart: Mr. Speaker, our government's support for minority language communities, and Franco-Ontarian communities in this case, extends well beyond respecting our obligations under the Official Languages Act and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This is about values.

[English]

The Franco-Ontarian community and other minority communities in Canada will always be able to count on the unwavering support of our government as a partner and as an advocate for their language rights.

[Translation]

Promoting the Canadian Francophonie is key to everything our government does to foster the vitality of the French language across Canada.

[English]

TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today to talk about a question that I brought to the floor of the House of Commons back in December. It was on the eve, sadly, of a cycling death that happened here in Ottawa. We know we have lost people in all of our communities across this great country to cycling deaths because we do not have enough safe cycling infrastructure in our country. We know that the government has promised to deal with that.

In the Liberals' government term, three and a half years, they have produced only one report. That report is titled "Active Transportation: A Survey of Policies, Programs and Experience". That report was done in October 2018 and still there is no action. I am hoping today that we will get an update for that report.

I would also like to pass on my condolences to the family and the loved ones who lost their family member in this tragic accident, but also to those across our country, including in my community of Port Alberni where we lost two children just last year in 2018 to cycling accidents.

We know that if we have a national strategy, a clear plan to grow cycling in our country, that creates safer ways and pathways where people can use active transportation, including cycling, we will improve the health of Canadians, we will lower greenhouse gas emissions, we will lower infrastructure costs and it is good for the economy.

I will go to children because they are a great measurement. In the Netherlands, 50% of children ride their bikes to school. In Sweden, that is at 20%. In Germany, it is 15%. Denmark is 40%. Here in Canada, it is 2%. We have to ask why. It is not because of the size of

our country, because 35% of Canadians live in three cities and in fact 83% of Canadians live in urban centres. It is not because of the climate either because we know that between Copenhagen and Toronto there is a difference of about one degree and we are far off the mark of what people are doing in Sweden. It is because they have a plan. They have clear targets and dedicated funding purely for safe cycling. They invest in marketing and education, and they are committed to growing cycling.

I tabled Bill C-312 to develop a national cycling strategy. There was a motion that went through FCM that was very similar to my bill and was passed with 95% support.

Canada Bikes endorsed my bill, wanting a national cycling strategy. The Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment has been calling for a national cycling strategy. The cities of Victoria, Toronto, Ottawa, Cumberland, and Port Alberni and Tofino in my riding, have all supported my call for a national cycling strategy. We have had support from the Comox Valley Cycling Coalition, and I want to thank Margaret Harris for her work with the coalition. She just stepped down as the president. With the Alberni Valley cycling association, John Mayba and Sarah Thomas helped pull that together. Lazarus Difiore from Arrowsmith Bikes has been really hard on me, pressing me to bring the message to Ottawa that we need a national cycling strategy.

On a personal note, I rode my bike every day that I sat in the House of Commons. Until just a month ago, I had ridden my bike to the Hill and I really believe it saved my life. There is a British study that says we reduce our risk of heart disease by 40% to 46% if we ride our bike to work. Heart disease costs \$12 billion to the Canadian economy every year. Some people say that if we could get a magic pill to save \$4 billion in health care costs, cycling would be it.

I would like to get an update from the government today about that report and how we are going to move forward. The National Bike Summit is just around the corner on May 13 and 14 here in Ottawa. Hopefully the parliamentary secretary could speak to that.

●(1925)

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Women and Gender Equality, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, like the hon. member, our hearts, on this side of the House, go out to the family that tragically lost a loved one.

I want to thank the hon. member for his leadership on this issue as well as for his incredible leadership on ocean plastics. I know we, on this side of the House, have appreciated his advocacy.

Just to let the hon. member know, this is a very important issue to me. I was a city councillor for two terms. I commissioned some of the first cycling studies and took action in the early 1990s in the area of active transportation, and today I am proud to say that Winnipeg has a very well-developed network and an active transportation system.

Adjournment Proceedings

I welcome this opportunity to provide information on how the Government of Canada is supporting the safety of vulnerable road users, including cyclists. While cycling is primarily a local issue that is the responsibility of municipalities, provinces and territories, our government is showing leadership on numerous cycling-related task forces. Our government is committed to ensuring the safety of all road users and recognizes the importance of cycling as a mode of active transportation. To this end, Transport Canada is working with the provinces, territories and other federal departments on a number of cycling-related initiatives.

In September 2016, under the Minister of Transport's leadership, the Council of Ministers Responsible for Transportation and Highway Safety created a task force to examine safety measures to protect pedestrians and cyclists around heavy vehicles. Following extensive consultations and support from all jurisdictions, the task force published a report that includes 57 safety measures to better protect vulnerable road users, including segregated cycling tracks, speed and red light cameras and warning signals in heavy trucks to detect nearby pedestrians and cyclists.

We are taking action by developing safety measures that fall within federal jurisdiction, such as pilot projects on detection and visibility systems, and by exploring potential regulatory action concerning automatic emergency braking systems and advanced driver-assist systems. Currently, the federal government supports cyclist safety through infrastructure programs that provide flexibility to provinces, territories and municipalities to determine priority projects that will make a difference in their regions, such as funding for the construction of bicycle lanes and paths and the installation of bicycle racks on city buses.

Also of note, the Public Health Agency of Canada, along other government departments, is spearheading an effort to strengthen relationships between federal partners working on files related to designing sustainable communities for healthy living, including opportunities to encourage active transportation.

Finally, with a view to complementing this work, Transport Canada is conducting preliminary research on the feasibility of collecting cycling data and the development of metrics to assess the connectivity of cycling networks. We will continue to collaborate with partners on this very important issue the hon. member has raised today.

• (1930)

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Speaker, we are hearing loud and clear from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities that, as I said, 95%

of those municipalities are looking for dedicated funding, clear targets for safe cycling and a national cycling strategy.

The report tabled in 2018, "Active Transportation: A Survey of Policies, Programs and Experience", created by the council's transportation and environmental task force, was three years' work, with 37 conference call meetings and engagement with 44 key informants Canada-wide and listening to jurisdictions nationally and globally on best practices. It heard about the wide range of benefits of active transportation, but it also cited the need for infrastructure funding dedicated permanently, in the long term, for cycling.

I would like to hear from the parliamentary secretary that he will commit to a national strategy for cycling so that we can get there. Canadians, especially our children, deserve safer cycling across this great country of ours.

Mr. Terry Duguid: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his advocacy.

While cycling is primarily a local issue that is the responsibility of municipalities, provinces and territories, our government is showing leadership on numerous cycling-related matters. We would agree with the hon. member that there is more to do.

Our government is involved in efforts to improve safety for cyclists through federal, provincial and territorial task forces. A report has been completed, and we are examining that report. This report is an important step in advancing awareness and addressing key safety concerns.

Infrastructure Canada also supports active transportation through infrastructure programming, and the Public Health Agency of Canada continues efforts to increase physical activity opportunities for Canadians.

We will continue to support active transportation through work on existing task forces and of course by listening to some excellent advice from the hon. member opposite.

• (1935)

The Deputy Speaker: The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:35 p.m.)

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