



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
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CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Thursday, December 5, 2013**

—

**Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer**

## **CONTENTS**

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

# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, December 5, 2013

The House met at 10 a.m.

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*Prayers*

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1005)

[*English*]

### GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 12 petitions.

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### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

**Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the first report of the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology in relation to Bill C-8, an act to amend the Copyright Act and the Trade-marks Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts. The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back the House, with amendments.

I also have the honour to present, in both official languages, the second report of the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology in relation to the supplementary estimates (B) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2014.

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### WAYS AND MEANS

MOTION NO. 5

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the various parties, and I anticipate that you will find unanimous consent for the following motion.

I move:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, Ways and Means motion No. 5 to introduce An Act to give effect to the Governance Agreement with Sioux Valley Dakota Nation and to make consequential amendments to other Acts be deemed adopted; the bill on notice entitled "An Act to give effect to

the Governance Agreement with Sioux Valley Dakota Nation and to make consequential amendments to other Acts" be deemed introduced and read a first time, deemed read the second time and referred to a Committee of the Whole, deemed considered in Committee of the Whole, deemed reported without amendment, deemed concurred in at report stage and deemed read the third time and passed.

**The Speaker:** Does the hon. government House leader have the unanimous of the House to propose the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to, Bill C-16 introduced and read the first time, read the second time and referred to a committee of the whole, considered in committee of the whole, reported without amendment, concurred in at report stage, read the third time and passed)

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

### PETITIONS

INCOME TAX DEDUCTIONS FOR TRADESPERSONS

**Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present.

[*English*]

My first petition comes from 170 people. It calls upon the Parliament of Canada to support Bill C-201, which would allow tradespersons and indentured apprentices to deduct travel and accommodation expenses from their taxable income so that they can secure and maintain employment at a construction site that is more than 80 kilometres from their homes.

[*Translation*]

VETERANS

**Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition is signed by more than 1,000 people and concerns the Veterans Affairs Canada office in Campbellton. The office is of vital importance to veterans living in our region and their families. The petitioners urge the Minister of Veterans Affairs and the government to keep open the Veterans Affairs Canada regional office located at 157 Water St. in Campbellton, New Brunswick.

*Routine Proceedings**[English]*

## CONCUSSIONS

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

Those living with concussions deserve comprehensive action and support. The petitioners call upon the government to enact a pan-Canadian concussion awareness week; a pan-Canadian strategy for prevention, diagnosis and management; and a centre of excellence for concussion research.

## SAMBRO ISLAND LIGHTHOUSE

**Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition on behalf of Nova Scotians and other Canadians who are calling on Parliament to create a strategy to preserve the Sambro Island lighthouse, an important symbol of our heritage. The Sambro Island lighthouse is the oldest lighthouse in operation in North America.

I would like to congratulate the Sambro Island Lighthouse Heritage Society for its efforts to preserve and maintain this structure. The society has actually gathered over 5,000 signatures in support of its lighthouse. It is calling on the federal government to fund the Sambro Island lighthouse. I certainly support them.

*[Translation]*

## LOCAL FOODS

**Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present. The first concerns Bill C-539, An Act to promote local foods. More than 100 people in my riding signed this petition, which asks the government to establish a pan-Canadian strategy for the procurement of local foods. It also calls on the government to establish a policy for federal institutions in order to support our farmers, create jobs in the regions and, above all, make healthy and affordable food available to Canadians.

• (1010)

## CONSUMER PROTECTION

**Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition calls on the federal government to prohibit charges for invoices sent by mail. Many people live in rural areas. They do not have access to the Internet and want to receive paper invoices without paying additional fees to suppliers.

*[English]*

## INTERNSHIPS

**Mr. Brent Rathgeber (Edmonton—St. Albert, Ind.):** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to table a petition signed by 200 constituents in Edmonton—St. Albert. The petitioners call upon the federal government to provide legislative protection for post-secondary students who work as interns, as part of their post-secondary education, in federally regulated industries and to provide specifications with respect to hours of work and other safety measures.

This petition was precipitated by a tragic event, where an intern working in the radio industry was killed after working two all-night shifts. Therefore, the petitioners call on the government to act.

## PENSIONS

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I table today a petition signed by a number of constituents in Winnipeg North dealing with the issue of Canada's pension programs.

The petitioners are in opposition to the government's decision to increase the age from 65 to 67 in terms of retirement. They are asking the government to do what it can to protect and ensure that the OAS, GIS, and CPP are not diminished in any way.

## CONSUMER PROTECTION

**Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions that I would like to present today.

Many seniors in my riding who get their paper bills in the mail were very upset by the fact that companies are now charging extra money for that. They were happy to hear in the throne speech that the government has realized that this is a serious problem. These residents have signed a petition calling on the government to act.

We look forward to the regulations that will see this take place.

## NUCLEAR FUEL PROCESSING

**Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition is on a nuclear fuel processing facility in my riding, which has been there for 50 years. In its operating licence, it was to have performed a very thorough public information program so that the residents would know that it was there. It has not really done that job, and consequently, most people never knew it was there. The signatories of this petition call on the government to ensure that the regulations and the licence are fully enforced.

**The Speaker:** The hon. chief government whip is rising on a point of order.

**Hon. John Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, our job in this place is to present a petition, not to editorialize before each and every presentation of a petition, such as we just heard, and it is certainly not to endorse petitions.

**The Speaker:** The member should keep in mind that members are not supposed to read petitions or go on at great length. The Chair usually tries to keep the chamber flowing when members are presenting petitions.

The hon. member for Langley.

## IMPAIRED DRIVING

**Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to present a petition representing thousands of people from British Columbia. The petition highlights 22-year-old Kassandra Kaulius, who was killed by a drunk driver. A group of people who have also lost loved ones to impaired drivers, called Families For Justice, says that the current impaired driving laws are much too lenient. The petitioners are calling for new mandatory minimum sentencing for people who have been convicted of impaired driving causing death.

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## QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Question No. 66 will be answered today.

[Text]

Question No. 66—**Mr. Murray Rankin:**

With regard to data, information or privacy breaches at Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), for each year from 2002 to 2012: (a) how many breaches have occurred in total and what is the number of individuals affected by each such breach; (b) of those breaches identified in (a), how many have been reported to the Office of the Privacy Commissioner and what is the number of individuals affected by each such breach; (c) how many breaches are known to have led to criminal activity such as fraud or identity theft; and (d) why was CRA unable to provide this information in response to written question Q-1217 submitted by Charlie Angus, MP for Timmins—James Bay, on March 7, 2013?

**Hon. Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay (Minister of National Revenue, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in 2012, the Canada Revenue Agency, CRA, put into place an updated information-sharing protocol between the CRA's areas responsible for security and privacy to insure that information on privacy breaches was flagged to the CRA's ATIP Directorate, which is responsible for liaising with the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada. The 2012 protocol strengthened the procedures and protections included in the previous 2010 information-sharing protocol.

With regard to (a), (b), and (c), while the CRA captures the number of internal affairs investigations—that is, data, information, and privacy breaches—as well as the number of security incidents that are unrelated to employee misconduct and that involve the theft, loss, or compromise of information, as well as the number of misdirected mail incidents, it does not capture the information by breach in the manner and the time period requested. In order to produce the response for 2002-2012, a manual search of records would have to be undertaken to extract the data, which is not possible within the prescribed timeline.

With regard to (d), for the reasons noted above, the CRA was not able to provide this information in response to written question Q-1217.

[English]

**Mr. Tom Lukiwski:** Mr. Speaker, I ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

## Government Orders

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

## NORTHWEST TERRITORIES DEVOLUTION ACT

The House resumed from December 4 consideration of the motion that Bill C-15, An Act to replace the Northwest Territories Act to implement certain provisions of the Northwest Territories Lands and Resources Devolution Agreement and to repeal or make amendments to the Territorial Lands Act, the Northwest Territories Waters Act, the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act, other Acts and certain orders and regulations, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today in support of Bill C-15, an act to replace the Northwest Territories Act to implement certain provisions of the Northwest Territories Lands and Resources Devolution Agreement and to repeal or make amendments to the Territorial Lands Act, the Northwest Territories Waters Act, the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act, other Acts and certain orders and regulations.

Before I actually start on the content of the bill, I want to take a minute to say what a stellar representative the Western Arctic has in its member of Parliament. This member is also the critic for the western Arctic. It is hard to imagine a person who devotes more time to representing a constituency. He exudes the love he has for the north. For many people in the House, he is a role model as a parliamentarian. We commend him for the amazing work he does. Yes, we come here to debate, but he realizes that one of the primary roles we have as parliamentarians is to bring our constituents' concerns and advocate for our ridings right here in the House. He is a stellar representative for the true north strong and free. I notice that this has made it into the news again, so I thought I would use it here.

I am speaking in support of second reading. I am very proud of the fact that both our critic and the leader of the official opposition, my leader, have committed to NDP support for the bill. We believe in devolution.

I also want to commend the leadership in the Northwest Territories for the amazing work they have done, specifically the premier, but also those who have gone before him, to advocate for the north breaking away from colonial shackles, so to speak, and moving toward self-governance.

*Government Orders*

The people of the Northwest Territories have worked hard for many years toward gaining more province-like powers. We have 10 provinces and our territories. I have had the pleasure of visiting the Northwest Territories, but I have to say that it was in the summer. I can honestly say I had an amazing tour of the Northwest Territories. I met such amazing people. They were very friendly and outgoing. However, the people do not have the same kinds of rights as Canadians who live in the provinces. They wonder why it is that in 2000, 2012, 2011, or 2013 they do not have the right of self-governance, the way the provinces do. They are not asking for more than the provinces. Their presentations have been very reasonable. Bill C-15 is a testimony to their hard work and advocacy.

We are way beyond the days when we thought we always knew what was good for the other person. I certainly hope so. One of the things we have learned as we have moved through history is that involving the people being governed, the people who live in an area, in decision-making is absolutely critical.

● (1015)

This is a step. I am not saying it goes all the way. I would like to have seen it go even further. It does not go all the way, but is a step in the right direction. That is why we are supporting it.

When it does get to committee stage, I know our critic is amazingly knowledgeable about this file. When I discussed this file with him yesterday, I found he already has ideas for amendments that would make this bill stronger and make it work for the Northwest Territories.

What does the bill do? There are a lot of people out there who would ask, "Did the Northwest Territories not already have the same rights as the provinces?" We in the House and in the north know they do not.

The bill rewrites the constitution of the Northwest Territories. It is the bill in this House that rewrites that constitution. That tells us a lot as well.

Unlike the provinces, the powers and authorities of the territories are set through federal legislation. We need to stop there and think about that for a moment, because here we are in 2013 and we have territories that still have their powers and rights totally under the federal government. That gives us some pause for concern.

However, there is always a silver lining in the clouds. Baby steps have been taken over the years, and some powers have already been devolved to the territories in such areas as education, health care, transport and renewable resources, specifically forestry and wildlife. These were all transferred in the 1980s.

When I look at the education system, at health care and transport in the Northwest Territories and at the limited resources that were allocated, I am truly impressed by the job it has done in this area. As of today, the Northwest Territories does not receive any revenues from resource development.

As we all know, the Northwest Territories is a rich territory. There is untold wealth that lies therein. However, for that existence and operating cost, the Northwest Territories has to rely on federal transfer payments. That in itself is a cause for some concern. There

are some major issues with being totally dependent on another government to transfer money to run a state, province or territory.

In 2013, the Northwest Territories and five of the seven northwest aboriginal governments signed an agreement on the transfer of power around the devolution process. In order to implement the agreement we are here today. However, there are some flaws with this bill.

The government has a penchant for combining many things into one bill and then tries to push it through. It also tries to corner the opposition by putting in some good things and some not so good, and then say, "Gotcha". In this bill, we do have major concerns. Our critic has pushed, and will continue to push, for the bill to be separated into two parts.

● (1020)

The first part of the bill is fairly straightforward. It makes changes to the Northwest Territories Act, an act that is virtually the constitution of the Northwest Territories, and all actions therefore under the Northwest Territories Act.

However, we have major concerns around the second part. That is because the second part brings in changes to the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act. It does away with the regional land and water boards created through land claim agreements with the first nations. They would now be replaced with a single superboard. That does cause some concern, because I have learned through my life experience that "when something ain't broke, don't fix it".

This is one agreement, the MVRMA, that has worked incredibly well, and has been touted as a success story. With the new bill, it is not exactly clear that these negotiations would still happen in a year's time when they were scheduled, or whether this agreement is now subsumed and will fall under the superboard that has been created.

Members may not think that is really a big issue. It is there, and more power has been granted to the Northwest Territories, but I want them to know that the minister actually has the right to reject any member to the board, and that should give us cause for concern as well. We are saying the Northwest Territories will now have this board, but there is no consultation, power of veto or anything given to the Northwest Territories. The minister vests into himself the power to veto any nominee for this board, and that is a major concern.

I should not be surprised by this, because over and over again under the government we have seen more and more power being vested into the ministers' hands. We have seen it in environmental issues and in labour. I am very knowledgeable about the immigration file, where we have seen more and more power vested into the minister, so many changes can be made in the future without ever coming through this House or going through any parliamentary oversight. In this case, a board that was functioning well basically under this agreement does not really have any rights. A superboard is to be appointed where the minister actually has the final power to veto.

*Government Orders*

Not only that, but the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories also receives some pretty specific directions. This will really change things a little bit. Whereas the commissioner was moving more and more toward being similar to a lieutenant, governor general or ceremonial position, this legislation actually draws the commissioner right back into the fold of the federal government. Bill C-15, clause 4 states:

The Commissioner must act in accordance with any written instructions given to him or her by the Governor in Council or the minister.

A position that was moving toward a ceremonial position would now suddenly be there to dance to the tune of the Governor in Council or the minister, and once again, more and more power being put into the hands of the minister is causing us some major concerns.

● (1025)

None of these issues we are raising should be a surprise to the government, because it has heard some of these concerns before from different groups from the Northwest Territories. There were a number of other regional boards that existed. With this legislation, those other regional boards would also disappear. So there would be a number of regional boards that would now be replaced by a superboard of only 11 members. Those 11 members would be looking at the whole gamut of issues with the full spectrum. Included under that would be the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act, which works, as I said, but when something works, the government does not really like it, so it tries to topple that as well.

When it comes to appointments to the board, there is absolutely no consultation with the Government of the Northwest Territories built into the legislation. If that were built in—and I am sure our critic will try to correct that oversight—we could say that the territories had been heard and they would at least have a say. What would be wrong with providing that consultation to the Government of the Northwest Territories? These are very simple amendments that could set things right.

The Northwest Territories has had environmental audits done. We know that the government across the aisle does not really like audits that much, and I do not really blame it because audits often see it wanting. They do not validate the volume of words the Conservatives use in this House.

Now we have a situation whereby all this falls under the umbrella of that superboard, and the ultimate controller of that superboard, of course, is Ottawa.

We need one government in charge of making decisions, and that should be the Government of the Northwest Territories in consultation with and working together with the first nations, who have a right to land and resources in the Northwest Territories and who we want to have as complete partners in the development of the Northwest Territories.

That last sentence is a direct quote from my esteemed colleague from the Western Arctic. I could not think of saying it any better than he did. It is a very laudable goal and it should be achieved in this agreement, but as we know, it is not.

There have been letters—and I have a copy of one of them—that have been written by the first nations community, raising specific concerns around both the Mackenzie area and other parts of the bill. We have read these and are paying close attention to them because letter after letter points out to us that the first nations communities

are seeing real problems. They are really worried that the authority of the minister and cabinet are being increased through the MVRMA amendments.

We do have serious concerns about the power being held by ministers and the control of the appointment of the board not being there.

What is it we are looking for on this side of the House? We are strong supporters of the devolution of more powers and authorities to the territorial governments, and at the same time we see the bill as a step in the right direction, but it has some major flaws that we will try to address.

● (1030)

Under the agreement, the Northwest Territories will keep 50% of the revenues, which is a good thing, but it is still not the same as the provinces. As I said, it is a step in the right direction, a huge victory for the hard-working people and leaders in the Northwest Territories, and a great credit to my colleague from Western Arctic. New Democrats would say that this bill is definitely taking us in the right direction.

**Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened intently to the member and I thank her for her intervention, but I have an important question.

What she said, surprisingly, is not accurate. It is actually quite the opposite. The facts are that through great consultation with first nations and the territories, power will be transferred from the federal minister to the territories. I thought I heard her say that the federal government and the minister will get more power, when in fact it is the exact opposite: the federal minister is giving those powers to the territories.

After great consultation and with great support from first nations and the territories, why would the member misrepresent what this act would actually do?

● (1035)

**Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims:** Mr. Speaker, we are supporting this bill and, as I have said, this is a step toward the kinds of powers that the provinces have, but it does not go all the way. As much as we like what the government has done so far, we are saying it needs to do a bit more in order to achieve what we believe would be good for the Northwest Territories, what the Northwest Territories want for themselves, and what my esteemed colleague, who knows that territory so well, tells us is so important to the people.

When I talk about investment of more power, through this legislation the commissioner is now basically being told that he is under the federal minister's control when it comes to signing off on issues or pieces of legislation. As well, this superboard, which from the way it is written I am assuming is now going to subsume the Mackenzie deal, means that instead of a number of governments getting together to negotiate, the power now rests with the minister, because he, after all, is the one who has the final say in the appointment of the board.

Those are the points I wanted to clarify.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to pick on the point of “we”, “we” being the New Democratic Party. I understand and appreciate that the New Democrats will be supporting the bill.

My question is with regard to the degree that the New Democratic Party believes that the Northwest Territories should be treated in the same fashion as a province and have the same authorities and powers that a province has. I would ask the member to comment on that aspect.

**Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims:** Mr. Speaker, I am going to stand and speak for myself. For me, it is incomprehensible that the Northwest Territories would not have the same powers as the provinces. I know there is a big history behind it from when the territories were created and all of that, and we are also dealing with multiple governments in the Northwest Territories, but I still think that the people who live in the Northwest Territories deserve the same kinds of rights, privileges, responsibilities, and accountabilities that our provinces have.

**Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I heard my colleague talk about the board and the change to the superboard and all of that. Is it not the trend of the Conservative government to say it wants to give control to people and then take it away through the back door? It did it with EI. The Conservatives got rid of the board that consisted of three people who dealt with those who did not receive their EI or did not qualify for it, or the Canada pension plan. There were 900 people, and it was cut down to 70-something, with only 38 people looking after EI. It was a mess across the country.

This is the same thing. It is to bring the power back to Ottawa so that decisions are made in Ottawa instead of on the ground by the people who live there, people who know what the problems are and who can make decisions on those things.

**Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague, another very hard-working parliamentarian who does an incredible job representing his constituents. On this issue of employment insurance, his advocacy and the research he has done on this file have been amazing.

The member is absolutely correct. What we have is a government that says one thing and does another. It believes in decentralization, deregulation, moving things away, and taking away the rules, but that only seems to apply to things that Canadians really care about, such as the environment. The government is taking away environmental protections and a lot of the blocks that could be in the way of the big resource extractors.

However, when it comes to rights—and EI is a right that people have because they pay into it, and it is their insurance—the government has moved into centralizing more power in the hands of the ministers. I watched it happening in the immigration file and I have seen it in this House over and over again.

Often it is the way a certain ideology works. The government talks decentralization, but what it is really talking about is removing protections and then taking more control over things we care about, such as health care, education, employment insurance, and governance.

• (1040)

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to congratulate my colleague for her speech.

I would also like to remind members that the last devolution to the Northwest Territories took place in the late 1980s. Thus, it has taken the government more than 30 years to introduce Bill C-15.

As my colleague mentioned, the NDP is obviously in favour of the transfer of powers and is working to put more power in the hands of the Northwest Territories. However, my colleague mentioned the Mackenzie Valley, which raises some concerns.

Could she speak further about her concerns regarding the Mackenzie Valley?

[*English*]

**Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims:** Mr. Speaker, when I visited the hon. member's riding, I witnessed first-hand the incredible work she does with the very diverse community in her riding.

I want to talk about the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act. That agreement would not be carried forward in this legislation. It appears to be subsumed into it. Under this devolution bill—which we support, by the way—if an agreement over land, resource development, and water has been negotiated between different levels of government, its existence would be thrown into question.

This is the bit that I was talking about earlier. If something works, why try to fix it? If something is working and people try to fix it, they are just going to end up breaking it. They are not making it any better.

What it would do is put all of this under the umbrella of the superboard of 11 members, and the minister has the final say as to who they are. Once again, it would throw into question the powers that the territories had prior to this bill.

We are looking for more clarification on this aspect. Maybe there are sections that the government is thinking it should bring forward in order to protect this agreement, leave it outside, and make sure the negotiations and the way it has operated are allowed to stand.

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise in the House today to participate in the debate on Bill C-15.

I want to say at the outset that my voice is a bit rough today. The NDP had a great party last night, with live music and great sociability. It went into the wee hours. I think everybody is feeling a bit rough this morning, but it was a good time to get together. Here we are back in the House this morning, ready to debate whatever is before us, so I am very pleased to speak to the bill.



*Government Orders*

I want to commend my colleague, the member for Newton—North Delta, who spoke just before me. She and I are both from metro Vancouver, so we represent ridings in Canada that are very urban. We face urban issues around affordability of housing, citizenship and immigration, poverty, transportation, infrastructure, and so on. We have a lot in common in terms of our ridings and the fact that we are both part of the metro Vancouver region.

However, I want to say that even though we are members of Parliament from the urban area, we have a sense of connection with our colleagues who represent ridings in the north, and certainly our colleague from the Western Arctic, who is the main critic on the bill we are debating today. When we visit other ridings and other communities with our colleagues, it is quite fascinating to learn about the experiences, the history, the culture, and the life conditions in those communities.

On the one hand, there are really vast differences, but on the other hand, there are incredible similarities. Every time I have visited the Northwest Territories, whether it has been Yellowknife or smaller communities, I have always been struck by how different the scene is from my community in Vancouver East, which is very densely populated. There there are 120,000 people living there. We have communities like the Downtown Eastside and historic neighbourhoods like Chinatown and Gastown. In the Northwest Territories, we are looking at communities that are hundreds and thousands of miles apart, communities that are very self-sufficient because they have to be. They have to deal with the very harsh elements in the North, yet when I get to know people and talk with our member from Western Arctic, we find that we are dealing with similar issues.

I know, for example, that one of the issues my colleague from Western Arctic has tackled in a very passionate way is the living costs in the Northwest Territories, an issue that I think is very relevant to the bill we are debating today.

In fact, he produced a 53-page report in November, just last month. In that report, he lays out, with great analysis and factual information, the concern of increasing income inequality in the Northwest Territories. That is an issue I face in my riding as well. Income inequality is growing between the haves and the have-nots.

He identifies that one of the key factors in the high cost of living in the Northwest Territories is the high price of food, particularly in smaller communities.

When I visited Yellowknife, I was very curious about this issue, so I went to the supermarket in Yellowknife, checking out the prices for milk, eggs, cheese, and vegetables and trying to compare them with my own community in East Vancouver. I was really surprised that there really was not that much difference. I remember saying to my colleague, the member for Western Arctic, “The prices are not too bad. Everything is available”. Then he said to me, “Wait until you get to the smaller communities. You’ll see an incredible difference”.

In fact, in his report, he documents that a family of four in Yellowknife would be paying about \$11,000 for food, but the cost of the same basket of food in a smaller community further north could increase by 13% to 210%. That really gives us an idea of what people are facing in the north. For example, the member for Western Arctic points out in his report that the same basket of food that costs

\$11,000 in Yellowknife would cost a family in Colville Lake more than \$21,000.

• (1045)

It gives us an appreciation of how difficult it is, particularly for people who live on a low income. There are some people making good money in the resource industry, but there are people who are struggling to make ends meet. I know the member has frequently, in the House on behalf of his constituents, raised issues of, for example, the nutrition north food program and his concern that it is actually making food prices higher not lower. He has raised these issues frequently in the House. He has also raised issues around the cleanup of Giant Mine in Yellowknife, as recently as just a couple of weeks ago here in the House of Commons.

I would echo the words of my colleague from Newton—North Delta who spoke about the member for Western Arctic and his passion for representing northern interests and the interests of his constituents. When he presented his comments about Bill C-15, the bill that we are debating today, we were very interested to know what his thoughts were. Therefore, my comments today are very much based on the expertise, experience and knowledge of the member for Western Arctic who was elected in 2006. He was the mayor in Fort Smith, a small community in the Northwest Territories, from 1988 to 1997, so this is an individual who is very grounded in the local community. I have seen the member in action and how people know him and interact with him. His take on the bill and the expression of how we feel about the bill come from a place of immense knowledge and experience, and that is something that we very much rely on and trust.

As my earlier colleagues have said, we do support the bill in principle. That's what we are here debating today, second reading, which is the bill in principle. We have to examine the bill and determine whether the principles of the bill are enough that we think it should go forward to committee. Certainly for us in the NDP, the official opposition, we believe that the bill has made progress in terms of devolution from the federal government to the Northwest Territories. Therefore, it should be supported in principle. However, when it gets to committee there are numerous issues that would need to be looked at.

To look at the bill historically, we know that over the decades there has been a transfer of powers from Ottawa to individual territories, and that is a good and very important thing. In fact, the last major devolution of powers to the Northwest Territories was in the late 1980s, so it is not that long ago when jurisdiction over education, health care, transport and renewable resources such as forestry and wildlife were transferred.

*Government Orders*

The current process would transfer administration and control of public lands, resources and rights in respect to the waters of the Northwest Territories. That is obviously a major advance because the Northwest Territories is a very special place in our country. It is a place that is fragile. It is a place that has a history of people being close to the land, of people respecting the land and the environment, and understanding that the extraction of natural resources must be done in a way that is sustainable and protects future generations. Therefore, the bill before us, Bill C-15, which would move into the area of the devolution process dealing with natural resources, is obviously a key milestone for the people of the Northwest Territories, and the Government of the Northwest Territories has been supportive of this.

It is quite interesting to note that until this devolvement goes through, the Northwest Territories does not receive any revenues from resource development, and in fact it has to still rely on federal transfer payments and taxes to deliver public programs and services. That is something that really is outdated. We need to ensure that the Northwest Territories and its government, which is duly elected by the people of the Northwest Territories, has control over not only things such as health, education, transport and renewable resources, but also over natural resources.

• (1050)

Bill C-15 does address that. Under the bill the Government of the Northwest Territories would keep 50% of the revenues collected from resource development on public land up to a certain maximum, and then the Government of Canada would retain the remainder. This tells us that it really does not go far enough at this point. It is not a total devolution. Nevertheless, it is a milestone and based on the consultation that has been done, we think it is something that is worthy of support.

It is a complex agreement. It will require the amendment of 42 different pieces of legislation. That is a lot to take on. In fact, my colleague who spoke earlier pointed out that the member for Western Arctic has advocated and is suggesting that the bill should be split because there are concerns about the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act. There are some major components in the bill that require very critical examination at committee. It would be a proper course of action to have the bill split.

Having said that, we have a very familiar pattern with the Conservative government where it likes to load everything up into omnibus bills and come up with these huge reports that one has to wade through. That is done deliberately. The Conservatives do not want transparency and proper scrutiny. How many times have we seen time allocation on bills?

Here today, we are debating this bill, a very important bill to the people of the Northwest Territories, yet other parties are absent from the debate. I find that quite incredible. The NDP is carrying forward the debate because New Democrats think it is important. We think it needs to be debated and aired in public and some of the issues addressed in public, before it is sent to committee. That is what we are here for. That is our primary job, to debate legislation in the House of Commons, to examine it and to hold the government to account. Bill C-15 would amend 42 other pieces of legislation. There may have been consultation and the government may feel there has

been adequate scrutiny, but the House of Commons is elected to do due diligence. That is what we are doing here today.

One of our key concerns is that as a result of the devolution agreement, the amendments would replace the current structure of the regional land and water boards that have been created through the land claim final agreements. It was a very major process that was undertaken a number of years ago. This new devolution agreement would supercede that and replace the regional land and water boards with one single board. Immediately, that should raise some concerns because when there are regional land and water boards that means there is local representation on those boards. It means there are people who understand local issues in a vast territory. The idea that we could now rely on a single board that would be able to scrutinize what is going on is a tall order. This is something the member for Western Arctic has expressed concern about and something we would like to see addressed in the committee.

The amendments also reserve to the federal minister the approval of all land and water usage in the Northwest Territories, which would circumvent the powers transferred to the Government of the Northwest Territories through the devolution process. There is a bit of a contradiction there. We have devolution, yet the federal minister is still maintaining approval of all land and water usage. There is obviously a lot more to be done.

We hope that when the bill is sent to committee and the NDP brings forward amendments that those amendments would actually be considered on their merit.

• (1055)

I would like to take a couple of minutes to speak about that. I am on the health committee and I know that when we have had bills come forward, even private members' bills that were fairly straightforward, every single time that we sought amendments to improve the bill, not for some political exercise but to simply improve the bill, they have been voted down. Again, in talking to my colleagues, I know that this is basically what happens at every single committee. The Conservative members can act in a very arrogant way. It does not matter what amendment is put forward; it is shut down.

A bill such as this has far-reaching powers for future generations in terms of the way the Northwest Territories government can operate on behalf of its people. With the bill, particularly because it amends 42 different pieces of legislation, the process at committee of hearing witnesses and considering amendments will be especially important.

To my colleagues across the way, I really hope that when the bill gets to committee, they will actually consider amendments in the light that the bill could be improved. There are concerns that have been expressed, particularly from first nations. Through the parliamentary process, the democratic process and the committee process, and through hearing witnesses and expert testimony, I hope that some of the concerns in the bill can be addressed.

*Government Orders*

I hope that there is a commitment that the Conservatives will do this in good faith, and that we do not just see a repeat of what we have become so used to. It is really so disrespectful of the parliamentary process to dismiss whatever amendments are put forward.

In terms of the support for the bill, because it has gone through a process in the Northwest Territories, there are people who certainly support devolution. In fact, I would quote Robert Alexie, president of the Gwich'in Tribal Council, who said:

We don't have to fear devolution. It's a new beginning....

I would also quote Robert McLeod, who is the Premier of the Northwest Territories. He said:

This Assembly has a vision of a strong, prosperous and sustainable territory. Devolution is the path to that future. Responsibility for our lands and resources is the key to unlocking the economic potential that will provide opportunities to all our residents.

The Premier of the Northwest Territories made that statement in June of this year as the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories approved the agreement.

We also have the president of the Chamber of Commerce, who pointed out that it is a very “historic agreement and one which will provide the Northwest Territories with the long-awaited and rightful ability to manage and control public lands”.

However, there are still voices that need to be heard of the people who have concerns about the agreement. For example, Jake Heron, from the Métis Nation, in speaking about the consultation process, said:

It's very frustrating when you are at the table and you think you're involved, only to find out that your interests are not being considered seriously.

As this agreement was being negotiated, obviously there were concerns being expressed. We have the same from an MLA in the Northwest Territories, Mr. Bromley, who said:

The federal government's proposal to collapse the regional land and water boards into one big board is disturbing, unnecessary and possibly unconstitutional. ...a single board does nothing to meet the real problem, failure of implementation.

There are clearly concerns out there.

In the time that I have remaining, I would like to underscore the NDP's support for the bill in principle at second reading. We are committed to working in good faith at the committee level to hear from people in the Northwest Territories and from experts who were part of this process. We are committed to making sure that this agreement is what it should be, that it is something that the people of the Northwest Territories can live with into the future and will address their concerns and allow them the measure of self-determination that we in the NDP all believe in.

• (1100)

Whether it is Quebec, the Northwest Territories or the first nations, we believe that people have the right to their own determination. Fundamentally, that is what this bill is about. Therefore, we will support it. However, we will work hard to ensure the bill lives up to those expectations.

[Translation]

**Ms. Francine Raynault (Joliette, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her very persuasive speech.

The people of the Northwest Territories have been trying for years to control and manage their land and their natural resources. I also thank my colleague for pointing out that it seems that the party in power will not be giving any speeches today. That is unfortunate.

My question for my colleague is the following: in her opinion, why is it so important for the people of the Northwest Territories to be able to manage their own assets?

• (1105)

[English]

**Ms. Libby Davies:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Joliette is correct. The question we have is why government members are not debating the bill. This is very much a basic process in the House of Commons.

I would like to ask government members why the government reserved control over appointments to the environmental review board and maintained control over the approval of licences. That is in this agreement. We would like to get an answer to that. Maybe we will be able to address this at committee.

To address my colleague's comments in debate at second reading, devolution is important for the people of the north. However, it cannot be a half-baked thing. Devolution means devolution. It means the right to exercise authority and power over decisions in that area. Yet there are elements of the bill before us today that still maintain the control of the federal government, such as appointments to the environmental review board. Why would that not be done locally?

If there are reasons for that, we would like to hear them. However, we are not hearing anything. There is silence on the other side of the House. Therefore, I cannot answer the question, but it is a question we will keep asking, along with other questions, to ensure the agreement lives up to the expectations of the people in the north for devolution.

**Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I apologize if I have been silent. However, members will hear from me now.

I want to bring to the attention of members that we understand the development of the Northwest Territories, particularly with respect to Mackenzie Valley land and water. We also understand that if we are to develop that, we want to ensure the development of those areas are run effectively and efficiently. As future land claims come along, I would envision we would continue to build a bureaucracy of more boards. We now have four. The intent is to become more effective. We would put that into a single board. Then as more land claims are developed around there, they would be able to use subcommittees of that board and the local people within that area would be the first on the ground part of it.

*Government Orders*

Part of what we want to continue to do is to ensure that investment and development is done in an environmentally right way and that the regulatory process is in place to ensure that whatever is happening in terms of those land claims is done properly and most efficiently. If we are to attract the kind of investment and development we want, we also know we have to be the best at what we do. Becoming more efficient, which is what we have done in just about all of our environmental processes, is about reducing a lot of the duplication. We want to ensure there is a continuity between boards and regulatory processes. Having the one board will help accomplish that.

I know from the NDP component that this is likely about resource development and the growing of investors. I suspect from the comments of the NDP members that they still oppose that, but not as a government and not as Canada. We are enriched by it and we need to ensure we take the best advantage of it in the most effective and sensitive way.

**Ms. Libby Davies:** Mr. Speaker, I welcome my hon. colleague from the government side to the debate. I hope he will go one step further and participate in the debate. Certainly questions and comments is one way, but there are opportunities to speak in the debate today for 10 or 20 minutes, and I hope the member will do that.

The member talked about efficiency and bureaucracy and said that the creation of this superboard was for efficiency and to eliminate bureaucracy. Efficiency does not necessarily mean that bigger is better.

The regional land and water boards were created by the Mulroney Conservative government to give aboriginal people a say over the development of lands and waters. There is a question about how eliminating these regional boards is going to serve their interests.

This is something we will follow up on in committee. I do not necessarily buy the argument about having a structure of subcommittees that do not have the same authority as the previous boards. The subcommittees would have to report back to the superboard and so they might be very limited in the scope they have. That is not necessarily a better way to go.

This will be a point of discussion and debate, I hope in the House and also in the committee because we do want to delve into this question a little more closely.

• (1110)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we look at the bill as a positive step forward, because it would provide the devolution of power in having more influence on natural resources and revenues coming in through those natural resources, which is a great thing.

The member made reference to the cap. Once a certain amount of money was reached in revenue collected from natural resources, that is where it would end and the rest would flow through, from what I understand, to Ottawa.

The member expressed disappointment in that. I want to know to what degree the member thinks there should be a cap from her perspective. Does the NDP believe that a cap is not warranted and

that whatever revenues are generated from the natural resources should remain in the Northwest Territories?

**Ms. Libby Davies:** Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague is correct that under the agreement, the Government of the Northwest Territories will keep 50% of revenues collected from resource development on public land, but there is a maximum.

I do not know what that maximum is, but when that maximum is hit, the Government of Canada retains the remainder. Presumably this was something that came out of the negotiation. I was not at the table, so I am not privy to what the various positions were and whether this was a compromise.

When it gets to committee, this is one element of the bill that is very much worth examining to determine whether this maximum cut-off is something that should be reviewed and possibly changed in the future.

I would be very interested to hear what the position of the Government of the Northwest Territories is in what its sees as the future in revenues from resource development. It may have a longer range plan and it may be something we need to build into the bill to ensure its expectations for what devolution is are met.

There is a lot to look at in the bill and we will do that in a very forthright way when it gets to committee so this question can be answered.

[Translation]

**Ms. Laurin Liu (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have the great pleasure of rising today to speak to Bill C-15. I would like to first indicate that I will be sharing my time with the member for Sudbury.

[English]

I would like to begin my speech in the chamber today by first congratulating the member for Western Arctic, who has done an immense amount of work on this file and represents his constituents very well. I would like to mention, most notably, his private member's bill in the House that he presented to increase the borrowing power of the Northwest Territories. He has worked tirelessly in the House to represent his constituents and ensure that the Northwest Territories develop in ways that are sustainable and to increase the ability of his constituents to participate in their own democracy.

Bill C-15 is an act to replace the Northwest Territories Act to implement certain provisions of the Northwest Territories Lands and Resources Devolution Agreement and to repeal or make amendments to the Territorial Lands Act, the Northwest Territories Waters Act, the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act, other acts and certain orders and regulations. The short title of this bill is the "devolution implementation bill". The length of the title of the bill is an indicator of the length of the bill itself, a 240 page omnibus bill. Preparing for this speech, I went through many cups of coffee. As I will mention later, it is customary for the government to present omnibus bills in the House.

I would also like to congratulate Robert McLeod, the Premier of the Northwest Territories, for his work on this file as well.

*Government Orders*

Before delving into the content of this bill, I would like to briefly talk about the process and the form of it. As I mentioned, this is a 240 page omnibus bill. The Conservative government in this case has lumped issues that are less contentious in the bill, issues that the opposition parties could actually get on board with, such as devolution, with issues that are a bit more contentious, including the creation of a pan-territorial regulator for industrial projects in part 4 of the bill.

Unfortunately, rather than separating these parts of the bill in order to get the support of opposition parties, the government put them into the same bill. This has occurred in other bills and it is the common practice of the Conservative government, which has not behaved in a very democratic way in Parliament. We saw this occur in the case of Bill C-13, the cyberbullying bill protecting Canadians from the online crime act, which was introduced by the justice minister last week.

The bill would stipulate up to five years in prison for individuals who published intimate images of people without their express permission and would also give police greater ability to investigate cyberbullying. This is something the opposition parties could get on board with, especially as we have seen these tragic cases of teenagers being cyberbullied across the country, with tragic results.

However, Bill C-13 includes measures that are completely unrelated to cyberbullying. It includes measures on terrorism, organized crime and hate propaganda. It gives police greater leeway to access online communications and contains provisions for jail sentences of up to two years for poaching cable and satellite TV transmissions. It is hard to see how these measures directly relate to the issue of cyberbullying. It is another cynical move by the Conservatives to try to push through their agenda in these bills that the opposition, unfortunately, cannot agree with wholeheartedly.

I will now discuss the content of Bill C-15. As we know, this bill has four parts. Part 1 would enact the Northwest Territories Act, implement certain provisions of the Northwest Territories Land and Resource Devolution Agreement and amend and repeal other acts and certain orders and regulations. Essentially, the Northwest Territories Act is the territories' foundational act. Part 1 would transfer powers to regulate oil and gas pipelines from the federal government to the territorial government as long as these remained onshore.

• (1115)

Part 2 would amend the Territorial Lands Act, part 3 would amend the Northwest Territories Waters Act and part 4 would amend the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act. As we have heard from my colleagues on the NDP side, this is the part that is the most contentious, perhaps, and this is the section that replaces regional management boards with a single 11-member board.

Those listening at home and those in my home province of Quebec might be interested to know that the Northwest Territories actually has responsibilities similar to provinces. In the late 1980s, health services, administration of justice and the management of forestry were devolved to the Government of the Northwest Territories. The Northwest Territories government also has responsibility over education, social services, highways and airport

administration, which are roles that would normally be considered to be under provincial jurisdiction.

This process has been ongoing throughout the history of the Northwest Territories, beginning with the Carruthers Commission in 1966, which actually moved the capital of the Northwest Territories to Yellowknife and brought a number of bureaucrats to Yellowknife. There is a history that leads up to the nineties, in which there were many constitutional development caucuses in the north, so this is a debate that has been going on for decades.

The NDP is in favour of devolution. This is actually the part of the bill we would support. As I explained, the people of the Northwest Territories have worked toward gaining more province-like power for decades. I would support the Northwest Territories in taking over federal responsibilities in the north. This is because we believe that the Northwest Territories knows best how its resources ought to be used, and ultimate authority should rest with the Northwest Territories. I commend the Premier, Bob McLeod, for his work.

However, there are many contentious issues with Bill C-15, so we would expect the government side to listen to our suggestions in committee and to amend the bill in order to take into account the expectations of northerners and to address some of the concerns that were raised around the Conservatives' move to lump in changes to the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act. The role of committee is crucial to the bill, and the Conservatives should benefit from committee and bring in experts and stakeholders and actually amend the bill so that it has wide consensus from those whom it concerns.

At this point we are concerned with the government's previous inability to make amendments to bills in committee. Notably there is the case of the Conservatives actually rejecting an amendment from the opposition side. That was an amendment concerning a grammatical mistake that was found in a bill, but they categorically objected to this amendment simply because it came from the opposition. Following that, the Conservatives had to bring forward the amendment again to change the small grammatical error in the bill.

We would actually expect the government members to listen to opposition members and to testimony, instead of governing with their ears and eyes closed to those who would propose constructive changes to the legislation.

Part 4 of the bill, the creation of a pan-territorial regulator for industrial projects, we find contentious. On this point I would like to refer to the speech in this House of my colleague from the Western Arctic, in which he raised important concerns with this part of the bill: "There has been no consultation with the Government of the Northwest Territories included in that provision". We do see that the Conservative government is trying to ram through its agenda without actually giving an adequate say to the Government of the Northwest Territories.

*Government Orders*

I will finish by citing the importance of taking into account the specific realities of the Northwest Territories in considering the bill, namely the presence of many aboriginal peoples in the north. Also, as my colleagues have raised, one of the main problems concerning land and water use certainty is the lack of progress in aboriginal land claim settlements.

• (1120)

We would raise that as a point, one which we could possibly discuss at committee. I would like to support the bill in principle. I would like to support the idea of devolution and giving the Northwest Territories more power, although I have serious concerns with the content of the bill and would suggest that the government accept our amendments during committee stage.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Francine Raynault (Joliette, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her very good speech. I hope that the other parties, the Conservative and Liberal parties, will speak to this matter later.

There is one thing that I find to be quite extraordinary: the amendments to replace the current structure of regional land and water boards. However, at the same time, these amendments also give the power to approve all land and water usage to the federal minister.

Is this not at odds with the Northwest Territories' control over their natural resources?

• (1125)

**Ms. Laurin Liu:** Mr. Speaker, I believe that that is a crucial point to be considered when the bill is studied in committee. A number of people have raised this point. The member for Western Arctic spoke about this in his speech. My colleague has raised an important point that will have to be discussed because the members of this House, the people who worked on this bill and Canadians who will be affected by it do not all agree. Nevertheless, I believe that some parts of the bill deserve our support.

[*English*]

Many people do not actually know that the Government of the Northwest Territories does not receive any revenues from research development and relies on federal transfer payments and taxes to deliver public programs and services.

I did not have time to mention this in my speech, but under this agreement, the Government of the Northwest Territories would keep 50% of the revenues collected from research development on public land up to a maximum and the Government of Canada would get the remainder.

There are very positive parts of the bill that we need to keep and to preserve, but as my colleague mentioned, there are also many parts of the bill that we need to study critically.

**Mr. Malcolm Allen (Welland, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, when one talks about devolution, which part of the bill does, it reminds me of the place where I grew up, which also has a devolved Parliament. The problem with devolution is that if we do not do it right, if we do not actually ask folks what they want, what their needs are, what the requirements are for the people that they are about to represent as we devolve this Parliament, as we devolve certain powers to them, we

end up in a place where we continue the mode of discussions about how to acquire the powers they think they deserve under the devolution.

There are experiences around the world about devolving powers to certain places. In the U.K., for instance, one could take the experience of the devolved Parliament in Scotland that came out of Westminster, which has been a Parliament of the United Kingdom for hundreds of years—a lot of longer than what we have seen here—we could take that experience and make sure we get it right. The reason to get it right, and one of the reasons that Scotland is now talking about more devolved powers, which it calls the question, is the fact that it did not get it right the first time.

Does it not make sense to take those experiences and talk to the folks we are going to give devolved powers to, to see if it is actually what they would like and need in the longer term to satisfy the needs of the people of the Northwest Territories? This is about them. It is not about us in the House. Should we not ask them to make sure we get this right?

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Laurin Liu:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague was very eloquent. We have to accept the fact that we live in a very diverse country and that the regions are all extremely different.

[*English*]

I think this is the way that an NDP government would function. An NDP government would consult and make sure devolution happens properly.

As my colleague from Western Arctic stated, we have particular problems with part 4 of the bill, as the structure would be changed to a single board managing research development. It would be possible to change it back later, but that is a question that is up in the air. However, as my colleague mentioned, an NDP government would go back and take a look at this and make sure it is done right.

I think that our vision of how this country should operate is very much in concordance with the vision Canadians have in every region of this country.

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault (Sudbury, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today and speak in support of Bill C-15, which is the Northwest Territories devolution implementation bill.

I think the short title does not reflect what the bill is really all about. The bill is really an act to replace the Northwest Territories Act, to implement certain provisions of the Northwest Territories Lands and Resources Devolution Agreement and to repeal or make amendments to the Territorial Lands Act, the Northwest Territories Waters Act, the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act, other acts and certain orders and regulations.

The bill would do a lot, and I think it is important, in the debate we are having in this House today and then at committee, to truly look at all of the implications that Bill C-15 would bring forward.

*Government Orders*

As my colleague for Welland mentioned earlier, it is truly important that we get this bill right, especially for the people of the Northwest Territories who have been working toward gaining province-like powers for decades. That is why members have heard from many of my colleagues today that the NDP is in support of the bill and of the Northwest Territories taking over some federal responsibilities in the north. Truly, who knows best about the territory and area? The people of the Northwest Territories do. They are the ones who should be deciding on how their resources ought to be used, and ultimately the authority should rest with them.

This brings up a few questions that we, as New Democrats, would like to see answered today or in committee.

First, considering that many first nations in the Northwest Territories are strongly objecting to the changes to the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act, why are the Conservatives ignoring these concerns and pressing ahead with the creation of a superboard?

This is a type of question that we definitely need to have answered. If we cannot get it answered today, it is something that will need to be asked in committee.

As we heard earlier from our Conservative colleagues, the creation of a superboard is for efficiency. Well, a superboard may not always be efficient if we do not bring forward the will, needs, wants and requests of all of the citizens of the Northwest Territories. We already know that many of the first nation groups within the Northwest Territories have some concerns.

I am hoping, through this debate and the opportunity in committee after second reading, that we can start getting some of these questions answered.

Another question: Considering the massive revamp the bill represents, why did the Conservatives reserve control over appointments to the environmental review board and main control over approval of licences?

Right off the top, I was talking about the importance of devolution and of the citizens and Government of the Northwest Territories having the control and ultimate say over their resources, their land and their territories. However, with Bill C-15, the government is saying, "We can give you some, but all of those requirements are now going to fall right back to the minister".

I think this is a question we need to get an answer to so that we can ensure we are doing this right.

For myself, coming from a resource-based community in northern Ontario, the great riding of Sudbury, that conversation comes up often. Why do we not have more say over the resources that are coming out of our ground in Sudbury? It is a conversation that many of my municipal councillors have with the province and that the province has with the feds. This is something we need to look at and ensure that conversation happens.

This begs the question then: Is it not premature to bring forward changes to the environmental review board creating a single superboard and eliminating the regional land and water boards before the completion of the land claims that are happening right now in the Northwest Territories?

Again, these are questions that need to be answered and we are hoping that this debate will allow for more of that.

• (1130)

Let us look at a bit of the history. The negotiations concluded with the Northwest Territories and the Government of Canada in March 2013, and the Legislative Assembly voted to approve the final agreement on June 5, 2013. There were several first nations, Métis, and Inuit organizations that all took part in signing the devolution final agreement on June 25. The agreement gives the Northwest Territories residents a greater voice in decisions about how public land, water, and resources are managed, how the economy is developed, and how the environment is protected.

If this is coming from the Government of Northwest Territories and the citizens of Northwest Territories, it is incumbent upon us, as federal parliamentarians, to work together to ensure that we have the debate to allow for them to have more of a say in lands, minerals, and development. That is why we have some concerns on this side of the House. We have some concerns when superboards are the ones that will be making the decisions or when the minister has the final say in appointments to these superboards. We cannot put the power in one person when it is representing such a large area with so many people.

Among other things that are important to mention is that the results of public engagement in the proposed Northwest Territories lands and resource devolution agreement were based on more than 40 public and stakeholder meetings in all regions of the Northwest Territories during April and May of this year. Forty public and stakeholder meetings is fantastic when we think about the involvement, by the Northwest Territories government, of its citizens on this issue.

Unfortunately, in this House, with the current government, too many times we have seen the elimination of public consultation and the reduction of stakeholder consultation. We bring certain issues to committee and listen to witnesses and testimony from stakeholders and citizens. They give testimony on how to make things work better and how to make a bill function within the laws of the land. What ends up happening in committee is that those ideas that are brought forward are not heard by the government members. The government will bring forward amendments, and its amendments pass. When we bring forward amendments on this side of the House, after listening to the testimony of our witnesses and stakeholders and putting in hours of work and research, they are sloughed off to officials to slam down. The next thing we know, they are defeated.

• (1135)

It is incumbent upon us as parliamentarians to ensure that we create bills, legislation, and laws that do the right thing so that we only have to do it once. Creating amendments all the time should be the exception, not the norm. However, what we see right now is amendment after amendment having to be presented, because unfortunately, what we have seen is the current government not always putting forward the best legislation but putting forward legislation that is based on a lot of politics.

*Government Orders*

Right now we have the opportunity in this House, in this debate, and in committee to make sure that the people of the Northwest Territories have that say, that they have the opportunity to have those powers to make sure that they are looking after their communities, families, and citizens. It is a great land. The member for Western Arctic talks often about the great people in his riding and the work he does for them. I am very proud to be able to work with the MP for Western Arctic on several issues when it comes to small businesses, tourism, and consumer affairs.

With that, I look forward to continuing the conversation during the question and answer period about the importance of this bill and the importance of devolution to the Northwest Territories.

• (1140)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Francine Raynault (Joliette, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Sudbury for his speech.

The party in power does say that it consults people and conducts public consultations. However, in my experience, it would seem that there is a rather minimal amount of consultation. Furthermore, bills do not even reflect the views of the people consulted.

When people are consulted, they can tell us what kind of life they want and how they want to structure their society and use their natural resources in order to have a better life.

According to the member for Sudbury, what is the role of public consultations in ensuring that people live well, are happy and achieve social peace? How does he see the consultations?

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

[*English*]

The interesting thing about consultations is that we do not always get everything we want to hear in the sense that public consultations are just that. People come and give their two cents on the issue of the day. Sometimes we may think that what we are proposing and what we are moving forward is right and just, but then we hear through the consultation process that we forgot about something. When we recognize that, we can make the fixes and bring them forward to make sure, through public consultations, that the legislation we are bringing forward is the best we can do.

Right now, unfortunately, with so many questions left unanswered, I do not know if we are bringing forward the best we can do. When we are creating superboards, when we are leaving the powers of so many jurisdictions in the Northwest Territories within the power of one federal minister, there is some concern.

If the Northwest Territories could have 40 meetings with the public and with stakeholders, then we need to be able to do the same and listen at committee. If there are recommendations made at committee through the testimony of the witnesses and through the work done by the opposition parties, I think it is an opportunity for us to ensure that we put them into the legislation to make the best law we can for the Northwest Territories.

**Mr. Malcolm Allen (Welland, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the member a question specifically about the amending process in the committee process. Perhaps he could tell us about some of his

experiences that were not in camera, because obviously, if they were in camera, he would not be able to say anything.

I can speak to the experience I had with the agriculture committee, when it came to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, when the government brought forward its latest bill on food safety. We had a series of amendments we actually discussed in an open session, because it was a public session, so I can speak to them.

We proposed a number of amendments that we felt were comprehensive and that would not alter the bill substantively but would actually enhance it. We were actually working with the government to enhance what everyone sees as being correct, which is making a strong piece of legislation on food safety. One would have thought they would want to actually do that. If they left something out of the legislation, would they not want to add it in?

It seems that if we propose it on this side, it is going to be denied. What we have seen is that there is no opportunity, because it is simply voted down.

I hope my colleague has a comment on that.

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my honourable colleague and comment on the fine tartan tie he is wearing today.

Amendments on this side of the House come from testimony from witnesses and stakeholders and from research. They are always thrown away by the government. That is unfortunate.

• (1145)

**Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby—Douglas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Vaudreuil-Soulanges.

I would like to thank the member for Western Arctic for his work on Bill C-15. I have never had the opportunity to be in the north, but I feel that I have been there after speaking with him. He knows that part of Canada intimately and regales us with plenty of stories that let us feel as if we have actually been there ourselves, if we have not had the pleasure. This is why parliaments are essential. They bring people from different parts of the country together to discuss where there is overlap and interest but where there is also disagreement.

A well-functioning Parliament is essential to a well-functioning country. Sometimes I wish this Parliament would function a little better. There are a number of measures before the House, either motions or private members' bills, that I encourage everyone in the House to look at, because we need to make this place work a little better.

I am happy to say that we are supporting Bill C-15 at second reading. We favour devolution for the Northwest Territories. They have pushed for it for a long time, and I am happy to see that we are at least going part of the way to getting this right at the moment. However, there are a number of problems we have with the bill, as my colleagues have pointed out in their speeches. We are looking forward to discussing them at committee.



*Government Orders*

My colleagues here today have offered a robust discussion on the details of the bill, although it would have been nice to have had more comments and speeches from the other parts of the House, because what we are here to do is share and deliberate. Perhaps some of the questions from the other side will help us work through this a little more today.

There are two things I would like to do in my short time. One is to continue what my colleague, the member for Welland, was speaking about, which was the idea of devolution and what it means. To talk about it in normative terms, what is it we try to accomplish by devolving? What are the themes, and what would we look at to determine whether devolution is a success or a failure? Second, if I have time, I will also look at the Yukon, which has been devolved for many decades now. There are lessons we can learn from that territory that perhaps we could transfer to the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, if you have free time on Friday night, there is an article you may want to peruse. It is titled “Assessing Devolution in the Canadian North: A Case Study of the Yukon Territory”, by Alcantara, Cameron, and Kennedy. It is from the academic journal *Arctic*, Volume 65 No. 3, published in September 2002. They actually have a very good case study. They conducted many interviews in the Yukon to ask a number of essential questions and to assess how successful the Yukon had been in devolving its powers. I recommend that to you, Mr. Speaker, and anyone else in the House. Sometimes the ivory tower can be useful, and in this case, it does give a good perspective.

What is devolution? All countries have constitutions, and constitutions lay out who has the ability to distribute resources and make rules. They distribute power within a country. However, if we remove the constitution and just say that we have a whole bunch of people living on a particular land mass, how would we write the rules that would determine who makes decisions?

In some ways, devolution is a reaction to our current constitutional situation. The provinces and the federal government are enshrined in our Constitution. They are actually given, under sections 91 and 92, the statutory authority from the Queen of Canada to execute laws and distribute resources in Canada.

In some ways, territories are not unlike municipalities. Sometimes that offends people, so I want to be clear that, constitutionally, provinces are recognized. They devolve power to the municipalities. Constitutionally, of course, the federal national government is recognized. It devolves power to the territories. However, there are some real differences between territories and municipalities, and there should be. Territories are much more like provinces in nature. For example, as we are seeing in this bill, they have more control over resources, such as a 50% split in the determination of resource revenues, whereas municipalities have much less power.

● (1150)

However, in nature they are similar because both territories and municipalities are not masters of their own fate. Where a province has certain constitutional powers to determine what they want to do without interference from the federal government, territories do not have that luxury.

When the federal government decides what kinds of powers it is going to devolve to territories, and provinces decide what kinds of powers they are going to devolve to municipalities, we have to make sure that the local population is getting the powers and the resources it needs to do the work it needs to do at the local level.

As my colleague from Welland pointed out, devolution has been a major theme around the world, especially in the United Kingdom, for many decades. I had the opportunity when I was living in the U. K. from 1997 to around 2002 to watch as New Labour decided to move ahead with a very aggressive devolution agenda. For example, we had the Good Friday Agreement, which was signed and devolved some powers in Northern Ireland. Considerable powers were also devolved to the Scottish and Welsh legislatures, as well as the City of London, which is treated more in some ways like a province than a city these days.

There was a lot of negotiation about who would get what powers and where. The power to make the change is still with the Queen and with the U.K. Parliament, however these local bodies have become much more autonomous and independent. Universally, across the United Kingdom, this is a good thing. Local people have much more control over their own lives through their own legislatures.

I think devolution continues to be a popular idea, and it should be because, in general, devolution is a good thing. Why would we devolve? What are some of the normative reasons why we might devolve power to a lower level or a government that is closer to the people?

One of the first arguments as to why we would do this is that it increases efficiency. We have heard this from the other side of the House. It does appear in the academic literature. If, for example, there were no territorial government in the Northwest Territories, that would mean all the decisions made in the north would be made from right here in Ottawa. We would debate what is best for northerners with a couple of representatives here in the House, and the vast majority of people who do not live in the north would be making decisions for the north.

That is why a devolved legislature with distinct powers in the north is essential. It allows northerners to make decisions about their own lives. The extent to which these decisions can be made, the decisions that are determined by the federal government and/or the NWT government, is what is at the core of what we are discussing here, both in this act and I am sure, in subsequent acts as we move to devolve more powers.

The argument is that sub-national authorities, here territorial governments, are better positioned to access and make use of local knowledge and context when they are making decisions. If there were no Northwest Territories government and I was asked every few days to make a decision for people in the north, I would feel unprepared to do that, because I have not visited.

This is why it is so great that there is a very well-functioning legislature there. Devolution would lead to more efficiency within government. Therefore, efficiency is one reason to do it.

*Government Orders*

The second reason is that, most importantly, devolution encourages government responsiveness. Local people can hold local representatives to account. The more power that these local politicians and local governments have, the more people will take interest and participate in their own governance.

I will close by looking at voter turnout, for example in the NWT. In the late 1990s, it was around 70%. It was around 60% in the 2000s. Northerners are already very engaged in their own governance. I think devolving will increase interest in governance in the Northwest Territories, and for that reason alone it is a grand idea to devolve powers.

● (1155)

However, I wish that the government would debate more on this. I hope that it will encourage discussion and witnesses to come forward so that we can make sure that we get it right the first time around. This one has been a long time coming. We do not want to wait another 20 or 30 years before we do it again. We have to get it right, now.

I implore the government to at least listen to our side of the House as we move forward with the bill.

**Mr. Malcolm Allen (Welland, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my friend from Sudbury, who mentioned my tie. Just to let folks know, this is the official tartan of my hometown of Glasgow. There is a plug for the European City of the Year in 1998.

Nonetheless, in contrast to how our colleagues on the other side, many of whom come from Alberta, would see the national energy program, which the Liberals hoisted upon them many years ago, how must folks in the north feel? I have been to Yellowknife on occasion. It is a wonderful place. How must they feel, and how would the Conservatives feel if they were under the same sort of program that the folks in the north are when it comes to their resources?

I would love to talk to the member for Fort McMurray—Athabasca about how he would feel if he were under the same sort of a regime in Alberta that the Northwest Territories is going to be under, imposed upon them by this legislation. My guess is that there would probably be a riot in Calgary, but that is of course speculative on my part.

I wonder if my friend could comment on that very issue and the contrast of the two. It would seem to me that in an egalitarian place such as this country, we would want to treat them the same.

**Mr. Kennedy Stewart:** Mr. Speaker, under the Constitution, we are all Canadians. We enjoy the rights that are given to us in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. However, we are not all equal administratively. That is because in the territories, the territorial governments have fewer powers than the provinces.

This is a crucial part of the debate. Where Albertans, British Columbians or people from Ontario have provincial governments that have complete discretion over their resources, the people who live in the territories do not. This has not really been addressed adequately in the bill.

We have mentioned this on a number of occasions. There are, perhaps, pending lawsuits over this in the north, and that worries us

greatly. We want to make sure that we get this right, but we want to make sure that we treat all Canadians equally. Again, this is a concern that we have brought up and would like to discuss more with the government.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, just to follow through on that particular question and to look at the issue of natural resources and resource development within the agreement, there is the idea that a certain percentage would in fact go over to the territories or remain in the territories as the natural resources get developed. It is estimated into the tens of millions of dollars. They will continue to receive transfer payments over and above that.

Does the NDP have a position on what they would like to see as an ultimate goal? Is it talking about 100% of resources that are generated out of the territories staying in the territories? What is the party's position on that?

**Mr. Kennedy Stewart:** Mr. Speaker, the way I look at Canada and all parts of Canada is that all Canadians should be equal, both constitutionally and administratively. The bill is a move in the right direction.

However, I am sure that this issue will come up again and I really hope that we do not take as much time as we have in the past. This has been dragging on way too long. Oddly, there has not been a lot of consultation. Although it has taken a long time under the Conservative government and the previous Liberal government to get the ball rolling on this issue, there has not been as much consultation as there should have been. The Conservatives have had lots of time, but they have not talked to enough people.

We should reverse that next time, make it shorter but make sure that we include more people in the process.

● (1200)

**Mr. Jamie Nicholls (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by thanking the member for Western Arctic for all the work he has done in the House and on the bill, in particular. Here is one man who represents a vast territory and does so very well, above and beyond what I would expect a member to do. He brings his work with him and I have great admiration for him. He brings the issue of Arctic sovereignty to the forefront in an authentically northern way. I will explain what I mean by an “authentically northern way” in my coming words.

It is not easy to represent an authentic northern perspective in the House and that is simply because, save for three seats, the rest of the seats are occupied by people from the south. Therefore, the priorities of the north depend on the voices of their three representatives in the House, of which the member for Western Arctic is one. I commend the member for doing so continuously and doing it to the best of his abilities.

*Government Orders*

I am a southerner, so I have to say right off the bat that my knowledge of the north is limited. The people of the north, from what I understand, embrace a philosophy that integrates people and places in a way that is hard for southerners to sometimes understand. Nevertheless, here we are again in the House making decisions for the north with the majority of MPs being from the south.

In my speech, I will depend more on experts, having said that my knowledge of the north is limited. I have never travelled to the Northwest Territories. I know what I have read in books, but I would like to depend on experts to explore some concepts surrounding devolution. I would first like to discuss Arctic sovereignty. The NDP is in favour of increased sovereign powers for the Northwest Territories. Other of my colleagues have mentioned province-like powers, but I would prefer to use the term “increased sovereign powers”. In doing so, we need to see the north's point of view of Arctic sovereignty.

At this point, I will share a quote with the House by John Ralston Saul. He stated:

Most of the sovereignty debate has been framed in old-fashioned western empire terms: *We have a distant frontier that must be defended. This frontier is ours, not theirs, whoever they may be.* It is only in this context that the people of the North are mentioned, as if the reason for their existence were to serve Canadian sovereignty. There is little sense in all of this that the well-being and success of the people of the North is a purpose in and of itself. And they do not need to be the guarantors of our sovereignty—even though they are—in order to deserve well-being and success. They deserve these exactly as any other Canadian citizen deserves them.

Some of my colleagues touched on the point of equality. In terms of devolution, what are speaking about here today? I have particularly enjoyed Anthony Specca's article in *Policy Options*. He stated:

Devolution means first and foremost that the territories' own elected legislators, not distant southern ministers, make decisions in the local interest over the use and development of lands and resources. Perhaps no less importantly, it also means a share of the substantial revenues those lands and resources may generate.

In exploring those ideas about devolution and Arctic sovereignty, we must talk about what Specca mentioned in his article, which is resources. How will we treat them in this agreement? Again, I point to a quote by John Ralston Saul, which states:

...we are a northern nation. Two thirds of our country lies in what is normally categorized as North lands. One third of our gross domestic product comes out of the three territories and the equally isolated northern parts of our provinces. And that one third is what makes us a rich, not a poor, country.

● (1205)

One-third of our GDP comes from the north. This GDP is largely from the rich natural resources that exist in those territories.

The question we should be asking here surrounding Bill C-15 is this: are we more interested in prosperity for the south or true prosperity for the people of the north? This is an essential question that we should be asking in this House with respect to Bill C-15. I am quite disturbed that government members are not standing up to give speeches, nor are members of the Liberal caucus, because it is a very important question that we should be asking.

In terms of devolution agreements, we have three that are in process. We have had Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut.

What Mr. Specca speaks about in his article is the agreement between Greenland and Denmark. I would like to share with the

House, as briefly as I possibly can, his ideas about the agreement between Greenland and Denmark because of what he mentions in his article in talking about the agreement.

He said:

As a consequence of assuming self-government within the Danish Kingdom, Greenland obtained jurisdiction over not only its abundant onshore mineral deposits—gold, lead, zinc, iron, rare earths, rubies and so on—but also virgin offshore oil and gas fields that the US Geological Survey estimates contain a tremendous 40 to 50 billion barrels of oil equivalent...

He is talking about all of the resources Greenland has.

Mr. Specca said that through Denmark's agreement with Greenland, Greenland was able to realize growth at an astonishing rate. In 2002, the revenues from resources were about zero; they ballooned up to \$600 million in 2010. Through its agreement, Greenland can hope to benefit handsomely from resource revenues in the coming years.

Mr. Specca goes on to say that had Denmark not handed this potential stream of wealth to Greenland, it would have flowed into the treasury of Denmark. Instead, both parties took a long-term view toward the prosperity and progress of the people of Greenland so that they could, in addition to the self-governance powers they got, also realize their own financial revenue and not depend so much on Denmark.

Mr. Specca goes on to say that under the agreement outlined in Bill C-15, the Northwest Territories would not benefit as much as Greenland did from Denmark. We could look to this agreement to see an international perspective on a best practice for providing a better guarantee for the prosperity of the Northwest Territories.

The question I have to ask is this: does this agreement give the Northwest Territories the long-term capacity to guarantee their fiscal capacity to deliver northern-sourced solutions and services to the north, rather than what has happened so often in the past, which unfortunately was the south importing unimaginative southern solutions for northern people? Canada needs to catch up on our northern policy by looking at other circumpolar nations.

I will end with another quote from John Ralston Saul:

When you look at the heavy hand of the South on northern architecture or power systems or education methods or food supply systems, you begin to realize how difficult it has been and remains for the new Arctic leadership in particular to put a northern perspective in place. Not always, but very often, the insistent and unimaginative ideas coming from the South have solved immediate specific difficulties while creating systemic problems.

● (1210)

Mr. Specca also said:

...bargaining over resource revenues is both a political and a fiscal game. Following four years of political preparatory work by a joint commission on Greenlandic self-government, Denmark and Greenland together explicitly took the long view toward Greenland's potential emergence as an independent, postcolonial state, with full sovereign rights over its own lands, resources and the revenues that flow from them.

The NDP will be supporting this bill at this reading, but we will always be there to ensure that Bill C-15 will meet northerners' expectations and to discuss these questions at committee.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, New Democrats have been supportive of the broad concept of devolution of power to the Northwest Territories. As my friend mentioned, the New Democratic member for Western Arctic has been fighting for this since before he was elected to the House.

We had a very good meeting with Premier McLeod a couple of days ago. The challenge that the government has created is around a secondary aspect of land and water use in the Mackenzie Valley. As someone who represents a northern riding, I have a great interest in the government's role in devolving powers and transferring wealth back to northerners.

Too often we see governments recognizing the north only as a place for resource development and wealth generation, while the rights and title of the people who actually live there are often not respected. There is no equivalent transfer back of revenue from the federal government.

In my first year here, we had a study done. It showed that in Skeena, in my riding in northern British Columbia, for every \$10 we were sending out in revenue wealth to the federal coffers, we were getting \$1 back in services over the previous 10 years. It is an enormous imbalance in the way that we manage the affairs of this country. As a result, in the Northwest Territories many services underperform because of a lack of resources.

For once the government seems to be listening to northern communities and saying that the devolution of powers to the territories is a good idea, but it has included a little string back to Ottawa, a little control piece back to the federal minister, who will have final jurisdiction over the MVRMA.

I am wondering what that speaks to in regard to the government. It almost seems there is a hesitation, that there is not complete confidence in the north's ability to govern itself. This is one of the things we want to study at committee.

It particularly pertains to first nations in the north. There will be implications for first nation communities and first nation leaders as to how the land and water are governed. If Ottawa ultimately has the final say in all of these matters, that seems to undermine just a little the effort the government is making here today to finally respect northern and aboriginal communities.

**Mr. Jamie Nicholls:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member and colleague for Skeena—Bulkley Valley for his excellent question, because it touches on the idea of northern people knowing what is best for what happens on their land and with their resources.

As a southerner, I know that I have moved from city to city throughout my career. I have lived in Vancouver, Thunder Bay, and different cities in Canada, and I had a sense of mobility about moving around urban environments in the south.

However, there is a particularly northern perspective, a deep understanding and link with the land, that people in the north have that sometimes we from the south tend not to see. We cannot see from the northern perspective, in fact, because we do not live on that land. We do not live and breathe that land every day of our lives for generations and generations. We have a different perspective.

My feeling is that we should discuss this aspect at committee, because we do need a northern perspective. To add this little string to Ottawa is again holding some kind of southern perspective and imposing southern influence on what should be completely under northern sovereignty.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Francine Raynault (Joliette, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Vaudreuil-Soulanges.

Several of my colleagues know that the Atikamekw Nation is found north of Joliette, at the end of an 85-kilometre logging road. You have to rent a good 4x4 to get there.

Some first nations are concerned about the changes this bill makes. It will be studied in committee, and I truly hope that the government will actually listen to the amendments that witnesses want and that will be moved by the NDP in the best interests of these nations.

I would like to hear what my colleague thinks about that. Does he hope that these peoples' needs will be heard in committee?

• (1215)

**Mr. Jamie Nicholls:** Mr. Speaker, I feel it is critical that we start listening to first nations, both in the south and in the north. They know their land the best. They know the resources. They know what technology is lacking.

For example, snowmobiles are not sophisticated enough to meet the needs in the Arctic. They would have to be imported from Finland to work in that region. They are, however, built by Bombardier.

Finland has a northern policy that includes those living in the far north. We need to do the same, and we can start by listening to the first nations people who live in those territories.

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is important that we recognize right from the get-go the incredible effort of the many who people got involved and participated in a worthwhile project that ultimately allowed us to have this debate today. I am thinking of individuals like Premier Bob McLeod and his group of MLAs in the legislature in Yellowknife, the many first nations, Inuit, Metis and others, different stakeholders, who have a very strong vested interest in ensuring that good, solid policy decisions are being made.

I want to, first, recognize their efforts in that sense of commitment to give us a stronger and healthier Canada.

When I reflect upon my younger years, a number of years ago, in high school, I would get a sense of pride when we pulled down the map of Canada. It is a massive country land wise. I think we are number two in the world. Russia, I believe, is the only country that has more land mass than Canada. We all have our own sense of pride. I am from Manitoba and I am very proud of that. I love my city. I am a very strong nationalist. I am a Canadian first and foremost.

*Government Orders*

However, when we look at the map, we see that vast land to the north. At that time, the Northwest Territories looked quite different. We have seen some changes, even since I was in high school.

However, once all is said and done, I recognize, even as a high school student, that there is this great vast beautiful part of Canada, which I believe has so much opportunity into the future, not only for those who live in the Northwest Territories but for all Canadians.

As we become mobile as a society, we understand and appreciate all regions of our country, whether it is the prairie lands in Saskatchewan, Manitoba and a bit in Alberta, or our mountains in British Columbia, or the Shield in northern Ontario, or those beautiful cliffs and the Atlantic Ocean out east, or that vast land up to the north, which has so much to offer.

We are finding that more and more Canadians want to visit the north, and for good reason.

We can talk about the beauty of nature where we have things such as caribou, polar bears, bald eagles and great fishing. When I was in the military, there was often talk about the Arctic char on the Herby runs and how they would try to bring it back. When I was serving in the Canadian Forces, I had the opportunity to travel to Yellowknife. It was an absolutely beautiful sunny day. It was an incredible flight, but a little noisy. It does get a little noisy in the back of a Hercules aircraft. However, there were windows, so we saw how truly amazing this beautiful land was. However, it is not only the nature, even though the nature is very important.

I like to think that all political parties truly care about what happens up north. Talking of the beauty of the Northwest Territories, there is the Tuktoyaktuk National Park, which has been on the books for many years. It was first recognized as a park in the making, because we had to respect all sort of other issues. We could not just proclaim that this was a park. However, it was an area that was identified for the development of a national park at some point, and it was designated that back in 1971 by Pierre Elliott Trudeau.

● (1220)

This ultimately came to fruition under Jean Chrétien in the mid-1990s. Paul Martin had something to do with the negotiating with first nations dealing with that park. All individuals will recognize that there is so much beauty in the north and it does need to be bragged and boasted about. We should feel very good about the Northwest Territories and what it has to offer all Canadians.

We also need to recognize the importance of ensuring it has the tools to do the types of things that many of us take for granted. I go back to my high school years. I knew it was a territory, but back then I made the assumption it would operate in the same fashion as a province.

There is a substantial difference. Provinces are incorporated into the Constitution as a provincial entity with certain powers under the jurisdiction of provincial control. It is quite different for the territories. The territories have had to evolve and the evolution has been somewhat slow, but one has to be careful as they evolve.

The bill before us will assist with that. There are some things that we take for granted. I have often made reference to the fact that I was an MLA for a number of years. We dealt with the delivery of health

care, which is a provincial jurisdiction, and public education, again a provincial jurisdiction. We have had that for many years at the provincial level. It has not been that many years that the Northwest Territories has taken ownership or more responsibility in those areas.

Today, as we have seen in the past, we are seeing more power or authority being shifted over to the Northwest Territories. We see that as a good thing. We have had some incredible individuals, like Larry Bagnell, who I did not have the opportunity to know for very long. From discussions I have had with others in the caucus, I know he was an individual who contributed a great deal in making people aware of what was taking place.

We have an incredible critic from Labrador, who is a very strong advocate for the north and northern development. That is really what we are starting to see with this bill. The emphasis or the big push on this is about northern development, along with the natural resources and how revenue might be dealt with.

These are very important issues. As someone had pointed out earlier, this is something provinces have had for a good number of years, virtually since Confederation. It is only natural that we would see more movement toward it.

When the Liberal Party critic spoke on the bill, it was indicated very clearly that we would like to see the bill go to the committee stage. We believe the bill ultimately makes a positive difference. It takes a step in the right direction. I say that because of the idea of the federal transfer of authority, dealing with our natural resources. It is something that is long overdue. Because we are going to allow it more at that local level, as a result what we will likely see is more development taking place.

● (1225)

When I say more development, it is important we recognize that it is of a sustainable nature. We will see that because there will be more local input from the individuals who are there, who live and call the Northwest Territories their home. They are very much aware of their environment and obviously care about it.

It is great to see that we appear to have an agreement that would allow for the sharing of the revenues being generated. The actual dollar amount, I understand, is based on percentage, but two things need to be highlighted.

One is in regard to the royalties or percentage of revenue that is generated from resources, which will be a significant amount of money. We are talking about tens of millions of dollars that would remain in the territories, which is great news for a wide variety of reasons.

Equally important is to recognize that Canada continues to provide those transfer payments. The transfer payments play a critical role in ensuring there is equity among Canadians no matter where they live in the country. That is why it does not matter whether one is from a territory, province or whatever part of our vast land, those transfer payments play a critical role. From my perspective, in terms of social development, it is absolutely critical. It is great that we have had some comments highlighting the fact that there will be an ongoing transfers of dollars coming from Ottawa.

*Government Orders*

One of the things we need to have more dialogue on is the amount of money generated from the natural resources and the exportation of them. Not only does the Government of the Northwest Territories have a vested interest, but the Canadian government does as well. We are very much interested in hearing some thoughts and ideas, which is one of the reasons I posed the questions I did to my New Democratic colleagues. This will be one of those sticky issues and it will be interesting to hear today and in the future of what happens regarding the percentage or share of the revenue that will remain in the north compared to coming to Ottawa. It is important to know.

The second point I would like to highlight is the idea that through the proposed legislation we will be reforming the way in which we review resource development.

I have listened to questions and comments and I have had the opportunity to do a very limited amount of study on the issue, but there are a number of first nation communities that are also part of the agreement. From what I understand, there are still some outstanding issues that have not been resolved. As much as we want government to ensure it is doing the type of consultation necessary to build that consensus, we will have to wait and see what happens at the committee stage on this point.

From a personal perspective, I approach it with an open mind when the government says that it has *X* number of regional committees that are dealing with land development and its concept is to reduce that number to one, which has raised serious concern.

• (1230)

I have seen amalgamation of other boards. In Manitoba, we had a very heated debate when it came time to amalgamate school divisions. It was believed that having one larger board would be in the best interests of all Manitobans in that particular region, but it was a very emotional time and there was a great deal of protest. However, ultimately the NDP government felt it was important to do it. We will have to wait and see what takes place on that issue.

Whenever community input is reduced or removed, concerns will be raised. We want to hear arguments as to why the Conservatives felt that going down to one board was in the best interests of the Northwest Territories, and to what degree they have a consensus of support that would allow us to be favourable of that aspect of it.

One final comment is that within the legislation there are amendments to the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act. They are quite significant, because resource development and regional land and water boards could have been incorporated into the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act. An argument could be made that we would have been better off to have two pieces of legislation before us. As has been pointed out, it would be great to see government members expand on the legislation and provide more clarification on that issue. On the surface, one could easily say that it would have been better to have, at the very least, two pieces of legislation, since this bill would have an impact on 35 or 40 other pieces of legislation, which is quite significant in itself.

I conclude my remarks by stating very clearly that I am a big of fan of the Northwest Territories. It reminds me of Churchill in my home province. When I think of the north, I think of wonderful opportunities. I am not just talking about it from an economic point

of view, but also from a tourism point of view. I realize that economics and tourism are tied, but there are many Canadians who truly value the Northwest Territories and how it contributes to the greater community of the country of Canada.

I am not suggesting that it is possible for VIA Rail to go all the way up to Yellowknife today, but I am sure that if we were able to provide an opportunity sometime in the distant future, we would have many more Canadians travelling to places like Yellowknife and the many different communities in and around the Northwest Territories. The point is that it is a beautiful land.

We look forward to the bill being passed. We give accolades to the many different stakeholders involved in bringing forward the legislation. We hope to see more from the government in answer to specific questions, and we anticipate that government members will be open to amendments at the committee stage to add strength to the bill and build upon the consensus that was achieved with the Northwest Territories legislature, which is a beautiful building in itself.

• (1235)

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault (Sudbury, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for his statement and for the little bit of a history lesson about how long ago he was in high school. That was quite enjoyable.

The hon. member brought up a very good point. I ask members to bear with me for one second. Bill C-15 is an act to replace the Northwest Territories Act, to implement certain provisions of the Northwest Territories Lands and Resources Devolution Agreement, and to repeal or make amendments to the Territorial Lands Act, the Northwest Territories Waters Act, the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act, other acts, and certain orders and regulations.

What we have in here is a lot. There are a lot of acts that we need to study and look at. The member brought up a very good point by asking if we should not have considered having at least two bills brought forward to the House for debate.

It is really important. We are hearing from many first nations, Metis, and Inuit groups that they are concerned about the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act and what is going to happen.

The member talked about having two bills. Those are things that we should be able to discuss in this debate and at least at committee.

That said, I would like to ask my hon. colleague a question. If we are not able to make the necessary changes right now and if in five years there is a call for review of these changes to the MVRMA, would he and his party be in favour of transferring more authority to the Northwest Territories to ensure that some of these concerns could be addressed?

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, the impact of the legislation in its entirety would be quite significant. It would have a significant impact on future generations not only in the Northwest Territories but also in the other territories. I believe, first and foremost, that the government should have brought in at least two pieces of legislation. It would have been a little bit easier for us to digest and proceed with, and having a review would be a responsible thing to do.

*Government Orders*

One of the things that I appreciate is that my leader has made reference to how consensus is achieved in the Yukon and in the Northwest Territories and how politics are pushed to the side. If we did a true review, we could probably enhance the legislation in the future so that everyone would benefit from better legislation after we have had time to assess what has taken place after this bill is passed.

• (1240)

**Mr. John Carmichael (Don Valley West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to add comment to my colleague's comments and those of this morning.

This bill responds to calls from the territorial government, aboriginal groups, and industry to provide northerners with greater control over their lands and resources and to improve regulatory processes across the north. Bill C-15 is a necessary step to implement devolution of management of lands and resources for the Northwest Territories and has a target effective date of April 2014 in the action plan to improve northern regulatory regimes.

Aspects of the amendments to the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act are required to implement devolution, thus making it necessary for this legislation to be considered together as one. In order for regulatory improvement initiatives to be fully implemented, all parties of the devolution agreement agreed that it was desirable to have this piece of legislation remain federal at this time and to utilize delegation as a model to implement devolution, with a full review of this model after five years.

I hope this clarifies the situation.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, one thing I would do is follow the lead of the Liberal Party member for Labrador, who is quite a bit more familiar with the legislation.

It has been pointed out, and this is not to call the member's statements into question, that we would have had a better opportunity to have more stakeholder involvement had there been two pieces of legislation, given the very nature of the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act. That is something that has been pointed out to us.

When all is said and done, we have recognized the importance of moving forward with this legislation. That is why we have indicated that we support the legislation. What we hope is that the government will recognize the co-operation that it is getting from the Liberal Party. If we feel that there is a necessity to bring in amendments that would give more strength to the legislation, we hope that the government in turn will be open to and support positive amendments that would make it an even healthier piece of law at the end of the day.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Laurin Liu (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we know that the hon. member has significant political experience. Before being elected to Parliament, he was involved in Manitoban provincial politics. He knows that during the 13 years the Liberals were in power, nothing was done about transferring power to the people of the Northwest Territories.

Was it not a priority for the Liberal government or did it simply refuse to listen to the people of the Northwest Territories? I would like to put that question to the member.

An NDP government would certainly listen to the concerns of the people of the Northwest Territories and would not do what the former Liberal government did.

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I do not agree with the assessment. The member does not recognize that there was devolution of power dealing with health care and education. Things of that nature do not occur overnight. Even a transition of government from one party to another does not happen overnight. There is no magic wand, except maybe in the minds of a few individuals. It takes time to move forward. It would be wonderful to see more happening, and I suspect that we will, but it will take some time.

We do not have to make any apologies. I made reference to the recognition of a park by Pierre Elliott Trudeau. That was back in 1972. I suspect that from the late 1880s all the way up to today, there were individuals who had a very caring attitude for the north. I will plug my leaders, whether it was Jean Chrétien, Paul Martin, or Pierre Elliott Trudeau, all of whom had a very caring attitude for the north and had dialogue with the Northwest Territories and the other territories. In fact, we even believed in having first ministerial conferences, and there were involvements through that mechanism.

New Democrats have to be fairer in their questions. Yesterday one of the hon. member's colleagues posed the question of what the Liberal Party had done for first nations. I made reference to the Kelowna accord, which was a huge achievement by the Liberal Party. It was the most significant consultation of first nations and other stakeholders in decades.

I am very proud of the history of the Liberal Party in the development of our country as a nation, including the Northwest Territories.

• (1245)

**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Marc-Aurèle-Fortin.

It is an honour to rise in the House to speak to Bill C-15, an act to replace the Northwest Territories Act, to implement certain provisions of the Northwest Territories Lands and Resources Devolution Agreement and to repeal or make amendments to the Territorial Lands Act, the Northwest Territories Waters Act, the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act, other Acts and certain orders and regulations, at second reading. I say it is an honour because the goal of devolution has been one that so many people in the Northwest Territories have fought and worked for over many years.

Last year I had the opportunity to meet with the Premier of the Northwest Territories, Premier Robert McLeod. He actually came to my home province of Manitoba for the Manitoba Festival, which is an indigenous music festival that profiles the amazing musical talent of the Northwest Territories. I had a chance to hear a bit from Mr. McLeod about the hard work that he and his team have done to get to this day.

*Government Orders*

I also want to acknowledge my colleague and friend, the member of Parliament for the Northwest Territories, who has worked tremendously hard on this initiative as well. He has been a solid representative and an extremely important spokesperson on the issues that matter to the people of the Northwest Territories.

I understand the issue, not only as a member of Parliament but also on a personal level. I understand the importance of the concept of devolution, autonomy and, not just self-respect, but the acknowledgement of the respect that is due to the people of the north. I say that because I myself am from the north. I represent the region known as Churchill, in northern Manitoba, but I am also from there. I was born in Thompson. I grew up in the north and I have a very acute understanding, an understanding that so many of us northerners share, of the way in which the north is often marginalized. It is marginalized overtly and covertly in so many ways.

I will give a few examples. Number one, we in the north are very much aware how important services are to us in northern Canada, like any Canadian; for example, health care. We also know that in the north it is oftentimes, unfortunately, more difficult to access the basic health care that is required, especially compared to that of our urban neighbours. What ends up happening is that we have fewer doctors. Sometimes when we have nurses, it is more difficult to have the same nurses come. We have many people who come in and out, who stay for a while and then leave, so it is impossible for us to build relationships with the people who care for us when we need them most. We also find that in terms of health care infrastructure it is a tremendous challenge. While in provincial jurisdiction communities in the north there is definitely an effort to invest in health care infrastructure in an equitable way, if one drives a few minutes down the road and spends some time on a first nation, which is federal jurisdiction, one understands how northern first nations in particular suffer as a result of their geographic location and the way systemic racism has come into play.

We understand that in health care, for example, we in the north have certain struggles, and we struggle more than people in southern Canada in some respects. However, what we also know in the other sense is that it is difficult to find health care services. It is also difficult to see the kind of infrastructure funding we need. If one lives in northern Canada—and anyone who has visited northern Canada knows—it takes a while to get to places. Communities are far away from each other and populations are spread out.

• (1250)

However, that does not mean that people do not need to leave. People need to leave on a regular basis for health care. People need to leave for education. In fact, young people in many of the communities I represent have to leave after grade 9 or grade 10 to finish their high school in an urban centre. People need to leave to go for post-secondary education or training. People need to leave to visit their families. People also need to leave to buy basic necessities, such as food and goods they cannot access in their communities or are too expensive in their communities. That means infrastructure that links them is extremely important.

I would argue that perhaps the greatest gap in terms of the reality that northerners face is the way in which infrastructure across the

Canadian north is often subpar compared to that in the south. We can talk about gravel roads and roads that need to be fixed up, but we can also talk about the fact that many communities across the north do not even have roads to speak of. Unfortunately, the common thread throughout the story is federal inaction and, frankly, neglect when it comes to partnering with the province and partnering on first nations.

The irony is that a tremendous amount of wealth comes out of northern Canada. It comes out of the communities I represent and the territories—Nunavut, the Northwest Territories and the Yukon. It comes out of northern Canada as a whole. That wealth comes through mining, hydroelectric development, forestry and development. That creates a tremendous amount of wealth in terms of revenue for government and corporate wealth. It does create jobs in our communities but often not in a sustainable way or in a way where training is part of the deal so that people are able to have long-term, stable employment, can learn from their work and go on to better themselves and work in other workplaces. Unfortunately, that wealth is often not shared with the communities that help to produce that wealth.

I can certainly share countless examples in my neighbourhood in the north where that is very obviously the case. Perhaps the most stark is the way in which so many first nations still live in third world conditions and yet are surrounded by some of the richest deposits of minerals or oil. Companies make great profits off these deposits, and yet there is no understanding that first nations, on whose territory these people are working, ought to be part of the deal, both in terms of revenue and long-term benefits.

This brings me to the point that northerners best understand their experience. They understand that this relationship, which has been supported by the federal government, where the decisions are made in Ottawa, where the wealth often goes back to Ottawa and is not returned to northern communities, must be fixed. We have an opportunity to do that, but unfortunately the work is not done. We are debating this bill at second reading, and New Democrats support this bill at second reading, but we have said very clearly that we need to look at the gaps and particularly at the way in which the federal government, unfortunately, continues to play a big brother role in this relationship, a relationship that some people use the word “colonialism” to describe, a sentiment that has been very much felt throughout recent years.

New Democrats want to make sure that this approach to devolution, something that so many people in the territories want, is free of that top-down approach, the approach that insinuates that the federal government does not trust the people of the Northwest Territories to govern themselves or make the right decisions for themselves. We believe that the federal government, which has done serious work on this file, needs to take this to the final stage, where a devolution agreement can be the best it can be and the best possible deal for the people of the Northwest Territories, an arrangement that agrees that the people, the first nations and the Government of the Northwest Territories must be the ones to make the decisions for the betterment of themselves and all of us.



*Government Orders*

•(1255)

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague has a real breadth of understanding on issues in the far north, representing a region in northern Manitoba very similar to my own in some ways. I was interested in her reference to the colonial mentality of this Conservative government and its attitude of rip-and-ship resources. It believes that its only obligation as a federal government is to get at the resources as quickly as possible, leaving no benefits for the communities. The lack of infrastructure in the first nation communities in all of our north is an international disgrace that has been recognized. Canada has now fallen to about 60th place in terms of looking after the needs of first nations children.

I would like to ask my hon. colleague this. Within the community she represents, does she have the same experience that we are seeing in James Bay, where the communities are wanting to move forward and be part of the development of their region but are basically being kept under the thumb of a colonial attitude that is about taking out the resources and leaving the community in very substandard and sometimes squalid conditions?

**Ms. Niki Ashton:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for sharing the experience of the people in his constituency. His voice and solidarity with the first nations people who he represents is something that I know inspires many people across the country.

I am proud of the work that we in the NDP have done as a party in making it clear that our priority is to work with first nations on a nation-to-nation relationship and to break down or crush this colonial history, to put it behind us. Unfortunately, it is a colonial history that continues through the child and family system, through the way in which education is being underfunded on first nations, through the way in which the government refuses to call a national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women, through the way in which so many pieces of first nations legislation are being rammed through this House, and currently through committee, in the way first nations are not consulted.

This is an opportunity for the government to show leadership, to break free from the shackles of history, shackles that unfortunately have only strengthened through its governance.

First nations people want and are striving for change. The federal government needs to either be with them or be left as a relic of history if it is not part of that change.

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault (Sudbury, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from Churchill for her, as usual, great speech and debate in the House.

I am proud to be part of a party that has so many representatives from the northern parts of our country. Although I say that I am a northerner from Sudbury, that is in the perspective of Ontario. However, when we look at the great mass of our country, the north takes on a different perspective.

One of the interesting points I heard my colleague talk about throughout her speech was the importance of listening to first nations, Metis and Inuit people from right across the country. We do have some concerns being expressed now by many first nations and aboriginal people from the Northwest Territories in relation to the

Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act and to all of the appointments being named by one minister.

We are in a time where we need to change the way we deal and work with first nations and aboriginal peoples right across the country.

I would like to hear my hon. colleague's comments as to what we can do to further enhance that with relation to the agreements we are seeing in today's bill.

•(1300)

**Ms. Niki Ashton:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague is indeed a northerner. I am proud to be able to work with him in fighting for northern Canadians.

There is no question that consultation is about listening. However, incorporating and acting on what we have heard is absolutely essential.

I want to read into the record the words of MLA Bob Bromley from the Northwest Territories, who said:

The federal government's proposal to collapse the regional land and water boards into one big board is disturbing, unnecessary and possibly unconstitutional.

...a single board does nothing to meet the real problem: failure of implementation.

There are other comments. There are people who have made constructive proposals for this bill. We hope the government will choose to do the right thing, listen to the people of the Northwest Territories and make this the best devolution agreement, a model devolution agreement, as northern people deserve it to be.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alain Giguère (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Bill C-15 is one of the first government bills aimed at rethinking our entire approach to the far north. It is particularly important because the far north is poised to become one of Canada's economic engines, if it is not one already.

So much remains to be done in terms of infrastructure and support for the local population. It will be important to review all of the issues that affect the people who live in that territory.

It is quite normal for the people there to want the economy of their region to be developed in a way that benefits them first and foremost, whether from an economic, environmental, social or structural standpoint.

Canada needs to make massive investments in aviation safety. These territories are so vast that everything must be done by plane. Air transportation is therefore a fact of life, and it will be essential that we discuss it sooner or later.

I would remind the House that the riding of Western Arctic is the same size as western Europe.

When the member for Western Arctic wants to visit his constituents, he has no choice but to do so by plane. Furthermore, he cannot hope to meet with everyone in all the communities in one day, or even in one week. There are too many small, remote villages. Too often he has to travel.

*Government Orders*

The marine mapping of the area has not been done. We often talk about the Northwest Passage, but it is important to emphasize that, as a sovereign nation, Canada has not yet mapped its Arctic coastline. This poses a problem in terms of territorial sovereignty, particularly when it is disputed.

I would remind the House that Denmark and the United States are disputing Canada's right of passage in its own waters. Russia, the United States and Denmark have launched border disputes regarding the 200 nautical mile exclusive economic zone. The government needs to have a closer look at these issues.

Bill C-15 deals specifically with the transfer of certain powers from the federal government to the Government of the Northwest Territories.

The NDP applauds and approves of this important first step. We hope that it will not be the last. It will allow these communities to take charge of their own futures, which only makes sense. Local officials, elected by the people, are in the best position to understand the specific problems and difficulties these communities face with regard to housing, infrastructure, access to drinking water, educational institutions and the preservation of their culture. These are all rather important things. In this regard, it is true that we support this first step.

Of course, we hope to be able to present amendments. We hope that all of the committee members will listen to what we have to say so that recommendations are considered on their merit and not on the basis of a party line, which all too often results in a failure to listen to the witnesses who appear before the committee.

The Northwest Territories know best how their resources should be used, and they should have the final say in that regard.

These people will have to ask themselves the following questions: should we empty our mines in 10 years or should we extract the materials more gradually over a period of 50 years in a way that is more advantageous to the local community?

• (1305)

How will the waste generated from the development of these natural resources be disposed of? These issues are of particular interest to the Northwest Territories. They do not want a small but immediate gain at the cost of a huge environmental, generational and financial deficit later on.

I sincerely believe that if all hon. members explained this bill to their provinces, it would not pass. We would not allow our respective provinces to be limited in the ways this bill will limit the Northwest Territories.

I would like to remind hon. members that there is a significant limitation on the transfer of powers and revenues from development. The Government of the Northwest Territories will keep up to 50% of the revenues from the development of resources on public land and the Government of Canada will keep the rest. On the one hand, the government is saying that the territory is entitled to only 50% of the spinoffs and, on the other, it is saying that the territory can receive a set maximum amount.

I would like to know whether any of us would agree to let such a limitation be imposed on the government of his or her province. I can guarantee that the answer would be a resounding no, from British Columbia all the way to Newfoundland. This is probably the most questionable feature of the bill. Fortunately, this is just the first piece of legislation. In five years, it will be accompanied by other laws and a review of our overall approach to the far north as it relates to first nations communities.

I will tell this House right now that these people will not agree to have the government give them just part of the whole. If they have a right to democracy, then they have it fully and completely. Infrastructure should be tailored to their needs. As for airlines and distribution centres, they want them at home because they want these jobs to be created at home. This makes sense, because these are well-paying jobs, just like the jobs in the mines.

Currently, the business practice is to establish a mine and a residential centre—not a town or hospitals, but rather a huge hotel where the mine's employees stay for two weeks and then take a plane home to Montreal, Sept-Îles, Toronto or Windsor, where they stay for another two weeks.

Therefore, northerners do not have these jobs and do not benefit from them in any way; everything is shipped by air or by boat from the large ports of Montreal, Vancouver and Halifax, or from major airports like Toronto, Winnipeg and Edmonton. How do they benefit from this? Aside from seeing the ships carrying ore go by under their noses, there is no advantage for them.

We will therefore support this first step because it is useful and, at least, finally gives this government the authority to assume and define the interests of the local population itself.

I would like to remind the House that global warming also affects the far north. Moreover, and all meteorologists agree, nowhere in the world does global warming have a greater impact than in the Canadian Arctic. Global warming can even damage infrastructure. If we put a road on the permafrost as it thaws, the road will be destroyed.

I thank all the members for listening to my speech and I hope they will listen just as carefully to the witnesses' recommendations.

• (1310)

[*English*]

**Mr. Mark Strahl (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as chance would have it, I just came from the aboriginal affairs committee, where we listened to witnesses from the Northwest Territories on this very bill. Minister Miltenberger was very clear that they support this bill in its current form, and they are urging us to pass it as quickly as possible. While the New Democrats talk about listening to the witnesses, I suspect that they will not like what Mr. Miltenberger had to say or what Premier McLeod had to say earlier in the day at the Senate energy committee, before he had to return home.

*Government Orders*

Given that the Government of the Northwest Territories is enthusiastically urging this body to pass the bill as soon as possible so that we can meet the April 1, 2014 deadline, will the New Democrats commit today to taking that witness testimony into account? Will the New Democrats review the blues of today's committee meeting, where the minister and the premier systematically picked apart the arguments of the member for Western Arctic? It was a beautiful thing to behold. I would invite them to take a look at them and agree with those witnesses and listen to those witnesses, who want this passed right now.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alain Giguère:** Mr. Speaker, the government's representative is a bit hostile.

Mr. McLeod said a lot of things. He said that this assembly had a vision for a prosperous and sustainable territory. Did my colleague hear that? The Conservatives only hear what they want to hear. Perhaps they should also listen to what people are saying.

One day, the Conservatives will have to sit down and recognize that these people are partners. They want to become partners and that is their right. The government should listen to them and do what they are asking. They should not simply listen to what they want to hear.

In the Standing Committee on Finance, the Minister of Health and Social Services for the Northwest Territories begged for help with hospitals and with reducing the suicide rate.

What was the government's response? We are still waiting.

• (1315)

[*English*]

**Ms. Yvonne Jones (Labrador, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I, like many members in the House of Commons, have had the opportunity to meet with the Premier of the Northwest Territories and his ministers. They have stressed to us the urgency of ensuring that the bill before the House passes. However, it is also fair to say that they made comments with regard to whether this bill would accomplish everything they have set out to do under devolution. They see room for improvement, but they are operating under the premise that this is a living document and that changes can be made.

Has the minister who spoke earlier consulted with the Premier and the ministers of the Northwest Territories, and has he sought their views on where they stand on this bill?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alain Giguère:** Mr. Speaker, I am honoured that the member for Labrador called me a minister. I am sure that will happen in 2015.

The entire government, including the official opposition, is prepared to act quickly. However, acting quickly does not mean acting hastily. We must not take action without considering the recommendations that have been made.

Wasting our time on unproductive debates does not speed things up, just as taking time to listen to people who come to testify and then giving them an answer does not drag out the debate.

[*English*]

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to rise on behalf of the people of Timmins—James

Bay to speak to this important bill, Bill C-15, on the issues of devolution and the further development of the far north.

Through representing a far north region in Ontario, I really appreciate and understand the importance of the devolution of power to the communities and regions that are very different from the rest of Canada, and that they be allowed and given the tools they need to advance.

Unfortunately, the government has failed on so many levels in dealing with issues of the far north. In my own region we see complete failure of infrastructure in community after community in the far north. The Conservatives' only attitude is very colonial. They want the resources, and they want them out as fast as they can get them. They treat the people who live there like they are a subject population.

I see also how they bungle these projects, because their idea of fast is to try to get things as quickly as possible without thinking about the need to develop the economy in any sustainable, long-term or cohesive manner. I point to the bungling of the Ring of Fire.

The Ring of Fire is in my region of Timmins—James Bay. It may be one of the largest mining discoveries in the last half century, \$3.3 billion of value at this point. There is an important need to get it right because we have seen how often things have been done wrong.

Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Joliette.

In my own region where I live in Cobalt, I see the poisoned lakes. I see all the wealth that was taken out of communities such as Cobalt. Not a single paved road was left in any of Coleman Township, which at one time was the richest municipality in all of Canada. I have seen the cave-ins from the mines that were left. I see that all across northern Ontario and northern Quebec, wherever I travel.

The idea was that we would take the resources out and leave the communities behind with whatever they could get by on. I look at the issue of devolution in terms of the revenue agreement. In the far north of Ontario, all our resources go to Queen's Park. We have one of the richest diamond mines in the world right near the impoverished little community of Attawapiskat. All the royalties from that mine go to Queen's Park, yet the people of Attawapiskat are basically living in shacks on top of each other. They do not even have the room to build a proper townsite. We would have to get that permission from the province. If we asked the Province of Ontario about Attawapiskat, we would be told it is not Ontario's responsibility, because those are federal people. Of course, the feds have shown a complete disinterest in Attawapiskat.

It is amazing, nobody else lives up there except the Mushkego Cree. They do not even have access to their own land. As one woman in Kashechewan told me, it is like being raised in a prisoner of war camp in her community. There are little postage stamp communities, while the vast resources around them are controlled by the province, which takes the resources out and they are sent to southern Ontario, paving the roads down there. The issue of devolution and the development of communities is something we really understand.

*Government Orders*

Going back to the Ring of Fire, the minister from Muskoka was to be our great leader on this. He was to be the man who got it all done, just like he got everything else done around here, and Cliffs has walked away from the project. They said they are tired of the lack of action, the lack of planning. The first nation communities are still sitting at the table saying they need the environmental issues dealt with. What happened to the big leadership of the member for Parry Sound—Muskoka? He shrugs and says it was a provincial responsibility.

That was not what the Conservatives were saying a few months ago when it looked like they would try to get some of the glory of the Ring of Fire. We notice that the issue of the Ring of Fire is vital for the development of northern Ontario, sustainable, planned, ensuring that the rivers and the lakes are not polluted, putting a proper road and transportation system in, working with the provincial Ontario Northland Railway to get a railway in there, to build sustainability. The feds walked. They blew it.

We have a motion at committee to look at the Ring of Fire, to find out what happened. However, the Conservatives go in camera and kill the study of the Ring of Fire, the same men and women who stand up and say they are the defenders of resource development and they understand the economy. They only understand their excuses when they blow it.

I am very interested in the issue of devolution, but there are some issues that have been raised that are very concerning. One is the amendment on the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act, which would create the environmental screening process for the Northwest Territories. The amendment will replace the current structure of regional land and water boards, which were created through land claims final agreements with the Northwest Territory aboriginal governments, with a single board.

• (1320)

Here is the kicker. The amendments also reserve to the federal minister the approval of all land and water usage in the Northwest Territories, which could easily circumvent the powers that were transferred to the first nation communities through devolution. Would any Canadian trust any minister on that side to do the right thing when it comes to water management or land management?

Let us just look at what the Conservatives did in their last omnibus bill. They stripped the environmental protections for 99.997% of all lakes and rivers in this country. Why is that? It was so they could push pipelines through faster, so they do not have to worry about the shut-off valves and can just go through any of the waterways.

It is funny. There are only 97 waterways that are still protected in this country. The rest of it is open season for these guys. If someone wants to dump tailings or run a pipeline through, this is their baby. Out of the 97 lakes and rivers that are protected, 12 of them are in the riding of the Muskoka minister. Lake Rosseau where Goldie Hawn gets her feet wet in the summertime, that property is protected. Twelve lakes in his riding are protected.

Do members know how many waterways in Quebec are protected? Four. In the massive region of Quebec, four are protected. The member for Parry Sound—Muskoka squirrels away 12 so that he can be happy with all his rich friends down at the cottage, and

maybe they will invite him over to the barbecue and he will get Jeff Bridges' autograph. Twelve, that is the same as what the Conservatives have reserved for the entire province of British Columbia.

This is about a government that has turned environmental protection and planning into an absolute mockery, which is why Canada is seen more and more as an international outlier. While the Liberals and Conservatives go down to Washington to try to promote the Keystone XL pipeline and outdo each other, our reputation is that this is a government and a third party that no one wants to deal with. The government has systematically undermined and trashed environmental standards so that its friends with the big oil agenda can get things as fast as they want, as quick as they want, and it is too bad about the planet.

We want to move towards devolution but we do not want to see anyone on that side able to put their fingers into the development of waterways and the environment in the far north. We know that the Conservatives' only attitude is to get it as quickly as possible, and too bad about the next generation.

I want to go back to the lakes and rivers, and the importance of it. Our friend, the Muskoka minister, who blew the ring of fire, was the man who allowed Vale and Xstrata to take control of the two greatest mining companies that Canada has produced, the international giants, Inco and Falconbridge. They were pretty much run into the ground under his watch.

The man who has grabbed 12 out of the 100 lakes to protect for his rich friends, is he not the same guy who took \$50 million of border infrastructure money that should have been used to stop gangs and guns from coming across the border? What did he do? He was building fake lighthouses in Muskoka with it. Of course there was no paper trail.

Normally people who take money like that and spend it in such an egregious fashion get the bounce. In the government, if someone is that bad, they get promoted. He is now the President of the Treasury Board, the man who is supposed to ensure that everyone else accounts for their dollars. We see him kicking the crap out of the poor civil service, blaming them, going after them and going after their pensions.

Here is the man who took \$50 million and does not have a piece of paper that he can show for it. Then, of course, we did find there was a lot of paper in his office, he just pretended there was not. We managed to find that through access to information.

These are not the kind of people we want to allow anywhere near environmental planning. We want to keep them away. We have to have some sort of ring fencing to keep them away and to keep their hands off it.

We think devolution is really important, but devolution has to be based on the principle that it is the people on the ground, the people in the far north, who should always have the final decision-making about what happens in their region.

*Government Orders*

•(1325)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** Before we go to questions and comments, just a reminder to all hon. members that the House has certain practices in terms of naming and referring to other members and or ministers in the House. We tend to want to stick to those, or it is a good idea to stick to those conventions in the course of referring to other hon. members.

Questions and comments.

**Mr. Rob Clarke (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this morning I got to sit on the aboriginal affairs committee where we had the NWT provide testimony. It was quite interesting to hear some individuals, especially the member for Western Arctic who is astonishingly out of touch.

The devolution with the negotiations were 25 years in the making. With regard to the regulations it required five years of negotiation. However, when I look at the report that was released by the member for Western Arctic, I believe early this week or last month, it says, “Resource extraction does little to address the increasing cost of living and socioeconomic inequalities faced by Northerners”. The report also recommends changes at the federal level that would redistribute wealth in the NWT.

The member is asking for taxes. However, if we look at northern Saskatchewan, resource development has created a unique area. Saskatchewan is now a “have” province. Here we have a member who does not want to see resource development create wealth for NWT.

Why would the member across the aisle not support economic development, which would help first nations, aboriginals and non-aboriginals prosper?

**Mr. Charlie Angus:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for his question and say I am sorry that maybe he needs subtitles when we are speaking so he can follow along. He could follow the bouncing ball to understand the importance of involving the people on the ground. Again, it is a sort of selective understanding. The Conservatives only hear what they want to hear when they want to hear it.

Bob Bromley, the MLA in the region, said:

The federal government’s proposal to collapse the regional land and water boards into one big board is disturbing, unnecessary and possibly unconstitutional. ...a single board does nothing to meet the real problem....

The real problem is the failure of implementation.

The Conservatives can jump up and down all they want and pretend they are managers of the economy, but obviously they have blown the Ring of Fire, they are alienating people with the gateway pipeline and they have managed to burn their reputation internationally on Keystone XL and the environment. Hey, they are going to need a third-party manager to look after them soon.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. friend for his discussion of Bill C-15. I agree with his colleague, the member for Western Arctic, that the bill would be more properly taken in two pieces.

On the devolution piece, I have heard most of the speeches from opposition members and I think they are in favour of the devolution.

We have seen the territories wait for far too long to make decisions in their own name.

On the concentration of boards, as my hon. colleague just mentioned, the reduction of what may appear to some to be bureaucracy is to others a self-government apparatus. They are regional boards responsible to various first nations’ land claim settlement processes.

I wonder if my friend would agree that we should see all land claims settled in the area and ensure that all first nations are supportive when we go ahead with changing some of the aspects of their own governance structures.

•(1330)

**Mr. Charlie Angus:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for her excellent question and I think she points out what the Conservative government does all the time.

It is the Conservatives’ Monty Pythonesque Trojan Horse where they think they are going to be really bright. They take something as strong as devolution, which they know everyone supports, and then shove into it once again an undermining of environmental standards such as their attack on the Mackenzie River Valley management area. Then they attack anyone who does not support their Trojan Horse.

This issue is about ensuring that this is done right, so let us separate the bill. Let us bring in devolution, let us deal with it, and then let us look at the Conservatives’ plan to give the minister that kind of control. However, the Conservatives do not have the nerve to stand up and go public with this and so they try and hide it.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Francine Raynault (Joliette, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, many government members and a member of the third party have talked about Bill C-15. We probably all agree that transferring additional powers to the Northwest Territories is a good thing.

Nevertheless, I wanted to speak today because I think that transferring powers to the territories is an important thing worth paying special attention to. I want to begin by congratulating the people of the Northwest Territories, especially the five aboriginal governments that are part of the process, the Inuvialuit, the Northwest Territory Métis Nation, the Sahtu Secretariat, the Gwich’in Tribal Council and the Tlicho government.

I work very closely with the Manawan Atikamekw First Nation. Respect for aboriginal government is essential. Even though these situations are quite different, I think it is interesting to see how this legislation can transfer responsibilities smoothly and for the good of everyone.

I would like to talk about my reasons for supporting this bill and discuss some unclear elements that will need more in-depth study. Changing a constitution is never simple. However, in the case of the territories, which do not have the same authority as provincial governments, it is necessary.

That is especially true as Canada works harder to assert sovereignty in the north. Accepting that residents of the Northwest Territories are equal to all other Canadians is the bare minimum.

*Government Orders*

The last devolution of powers to the Northwest Territories took place in 1980, when it acquired jurisdiction over education, health care, transportation and renewable resources, including lumber and wildlife.

However, for devolution to be more than just a legacy of British-style indirect rule, much more had to be done. This transfer of powers will enable the Northwest Territories to operate as independently as possible despite being so remote.

The bill before us goes a little farther by transferring the administration and control of public lands and resources, as well as rights in respect of waters, to the Northwest Territories.

The aboriginal governments identified earlier, as well as the Government of the Northwest Territories, signed a transfer of power agreement with the Canadian government on June 25. Now it is our responsibility to move forward.

The situation in the Northwest Territories cannot be compared in any way to that of the people in the provinces. As an example, I almost had a culture shock when I contacted the Manawan Atikamekw people, who live in the far northern area of the riding of Joliette. Although we share the same country, their administration is vastly different.

In the case of the Northwest Territories, this inconsistent policy is still evident today in the fact that the territory does not receive income from resource development and must rely on federal transfers for the delivery of programs and services. This situation can only be described as outright dependency.

Under the agreement signed in June, the Government of the Northwest Territories will be able to retain 50% of the revenues from resource development on public land up to a certain maximum, and Canada will retain the rest. The agreement will also enable the Government of the Northwest Territories to collect revenues from oil development.

● (1335)

However, here again, there will be a cap on revenues and any surpluses will be deducted from federal transfers.

Since these revenues derive from resource development, I do not really see anything wrong with the government withdrawing when marginal revenues based on the needs of the province are met; again, “when the needs are met”. Indirectly, this allows for a transfer of the wealth produced by this development.

However, as I said at the time, such a bill is not that simple. In the case of Bill C-15, 42 laws will be amended, making this a truly mammoth bill. In addition, the AANDC deputy minister appeared before the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development in November. The deputy minister confirmed that Bill C-15 would, among other things, amend the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act.

I will take the time to talk about this amendment because it has received some criticism, particularly from the Gwich'in Tribal Council and the Tlicho government.

The amendment to this act would transform the current structure of regional councils for land and water, created under final land

claim agreements with aboriginal governments. This structure would be replaced by a single board.

In addition, the amendments will give the federal minister the authority to approve how the land and water in the Northwest Territories is used, which means that the transfer of powers we are working towards would be jeopardized. At least, that is how some people feel. As a New Democrat, I believe that the regional boards should make the decisions.

However, since the Government of the Northwest Territories has finally rallied behind the proposed changes and because the legislation will be reviewed in five years—which we will have to keep a close eye on—I will be supporting this bill anyway.

During the review, there will be an opportunity to evaluate the possibility of transferring other powers to the Northwest Territories, including the power to amend this law. To my mind, that alleviates some concern.

However, I would like to make a general comment about the Conservative government's tendency to concentrate power in the hands of a few and to give more power to the ministers who, ironically, have less input within their own caucus. I would like to take advantage of the opportunity I have here today to ask that such schemes do not become the norm.

As for the concerns that certain groups still have about amending the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act, I would like to point out that those of us on this side of the House will take their concerns into account when studying these amendments in committee.

The goal here—and I think that we all share it, even though some people feel absolutely no need to talk about it—is to ensure that Bill C-15 meets the needs of the people of the Northwest Territories. Until I hear proof to the contrary, I would say that we all agree on that point.

● (1340)

[*English*]

**Mr. Mark Strahl (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Joliette for raising the level of debate after the member for Timmins—James Bay did his best to put it in the gutter. It would have been better if she had not shared her time with him, because he certainly did not address the bill and he went on several tangents that did not relate to anything that had to do with devolution.

Is the member aware that the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development both confirmed today, independently in different panels before committee, that the Gwich'in, Sahtu and Tlicho land claim agreements each provided for a single land and water board in an area larger than the respective settlement areas and that the restructured board was in compliance with settled land claim agreements and would continue the co-management approach laid out in these agreements?

*Government Orders*

The red herring of the board that is envisioned in Bill C-15 as somehow being out of compliance with land claims agreements has not been verified by the Department of Justice. It has been proven by the Government of the Northwest Territories to be false.

If that is what the NDP is hanging its hat on, perhaps it would review the blues of this morning's committee meeting, where the Government of the Northwest Territories was clear that we needed to move forward. It fully supports the bill and it does not need MPs from Montreal and Toronto telling it what is in its best interest.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Francine Raynault:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for the question.

I understand that they do not need people from Toronto or anywhere else telling them how to manage their territory. However, it is important that these people be supported, not because we want to tell them what to do and when to do it, but rather because we want to keep an eye on the government to ensure that it does not force them to accept anything they do not want. It is absolutely crucial that they manage their territory independently, and I am sure that they are perfectly capable of doing so.

[*English*]

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Joliette for her very thoughtful and intelligent comments on the bill.

Does she think the bill should be split because it would amend 42 different pieces of legislation, particularly the elements of the bill that would deal with the Mackenzie Valley agreement? We have a lot of concern about that and there is a proposal that we should look at splitting the bill to ensure there is proper examination of all of those aspects.

Would the member agree that it would be much better to have an examination if the bill were split?

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Francine Raynault:** Mr. Speaker, yes, it would be better if the bill were split. You know, when a bill amends 42 pieces of legislation, that is really extraordinary. We really have to work quite hard to dissect it all. I agree with my hon. colleague that this bill should be split.

[*English*]

**Ms. Yvonne Jones (Labrador, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to the members speak and the questions. My question at committee this morning to the minister for the Government of Canada and to the minister for the Northwest Territories was just on that issue of bill splitting.

I can tell the member that I would have preferred to have seen it done that way, but the minister for the Northwest Territories said that it would cause delays, that it would not meet its timing and that it would not be in the benefit of the Northwest Territories government.

Based on that context, does the member still think the Government of Canada should be moving forward in that direction and does she have concerns about delaying the devolution of this act in the Northwest Territories?

● (1345)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Francine Raynault:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for the question.

I am much more concerned that these people will not be heard when they appear in committee and that this government will ignore their needs and what they have to say.

I am concerned. It would have been better if the bill were split, but that is not going to happen.

**Mr. Matthew Dubé (Chambly—Borduas, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I will share my time with my colleague from Skeena—Bulkley Valley, a member who represents a northern riding. He will certainly bring an interesting perspective to this debate.

I think it is important to commend my colleague from Western Arctic, the member for the Northwest Territories, who works very hard and does an extraordinary job. It is a huge territory and a big riding. When I compare the size to my own riding to his, I realize how impressive it is to represent such a vast territory and to do it so well. I wanted to say that, because this is a very important bill for him and for all of us.

Before I get into the details, I want to take a step back and look at the circumstances in which we find ourselves.

A number of my colleagues, both Conservatives and members of my own party, have spoken about the constitutional nature of this situation.

In Canada, natural resources are an interesting issue. Powers are shared, but provinces also have power over their resources. This has created an interesting situation, since over the years—and now in 2013—energy and natural resources have become very important issues, not just for us, but for the entire world.

There is a lot of talk about pipelines and developing different resources. Quebec is having some important, interesting and essential debates on issues such as shale gas and pipelines.

We are very concerned about the division of powers for natural resource management. Although the constitutional powers were divided a certain way at the time, I think it is very important to move in this direction and devolve more powers to the Northwest Territories. That is something we support, obviously.

This is the first time since 1980, if I remember correctly, that the federal government has devolved additional powers to the Northwest Territories. We are very happy to see that.

That being said, I think that there are some major concerns to keep in mind. I talked about energy-related concerns. Bill C-38 made a lot of changes to environmental assessments for various projects.

Under the circumstances, I think it will be important to arrive at a better understanding of the bill during the committee's study and to know which powers will belong to the Northwest Territories and which to the federal government, directly and indirectly.

*Government Orders*

At first blush, this bill seems to have some tricky parts, but it is not quite clear. That is why the committee work will be so important. I feel optimistic; I think that the government has good intentions with this bill.

When the bill goes to committee, there will be questions about exactly how powers will be divided and how to ensure that there are no loopholes enabling the federal government to retain control over matters related to selection of projects, specifically regarding natural resource development and royalties.

These are very complicated issues. Many of my colleagues are better equipped to discuss them than I. My colleague, the parliamentary secretary, talked about how it is important for people in Toronto and Montreal not to impose their way of doing things on the Northwest Territories. Even though I am an MP from suburban Montreal, I completely agree with him. As an MP from Quebec, I have a pretty good understanding of the relationship between the federal government and our communities, the division of powers, the importance of a respectful relationship and the desire to be in a position where we are not being told what to do.

• (1350)

That being said, I can understand the concern. I think it is important that each one of us talks about managing natural resources, no matter where we come from, because there are fewer and fewer borders when it comes to this issue.

However, that does not mean that we should set aside the principle that the provinces—or territories in this case—must have some input and are responsible for managing natural resources. We understand that the federal government has a role to play because these issues affect everyone.

Take pipelines, for example. In my riding, the Portland-Montreal pipeline goes under the Richelieu River. This issue is of great concern to the people of my riding, but we all know that it extends beyond the boundaries of my riding.

With that in mind, we need to rigorously debate this issue in order to fully understand the bill. We also need to have a rigorous, in-depth review of the bill in committee, one that takes into account the concerns of the witnesses. They will likely have an interesting perspective to share.

Speaking of interesting perspectives, I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the work being done by our caucus with regard to northern development and protecting the rights of the people in those communities.

For example, yesterday, I listened to the speech given by the hon. member for Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou during the debate on Bill C-15. His views are extremely relevant and interesting, given the role he played in the negotiations between the Cree government, the Government of Quebec and the Government of Canada on the treaties that have been signed over the past few decades.

At home in Quebec, we set aside political differences and accomplished an historic work in James Bay. When we think about the work that the Government of Quebec accomplished in the early 2000s, we understand the importance of a nation-to-nation dialogue

or even a dialogue among three nations, if we count the Quebec nation as a third player.

There is hope for this bill. The government has made a good start by engaging in a dialogue with the first nations and with the people of the Northwest Territories. In my opinion, that is extremely important. This is a complex, worthwhile and important constitutional issue.

Earlier, I mentioned my colleague from Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, but the NDP also has other members. I am thinking of the members for Sudbury, Nickel Belt and Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing in northern Ontario and all my other colleagues from that area. They know the importance of these issues, and I know that they will bring an extremely relevant and interesting perspective to this debate.

We have a great deal of respect for the people who live in these areas. My colleague from Western Arctic does an outstanding job when it comes to these issues. Out of respect for these people, it is important that we all participate in this debate, because issues related to energy and natural resources are of the utmost importance to all Canadians and Quebecers. I am also thinking about the people who live in my riding. It is essential that we participate in this debate.

I hope that the government will take into account what is said in committee. To date, the debate seems very healthy. I hope that this will continue in committee and that we can make amendments, if such is deemed necessary by the witnesses, who will conduct an assessment of the bill that will no doubt be very interesting.

I look forward questions from my colleagues and I thank them for their attention.

• (1355)

[*English*]

**Mr. Mark Strahl (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there is a recurring theme I am hearing from the official opposition. It is that the New Democrats want us to carefully consider the evidence that is heard at committee. What we heard today from Minister Miltenberger, and earlier from the premier at the Senate committee, is that they want this bill, as is and not split, to go forward as soon as possible. Minister Miltenberger said today that when this is implemented, it will mean less Ottawa and more Northwest Territories. That is something that I think we all agree would be in the best interests of everyone in the Northwest Territories.

He mentioned his northern colleagues. On our side I will mention the member for Yukon and the Minister of the Environment, who are in the territories. We heard again at committee about Yukon, which has seen a \$1 billion increase in its GDP since powers were devolved to it 10 years ago. It is now at \$2.5 billion.

Would the member agree with me and, more importantly, with the Government of the Northwest Territories that we need to move forward on this quickly, that we need to work together, and that we need to move forward in the current form as soon as possible?



*Statements by Members*

[Translation]

**Mr. Matthew Dubé:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

The fact that we are asking ourselves questions and examining the bill to determine if there are any potential problems does not mean that we do not support it. As I said, we support the bill.

We are acknowledging that, like the Government of the Northwest Territories, we want to move forward and deal with this issue, which is somewhat urgent. We are even saying that this has gone on too long and that it could have been dealt with sooner. With that in mind, we certainly do want to move forward. The two matters go hand in hand. It is possible to act quickly, while addressing some of our concerns.

This bill is obviously important, and we do support it. That being said, we have concerns about some ill-considered measures that could give more power to the minister rather than to the Northwest Territories. My colleague said that they want less Ottawa and more Northwest Territories. That is exactly our philosophy, and that is why it is important to study this bill. We will also have to consider this morning's evidence, which is extremely important in this matter. They go hand in hand.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton):** The member for Chambly—Borduas will have two minutes for questions and comments when the House resumes debate on this motion.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

### LEASIDE SPORTS HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

**Mr. John Carmichael (Don Valley West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Leaside Sports Hall of Fame in my riding of Don Valley West is dedicated to celebrating excellence in sport at the recreational, competitive, and elite levels in and from the Leaside community. It aims to foster a community where participation in recreational and competitive sports is valued and where the achievements of athletes and the contributions of volunteers are honoured.

Recently the Hall of Fame inducted its inaugural class of 10 athletes and recognized its first Leaside athlete of the year. They are Howard Birnie, Teri Black, John Child, Cathy Lansdowne, Dr. Ron Taylor, Pete Mahovlich Jr., Erica Gilbert, Lloyd Woods, Dr. Tom Pashby, and Rich Ferguson. Martha McCabe is Leaside's first athlete of the year. She competed in her first Olympic Games, in swimming, at London in 2012 and is preparing for Rio in 2016.

Congratulations to all the 2013 inaugural inductees to the Leaside Sports Hall of Fame.

● (1400)

[Translation]

### AIRPLANE CRASH OF NOVEMBER 29, 1963

**Mr. Alain Giguère (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, on November 29, 1963, a Trans-Canada Air Lines DC-8 crashed near Sainte-Thérèse-de-Blainville at about 6:30 p.m.

The violent crash left no hope for the survival of the 111 passengers and seven crew members. Despite the size of the crash site and the muddy and swampy ground, all emergency services immediately began rescue operations in the hope of rescuing any survivors. We must salute the selflessness of these responders, which was honourable.

I also remember that this accident, and especially the fact that it was impossible to pinpoint the cause, led to the development of flight recorders, or the famous black boxes. Last Friday, together with family members, friends, witnesses and municipal representatives, I attended a memorial service for the victims. The service was organized by Robert Page, who lost his father in the accident, and gave us an opportunity to honour and remember those who perished the evening of November 29, 1963.

\* \* \*

[English]

### SAINT JOHN PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

**Mr. Rodney Weston (Saint John, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, November 22 was a great day for the city of Saint John. All three levels of government gathered together to deliver a long-awaited agreement that will enable Saint John to proceed with the city's safe clean drinking water project. The largest municipal infrastructure project ever in the province of New Brunswick, at \$230 million, will be delivered by a public-private partnership.

P3s have a proven track record, ensuring that projects are finished on time and on budget, with the risk held by the private partner, protecting taxpayers from unexpected costs. Increasingly, municipalities like Saint John are demonstrating that they can build public infrastructure faster and better by taking advantage of the innovation and efficiency we find in the private sector.

I am also pleased to point out that with this water project, Saint John will have one of the most modern, environmentally sensitive systems for the treatment of water and waste water in all of Canada. These two projects will provide a safe, clean, 21st century level of service to the oldest incorporated city in all of Canada. I am proud to be a member of the Conservative government that provided funding to both of these very important projects.

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### GUELPH LAWN BOWLING CLUB

**Mr. Frank Valeriote (Guelph, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, from its humble beginnings as the Victoria Bowling Club in 1838 at space on greens behind the Knox Church, to its current home at the Royal City Park on Gordon Street, the Guelph Lawn Bowling Club remains, now as ever, dedicated to sportsmanship and camaraderie that encourages physical activity and healthy competition among men and women of all ages and abilities.

*Statements by Members*

The championship pennants lining the clubhouse walls tell the stories of great matches that built many a lifelong love of the sport. Just one look at the professionally maintained greens each summer makes it very clear that members have built a place for everyone to come and discover a new, exciting game. Year after year, they continue to create new lawn bowlers and memories.

I invite my colleagues in the House to join me in congratulating the Guelph Lawn Bowling Club on an astounding 175 years as a building block of our community and in wishing them 175 more years of fun, success, and healthy living.

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**BIRTHDAY CONGRATULATIONS**

**Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton East, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Canada's newest centenarian, Mr. John Philip Fearnley, born 100 years ago, on the 8th of December 1913, on the family's pioneer homestead farm in Gibbons, Alberta.

Farming was his lifelong interest, which he did into his late eighties. Mr. Fearnley followed politics closely, which is how I met him when I first ran for Parliament in 1997. He was a tireless campaigner, volunteering in every election, including in 2011, when he was 97 years young.

Mr. Fearnley and his wife, Helen, lived in Edmonton's Beverly district. Helen passed on in 2007, shortly after their 61st wedding anniversary.

Gathering together with Mr. Fearnley this Sunday will be his friends and family, which includes three children, seven grandchildren, and 10 great-grandchildren.

To my friend Phil Fearnley, from the Parliament of Canada on his 100th, happy birthday, Phil.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**MEDIA CHARITY DRIVE**

**Ms. Nycole Turmel (Hull—Aylmer, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the holiday season is a time of joy for most of us, but it also reminds us of the loneliness and poverty afflicting a growing number of Canadians.

Today, thousands of volunteers and hundreds of media organizations across Quebec are joining efforts to collect non-perishable food items and cash donations as part of the event known as La grande guignolée des médias.

Since its creation, this event has raised \$22.3 million for the less fortunate in our society.

This is an extraordinary act of solidarity, and I wish I could personally thank each and every one of the people involved, as well as those who work day-to-day with anti-poverty organizations in our communities. These people make a real difference in the lives of those who need it most, and we can never thank them enough.

Thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

● (1405)

[*English*]

**COMMUNITY SERVICE**

**Mr. Lawrence Toet (Elmwood—Transcona, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge the strong and active cultural communities in Elmwood—Transcona and the important role they play in enriching our local identity.

I would like to commend the efforts of the Filipino community in Elmwood—Transcona, which, along with the broader community, has been raising funds to provide relief for the millions affected by Typhoon Haiyan. Our community is engaged and involved as individuals and groups who continue to come together to support relief efforts for those impacted by this devastating disaster.

I am also thrilled to attend the Sher-E-Punjab Sports Club event this weekend in support of the Valley Gardens Community Club. This is another prime example of people coming together to make their neighbourhood a better place to live.

St. Michael's Ukrainian Catholic Church parish recently celebrated its 100th anniversary in Transcona. It has been an important foundation of our community and has been significant in the faith life of so many people in Transcona and has contributed to our community in many other ways.

It is my pleasure, as a representative for Elmwood—Transcona, to celebrate those who have served our community so well.

\* \* \*

**BATTLE OF HONG KONG**

**Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am here today because of a great Canadian. Seventy-two years ago this month, this Canadian, along with many others, fought in the Battle of Hong Kong to defend the people of the crown colony, my father being one of them. In that battle, the Japanese attacked the Royal Rifles and the Winnipeg Grenadiers in the first Canadian combat engagement of the Second World War.

Seventeen days of battle ended on Christmas Day 1941, with 290 Canadians dead, 493 wounded, and 1,600 made prisoners of war. For three and half years, they lived in appalling conditions. Hundreds died. Years later, my father moved to Winnipeg, home of the Grenadiers. Years after that, I met that great Canadian, Mr. George MacDonell, who was taken prisoner of war in that battle.

I stand here today in this Canadian House of Commons, because Mr. MacDonell stood in Hong Kong 72 years ago to defend my family. Mr. MacDonell is here today in Ottawa. I ask all my colleagues to recognize this great Canadian.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

**Ms. Mylène Freeman (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, on December 6, we will observe the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women.

*Statements by Members*

I was born in 1989, the year of the massacre at the École Polytechnique, and I am the same age as many of the women targeted in that tragedy. However, unfortunately, even 24 years later, we still have a very long way to go.

Whether in the form of domestic violence, physical and psychological abuse, harassment, poverty, denigration, racialization or fear, violence is still part of all of our lives, all around the world, generation after generation, because we are women.

We must never give up and accept violence as a reality for women. Each and every one of us has a duty to take real action, to stand up against and put an end to all forms of violence.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**VOLUNTEERS**

**Ms. Lois Brown (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise on International Volunteer Day to salute the incredible work done by Canadian volunteers to improve the lives of those in developing partner nations. Canada is a nation that values the contribution of volunteers at home and abroad. The government recognizes the enormous contribution Canadians make through volunteering.

As an example, through their partnership with Barrick Gold, World University Service of Canada is helping young people in Burkina Faso with skills development, ensuring secure futures and hope for a new generation.

Many of our partner organizations are gathered today in Toronto at the volunteer co-operation event. I want to thank them for their dedication and to recognize their contributions. As the minister said this morning:

International Volunteer Day is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the positive impact Canadian volunteers are having throughout the world.

\* \* \*

• (1410)

[*Translation*]

**VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Outremont, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, 24 years ago, 14 women were brutally murdered at the École Polytechnique in Montreal. They were killed simply because they were women. Our thoughts and prayers are with the victims of that senseless act and their families.

[*English*]

This tragedy has had a lasting effect on all Canadians. It opened our eyes to a dark reality, and it led the House to declare every December 6 a national day of remembrance. Clearly it is not enough just to remember. We also have to work actively for change. Over half of Canadian women will experience violence at some point in their lives.

[*Translation*]

We can make a difference. Together, we can ensure that women fleeing abuse have all the support they need. We can keep dangerous weapons out of the hands of dangerous people. We can demand

justice for the hundreds of aboriginal women who have gone missing from our communities. We can make Canada a safe place to live. We owe it to those 14 young women.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA**

**Mrs. Kelly Block (Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, once again the NDP is out with its incoherent policies that have no credibility whatsoever. It is clear that its latest energy policy was written on the back of a napkin. Not only does it propose economically unsound ideas, but it completely rejects the notion of independent science-based reviews.

Yesterday the leader of the NDP confirmed that he wants the government to arbitrarily decide which projects should move forward. The NDP will stop at nothing to let ideology get in the way of science. On this side of the House, we will allow independent scientific reviews to make recommendations on proposed projects.

\* \* \*

**GOVERNOR GENERAL'S MEDAL OF BRAVERY**

**Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize three of my constituents who were presented with the Governor General's Medal of Bravery today in Ottawa.

In August 2008, Francis Marshall, of Membertou, and Joey Sylvester, from Sydney, evacuated residents from a burning apartment building. Mr. Sylvester rushed his family to safety before going back to rescue his neighbour and his two children. He then returned inside for a third time to help pull a disabled woman from her apartment. Mr. Marshall also braved the heat and smoke in an attempt to extinguish the flames and survived a propane tank explosion.

In August 2009, Len MacIntyre, of Sydney Mines, rescued a woman from a burning apartment in Florence. Mr. MacIntyre ran inside and used a quilt to help shield the victim from the flames, pulling her outside to safety.

I commend these Cape Bretoners for their bravery in saving lives while putting theirs at risk. Their leadership is a great example to all Canadians.

\* \* \*

**VOLUNTEERS**

**Mr. Scott Armstrong (Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, volunteers represent the best of Canadian society. They support families. They support communities, and they contribute the equivalent of 1.1 million full-time jobs in volunteer hours each and every year. Our government is proud to support volunteerism and to encourage them to volunteer in their communities. The volunteer.ca website helps connect volunteers with volunteer opportunities in their communities. Since 2012, the Prime Minister's Volunteer Awards have recognized exceptional volunteers and volunteer organizations across the country.

*Oral Questions*

Today is International Volunteer Day. We would like to congratulate and thank the over 13 million Canadians who volunteer their time and support their communities each and every year.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**ETHICS**

**Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, our dear Prime Minister should have written a fantasy story instead of a book on hockey. The Prime Minister's fantastical imagination would be amazing were it not used for such harmful purposes.

There was the story of Nigel Wright, the only one who knew about the scheme, right up to the day that the RCMP implicated more than a dozen people from the Prime Minister's inner circle. There was the story of the missing legal agreement between Mike Duffy and Nigel Wright, right up to the day that the RCMP proved that that was yet another fabrication. There was also the story of the independence of the Senate, right up to the day that one of the speakers of the Senate decided to "slip away". There was the story of Mike Duffy's residency supposedly being okay, right up to the day that Mr. Duffy himself did not even know where he lived. There was the story of the innocence of Benjamin Perrin, right up until his fingerprints were found all over the police documents. Lastly, there was the story of Irving Gerstein not being involved, right up until we learned the truth about this manipulative schemer.

When will this book of the Conservatives' greatest scandals be released?

\* \* \*

•(1415)

[English]

**NORTHERN SOVEREIGNTY**

**Mr. Ryan Leef (Yukon, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians are proud of their northern identity, and our government has made unprecedented investments.

This Prime Minister's accomplishments include the Canadian Armed Forces Arctic Training Centre and the devolution and transfer of lands and resource management to the Government of the Northwest Territories.

Canadians know they can count on this Prime Minister to stand up for the north and for Canada's international claim for Arctic seabed rights, including the North Pole.

Unfortunately, the Liberal leader is as soft on Canadian sovereignty as he is on crime. Yesterday the Liberal leader refused to stand up for Canada's northern sovereignty when he said that the North Pole is not Canadian. How can he, this close to Christmas, deny Santa Claus his rightful citizenship?

It is yet another example of lack in leadership, whether it is being in favour of removing mandatory minimums on child predators or promoting reckless plans to legalize marijuana to children. Canadians do not want this Liberal leader stuffing our stockings this Christmas.

**ORAL QUESTIONS**

[Translation]

**RAIL TRANSPORTATION**

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we now know that the Lac-Mégantic railway had been in urgent need of attention since 2008. In 2012, the city even wrote to the minister of transportation at the time and to the Conservative member who is also the minister responsible for the region. Despite all that, the Conservative government chose to ignore all of the warnings.

Why was that railroad allowed to continue operating despite all of the warnings?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the truth is that the government has invested record amounts in rail safety. Since 2006, the number of inspections has increased by 4%. The government will continue to improve the system.

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Prime Minister for his compassion for the 47 people who died in that tragic accident, but will he at least acknowledge one thing? In 2008, there was a problem that was never resolved, and in 2012, when there was still an urgent need for action, the government gave the railroad exceptional permission to operate with one sole conductor.

Why did the government go in the opposite direction of public protection? Why did it not heed the warnings?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there is an ongoing inquiry into this incident. It is clear that rules were not abided by. Of course our hearts go out to those affected by the death of these 44 people. That is why I visited the community that weekend. I also went there more recently to work with the mayor and the community on a plan for reconstruction.

[English]

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, maybe the city would not have needed construction if the Conservatives had listened to the warnings and if they had the assumed the federal government's responsibilities.

The Conservatives had been warned since 2008. They were warned in 2012, in writing, by the town. What did the government do in 2012? It gave an exceptional permission to MMA to operate with one sole conductor.

Why did the government go in the opposite direction of public protection? Why did the Conservatives protect the railroad instead?

•(1420)

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there is obviously an inquiry into this incident. It would be premature to suggest, as the leader of the NDP does, that he knows all of the facts. However, I think that the facts that we do know indicate pretty clearly that rules were not abided by.

This government has made significant investments in the rail safety system and in strengthening rail protection rules. This government is continuing to work with the community and others to ensure that we do more of that going forward.

## ETHICS

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, speaking of inquiries, what does the government have to hide? Why does it not allow the Senate to hear Michael Runia? We know that he is the Conservative Party's own auditor, but why, if the Conservatives have nothing to hide, do they have an interest in blocking Runia's testimony? Why do they keep interfering in the Senate? Why block this testimony?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the auditors have in fact already testified before the Senate, and they have testified to the integrity of their audit.

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, that is all of them except one, the one his friend Irving Gerstein phoned to try to influence the audit of Mike Duffy. He knows that is the one we are talking about.

We have an 81-page report from the RCMP that proves beyond a shadow of a doubt that his office has been controlling everything in the Senate.

Why are the Conservatives blocking Runia if they have got nothing to hide?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the auditors who performed the audit have already testified before the Senate, and they testified as to the integrity of their audit.

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, according to sworn police documents, the Prime Minister's Office conspired with Senator Gerstein to mess with Deloitte's audit of Mike Duffy. Nigel Wright asked Gerstein personally to intervene. Another PMO staffer, Patrick Rogers, pressed Gerstein to get Deloitte "locked in", and Gerstein tried. Through senior partner Mike Runia, he tried to breach Deloitte's ethical walls, contrary to the most sacred principles of the auditing profession, so why is Gerstein still the Prime Minister's hand-picked chair of the Senate banking committee?

**Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Senate heard from the three auditors in question. Those three auditors confirmed the integrity of the audit that was completed on behalf of the Senate. That was the basis on which the Senate fought to ensure that those three senators were removed from the Senate without pay.

**Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Gerstein's scheme with Runia to mess with an audit was not an isolated transgression. According to sworn police evidence, Gerstein also agreed to pay Duffy with Conservative Party money as long as it was only \$30,000. That would be against the law, but Gerstein's concern was not about principles, just the price.

Yesterday, in a blatant conflict of interest, he himself ruled on a conflict complaint about his own conduct. If Gerstein cannot tell right from wrong, why does he still have the Prime Minister's full confidence?

**Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as the documents quite clearly outline, the RCMP is looking into the actions of Senator Duffy and the actions of Nigel Wright.

## Oral Questions

[Translation]

**Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the RCMP's sworn statements clearly show that the Prime Minister's staff received privileged information from Senator Gerstein about the audit of Mr. Duffy.

However, the Deloitte auditor could not form a conclusion because Mr. Duffy was following orders from the Prime Minister's Office and refused to co-operate.

When will the government stop interfering with the process and order Senator Gerstein and former PMO staffers to testify under oath?

[English]

**Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I just said, the three auditors appeared before a Senate committee, and they were very clear in the fact that this audit had been done with complete confidentiality and that the Senate could have confidence in the report that it used as the basis to remove these three senators from the Senate without pay.

The RCMP report that he references quite clearly identifies that the Prime Minister also advised his office to work with the RCMP to provide as much information as the RCMP required. The report does go on further to say that the Prime Minister had no knowledge that this was being undertaken. As the Prime Minister has said, had he known, of course he would have put a stop to it right away.

• (1425)

[Translation]

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I asked the Prime Minister whether his office broke the law by deleting emails that should have been saved. Today, his office is blaming Benjamin Perrin.

Does the Prime Minister realize that he is admitting that the law was in fact broken?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I said, it is the responsibility of employees to follow the rules on records retention. Records are retained by the bureaucracy. When the bureaucracy realized that it had this information, it made this information available to the RCMP.

[English]

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, "The bureaucracy made me do it" was yesterday's answer. Today's answer from his office is "It's Benjamin Perrin's fault." Why does the Prime Minister's story keep changing?

*Oral Questions*

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will say once again what I said yesterday. There are rules in terms of retention of records. Retained records are kept by the bureaucracy. As soon as the bureaucracy realized it had information that was relevant to the investigation, it immediately made that information known and turned it over to the RCMP.

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, is everyone in the Prime Minister's Office to blame except the Prime Minister himself?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on the contrary. As the RCMP said in its recent court filings, the Prime Minister's Office has not only provided full assistance and co-operation but has also provided all and any documentation that the RCMP has required.

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, let us talk about the RCMP's ability to do its job without interference.

The Privy Council Office warned lawyers representing the Prime Minister's staff that their emails had been handed over to the RCMP. Why did the Privy Council Office—I remind the Prime Minister that he is in charge of that office—which reports directly to the Prime Minister, warn potential suspects that their emails were under investigation by the RCMP?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Once again, Mr. Speaker, I think the RCMP itself has been extremely clear on this matter. All and any information that has been requested from our office has been given to the RCMP, and the RCMP has praised that, and that is what we will continue to do.

What is unacceptable here is the event that took place, the payment that was not properly disclosed. It was misrepresented, and for that reason we have taken action and the two individuals in question are under investigation.

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the RCMP does not warn people that there is an investigation going on, but the Prime Minister does, especially when they are people who worked for him.

[*Translation*]

On May 28, the Prime Minister said that “there is no legal agreement” between Mr. Duffy and Mr. Wright.

Why then is there an email exchange between Mike Duffy's lawyer and the Prime Minister's lawyer, negotiating a very clear and specific legal agreement?

[*English*]

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, let me correct the misinformation that was contained in the preamble to that question. The Leader of the Opposition has asserted that there are members of the Prime Minister's Office who are under investigation. That is, of course, not what the RCMP has said.

The RCMP has made very clear there are two individuals under investigation. They are Mr. Duffy and Mr. Wright. These are the individuals against whom we have taken appropriate sanction, and we will continue to co-operate with the RCMP.

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, did the Prime Minister know about the original plan to pay off Mike Duffy's expenses using money from the Conservative Party, yes or no?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I have said repeatedly, it was always conveyed to me that Mr. Duffy would repay his own expenses. Not only is that what I was told; Mr. Duffy himself said publicly that he had done that. The fact of the matter, of course, is that was not true. Mr. Duffy had received money from somebody else who had effectively done that for him, and that was not properly disclosed and was misrepresented. For that reason, we have taken the appropriate actions.

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's spokesman has given a clear answer to that question. It is just different.

Why is the Prime Minister afraid to give a straight answer? Why is his spokesman allowed to give straight answers? Is it because his spokesman is allowed to lie and the Prime Minister is not?

• (1430)

**The Speaker:** I do not know if those types of accusations are helpful to the debate.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** Order, please. I would ask members to avoid trying to insinuate or to make implications either about sitting parliamentarians or about using the protection of this place with regard to a private individual who does not have the ability to defend himself or herself. But I will allow the hon. Leader of the Opposition to pose a supplemental.

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair:** Mr. Speaker, did the Prime Minister know about the original plan to have the Conservative Party pay Mike Duffy's expenses, yes or no?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, of course I have answered that question on many occasions. It was always conveyed to me that it was Mr. Duffy who was going to pay Mr. Duffy's expenses, not the Conservative Party, not Nigel Wright, not anybody else.

We have been crystal clear on that. The Leader of the Opposition knows what the answer is to that question. He knows what the truth is. It is he who is determined to ignore the truth.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, did the Prime Minister know that Irving Gerstein intended to interfere in Deloitte's work or not?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, once again, no charges have been laid against this individual. There is an investigation into the actions of Mr. Duffy and Mr. Wright. For that reason, we imposed the appropriate sanctions on them, and we are co-operating with the RCMP in its investigation.

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Irving Gerstein agreed to pay Mr. Duffy's expenses if they did not exceed \$32,000. He also tried to illegally censor the Deloitte report.

If the Prime Minister admits that these actions were clearly inappropriate, why is Mr. Gerstein still sitting beside the Prime Minister as a member of the Conservative caucus?

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the senator has denied these accusations. He is not being investigated. On the contrary, here are the facts: Mr. Duffy accepted a payment from Mr. Wright and did not properly report that payment. He misrepresented the nature of the payment. For that reason, these two individuals are under investigation.

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, now the government is trying to lay all the blame on Benjamin Perrin for the disappearance of those emails. However, we know that the government had those emails in its possession for at least six months. The Prime Minister is also blaming his own department.

Is the Privy Council so out of touch with reality that it did not notice this Conservative scandal in the news? Did it not know that the RCMP was looking for Mr. Perrin's emails? Is the Prime Minister accusing the secretary to the cabinet of committing reprehensible acts or simply of being incompetent?

[English]

**Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in a letter the Privy Council has identified the fact that it was a mistake, inadvertently, not to have provided these emails and has said, to actively inform the RCMP and the PMO about the availability of Mr. Perrin's emails: "We apologize for any inconvenience it may have caused". That was from the Privy Council Office.

Of course, the member for Wascana said the following on Sunday night: "Beyond apologies to the PMO+RCMP, the Privy Council owes its biggest apology to all Canadians".

I think the Privy Council itself, in its letter, identified the mistake that it made. It has taken responsibility for that and made sure that these emails are available to the RCMP.

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government had copies of Benjamin Perrin's emails in its possession for six months, and only turned them over to the RCMP when they were asked for them, not once, not twice, but three times. The Prime Minister now tries to blame his department, the PCO. This is ridiculous.

Did the secretary to the cabinet not notice this Conservative scandal? Did his boss, the Prime Minister, not mention a problem when his chief of staff suddenly disappeared? Is the Prime Minister's latest excuse really that the Privy Council did not know what a court order to produce emails looks like?

•(1435)

**Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we know the Liberal Party itself seemed to have trouble finding emails with respect to the Senate.

However, having said that, on page 21 of the exact same report it says:

Rob Staley, legal representative for the PMO, advised my office that he had clear orders from the Prime Minister to provide complete cooperation with the

### Oral Questions

investigation, and to provide any assistance or documentation the RCMP requested. The PMO employees (current and former) whose e-mails I deemed relevant, have all provided privacy waivers through their legal counsel, relating to the content of their e-mails. The PMO has also waived solicitor-client privilege for those e-mails.

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, last night Conservative senators protected Senator Gerstein's unethical conduct in attempting to kill an audit into Mike Duffy. This is not the first time the Conservative Party has mopped up Gerstein.

When charged under the Canada Elections Act, he only plea-bargained out when the Conservative Party pled guilty for him. Nigel Wright resigned or was fired—which, we are not sure anymore—for offering money to Mike Duffy. We know that Gerstein also offered money to Mike Duffy.

How can the Prime Minister still have full confidence in this now-disgraced Conservative senator, Irving Gerstein?

**Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is quite clear that the auditors came before the Senate and they confirmed the fact that this audit was done with the utmost confidentiality. At the same time, the RCMP has indicated in the documents to which the member refers that it is the actions of Nigel Wright and Senator Duffy that are under investigation. At the same time, the audit he referenced was, of course, the basis that the Senate used to remove these three senators from the Senate without pay.

We know that the Liberals were fighting really hard for the status quo in the Senate. We, of course, fought for taxpayers and that was the end result when these three senators were removed.

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### RAIL TRANSPORTATION

**Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan (Scarborough—Rouge River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, eight months before the disaster in Lac-Mégantic, local officials wrote to Ottawa as well as the rail company. They raised concerns about a nightmare scenario of a toxic spill in their community. Their nightmare came true.

Rail safety should be a top priority of the government. Why has the current government not taken the transportation of dangerous goods more seriously?

**Mr. Jeff Watson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, CPC):** Quite on the contrary, Mr. Speaker, this government has taken a number of important actions with respect to rail safety: made significant investment in the rail safety system with an emergency directive and two protective directions and information sharing with the municipalities.

This is what one member said regarding the transportation of dangerous goods by rail:

Shipping materials by train are...very safe, and the record is really quite good.

Who said that? It was the senior transport critic for the New Democratic Party.

*Oral Questions**[Translation]*

**Mr. Hoang Mai (Brossard—La Prairie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, more should have been done to prevent the Lac-Mégantic tragedy. The Minister of Infrastructure, Communities and Intergovernmental Affairs received a warning that could not have been any clearer. I would like to quote a letter from the Lac-Mégantic municipal clerk dated November 12, 2012:

...a train derailment of cars carrying toxic substances or contaminants in that location would likely cause substantial damage, considering the proximity to many residences and to Lac Mégantic;

After receiving such a warning, does the minister believe he could have done more?

*[English]*

**Mr. Jeff Watson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member is suggesting that he knows the causes of the tragedy in Lac-Mégantic. Independent investigators are still continuing their investigation.

We will let them continue with that independent investigation, and Transport Canada will not hesitate to act on any recommendations.

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*[Translation]***PENSIONS**

**Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, no matter what the issue, it is always the same story. The Conservatives ignore the warning signs until it is too late.

When it comes to Canadians' retirement savings, provincial premiers and experts agree: the Canada pension plan and the Quebec pension plan need to be improved now.

The Conservatives are saying that they will not change anything. Given that the provincial governments have come to a consensus, will the Minister of Finance acknowledge that consensus and work to implement change?

● (1440)

*[English]*

**Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Minister of State (Finance), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, again, we share the concerns of small business. We share the concerns of employees and of many of the provinces that believe that increasing costs during a fragile economy is the wrong approach.

Moderate Canada pension plan reforms continue to be examined by the federal government and the provinces. We encourage provinces to move forward with PRPPs, pooled registered pension plans. There is a host of retirement savings plans that need to be adopted.

We share the concerns of small business.

**Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the minister claims we cannot afford to strengthen the Canada pension plan, but I say we cannot afford to have an entire generation of Canadians retire into poverty.

Every Canadian should be able to retire with dignity. The experts, the economists and the provinces all agree that we need to strengthen the Canada pension plan and we need to do it now.

If the minister does not like the provinces' proposals, why does he not take some responsibility and put his own proposals forward?

**Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Minister of State (Finance), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, moderate Canada pension plan reform is being studied by the provinces. It is being looked at. We are working together with the provinces and our federal government.

The NDP's plan to double Canada pension plan premiums when our economy is still fragile is not a moderate proposal.

Despite the NDP's risky strategies and schemes, we continue to stand up for lower taxes, job creation and economic growth.

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**CONSUMER PROTECTION**

**Mr. Devinder Shory (Calgary Northeast, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, supporting and protecting Canadian families is a priority for our government, and that is why we have taken measures to protect Canadian consumers from harmful knock-off products by introducing the combating counterfeit products act.

Canadians should feel confident that the brands they buy are the real deal, not a wheel and deal. Can the Minister of Industry please tell this House what our government is doing to help protect Canadian families from counterfeit products that could be harmful to their health and safety?

**Hon. James Moore (Minister of Industry, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we said in the throne speech not long ago that our government would be enacting new measures to protect Canadian consumers.

This week we have put in place our anti-spam regulations to make sure that comes to life. We have put forward the regulations to protect consumers from being ripped off at the pumps, and now we have our anti-counterfeit products legislation that has been passed now by the parliamentary committee.

Canadians deserve protection. This helps small businesses, larger business and consumers, because stuff that gets counterfeited is not just handbags and watches; sometimes these products are dangerous to our kids and dangerous to our health. It is important to have effective legislation moving forward.

I say to all members of Parliament who were on that committee and unanimously supported these recommendation, thanks for supporting that bill. We are moving forward to protect Canadian consumers.



*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS**

**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, there is a growing number of people calling for a national inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women. Everyone agrees, including families, aboriginal organizations, the provinces and the territories. The only ones standing in the way of this inquiry are the Conservatives. Victims and their families deserve answers.

Why are the Conservatives continuing to block a national inquiry?

[English]

**Hon. Kellie Leitch (Minister of Labour and Minister of Status of Women, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I have mentioned in the House before, we are focused and committed against any violence to women and girls.

Our investment in local-based community projects has been unprecedented. In fact, we have invested over \$62 million since 2007 in local community projects. This is what individuals are asking for. This is what aboriginal Canadians have spoken to us about. In the last number of years, we have invested in seven very specific and targeted projects with aboriginal communities across the country.

I look forward to the NDP stepping up and helping us support these communities.

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**STATUS OF WOMEN**

**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, aboriginal Canadians are asking for a national inquiry and they are asking for federal leadership to end violence against women.

Over half of Canadian women have experienced sexual or physical violence, but the Conservatives are refusing to call for a national action plan to end violence against women. When will the minister and her government work with the NDP so we can find solutions so Canadian women do not have to live their lives facing violence?

• (1445)

**Hon. Kellie Leitch (Minister of Labour and Minister of Status of Women, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I have already mentioned, we have invested significantly in ensuring communities across the country have had support.

Most important, during the 16 days of action against violence against women and girls, I encourage the NDP members opposite to wear a ribbon, get involved in a community project and ensure they attend a vigil tomorrow evening. These are things that Canadians care about. These are things that Canadians are participating in. It is what this caucus has been participating in every day over the last 16 days, and every day of the year.

\* \* \*

**NATIONAL DEFENCE**

**Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in the last 10 days, Canada has lost four soldiers to suicide. The

reality is, soldiers worry that if they come forward with their mental health issues, it will end their careers.

Because of universality of service, soldiers who admit to symptoms of post-traumatic stress syndrome could soon face a discharge. How can the government just tell soldiers to come forward when they might face losing their careers and pensions?

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that is completely false and I would ask the hon. member not to alarm those individuals who are thinking of coming forward.

The Chief of the Defence Staff said last night that many men and women in uniform had trouble coming forward when they needed help. That help is there. There has been an unprecedented commitment by this government to provide that help for them.

All of us should get together and encourage those who have problems to come forward and get the help they need. They will get it from this government.

[Translation]

**Mr. Sylvain Chicoine (Châteauguay—Saint-Constant, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the current system works well for healthy people. It is not designed for those who need help. The minister encourages people to seek help, but that is precisely the problem. Encouragement is not enough.

What we need is clinics and specialists in the detection of post-traumatic stress. What our veterans and military need is human resources and people who will be there to help them.

Will the minister address this significant gap by investing in these resources?

[English]

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I do not know how the member has completely missed what has taken place over the last couple of years, such as the inauguration of the joint personnel support unit to help men and women in the armed forces and those who are veterans and the unprecedented commitment to health care. We have the highest ratio of mental health experts to help the men and women in uniform than any of our NATO allies. That is the commitment of this government.

I ask the member to get behind us and help.

**Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, post-traumatic stress disorder is a major issue facing Canadian Forces personnel, as has been made painfully clear in the last week.

Has the Department of National Defence reached out in person to the more than 75,000 Canadian Forces personnel to remind them of the resources available to them if they need help?

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, indeed, we have. In fact, just last night the Chief of the Defence Staff made it very clear that help was available to those individuals who were suffering.

### Oral Questions

All of us have made it clear that among other things there is a 24-7 1-800 number so those individuals who are suffering can reach out. We all have to work co-operatively, the colleagues, friends and families, to reach out to these individuals and ensure they get the help they need. The help is there.

[Translation]

**Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians are beginning to realize the enormous price paid by our soldiers when they are sent into battle.

Many need help to recover from the horrors they have witnessed or lived through. We must not hesitate to do everything we can to help them. All our soldiers must be informed of the resources available to them and encouraged to use them.

I think the government is beginning to understand this. I would therefore ask the government to inform us of any action it plans to take in the future to help our soldiers.

[English]

**Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of National Defence, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we certainly started sometime ago. I would point out for the individual that the joint personnel support unit allows ill and injured members to work with medical personnel and social workers to get the help they need.

There have been unprecedented investments in health care for individuals. We have increased the number of mental health care workers who work with these individuals.

This is an ongoing process. I would urge the member to get together with everyone to encourage people who have these difficulties to come forward because the help is there. We have made that commitment.

\* \* \*

• (1450)

[Translation]

### NATURAL RESOURCES

**Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Doug Eyford's report is simple. He echoes the NDP's recommendations.

Natural resource development must be done sustainably, in an environmentally responsible way and in consultation with first nations. The Conservatives do not seem to understand those three concepts.

By failing in their attempt to build good relationships with first nations, the Conservatives are putting major economic development projects at risk.

Will the Prime Minister act on his special envoy's recommendations?

[English]

**Mrs. Kelly Block (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we thank Mr. Eyford for his work on this very important file. It was, after all, our government that commissioned this report to ensure the responsible development

of our natural resources and pursue meaningful consultation with aboriginal peoples.

We will be engaging with aboriginal peoples on this report, as well as provinces and industry, to identify the most promising avenues for meaningful follow-up.

**Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's special envoy released a report on consulting first nations on energy development. The report highlights what the NDP has been saying all along.

The government needs to build a relationship of trust with first nations. The government must actually consult, listen and act when it comes to resource development concerns on first nations territories.

Will the minister be acting on these recommendations?

**Mrs. Kelly Block (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government will thoroughly review the recommendations before making any decisions on next steps.

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### FOREIGN AFFAIRS

**Mr. Ed Komarnicki (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our Minister of Foreign Affairs is working hard in Ukraine on behalf of Canada.

Yesterday he met with the foreign ministry of Ukraine, as well as with more than a dozen civil society representatives, a broad group of religious leaders, business people and opposition leaders.

Could the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs please tell the House what strong messages the minister delivered to these important stakeholders and what he will be doing in Ukraine today?

**Hon. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and for International Human Rights, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hard-working member for Souris—Moose Mountain.

Yesterday the Minister of Foreign Affairs expressed Canada's grave concerns with Ukraine government's crackdown on mass protests against its decision to suspend negotiations with the European Union.

Today he will visit the Holodomor monument to pay his respects to those who perished under Soviet tyranny. He will also be visiting Independence Square in support of Canada and Ukraine's shared values of democracy and human rights.

We are proud of our principled approach in these matters. This government continues to stand with the people of Ukraine.

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### THE ENVIRONMENT

**Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise once again to talk about the potential of a major environmental disaster off of the northeast coast of Newfoundland. The ship is known as the *Manolis L* and it sits at the bottom of the ocean. It contains over 500 tonnes of bunker C and diesel oil.

Citizens have been calling, saying that one third of the sea birds they observe have oil on them. Aerial surveillance also shows oil on the water. This is one serious environmental issue.

Where is the government plan to do something about this? Emergency measures are not needed in the future. They are needed now.

**Mr. Randy Kamp (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to protecting the environment from ship-sourced oil spills. We are committing millions for science and remediation measures through our world-class tanker safety program.

With respect to this situation, the member will know that work was done during the summer to plug some leaks. We have been monitoring it ever since, including a visual inspection. Based on these most recent reports, we will be conducting another visual inspection and taking the necessary action as soon as possible.

\* \* \*

• (1455)

[Translation]

#### SEARCH AND RESCUE

**Ms. Annick Papillon (Québec, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Conservatives voted against an NDP motion calling on the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans to appear in committee to indicate what she intends to do in the crucial matter of the maritime search and rescue centre in Quebec City. Even the member for Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière voted against the motion, without good reason.

After two years of dithering, deferring decisions and unjustified spending on ineffective transfer attempts from the only bilingual centre in North America, can the minister tell us what she has in mind for the centre in Quebec City and exactly what she has done since she has been in that position?

[English]

**Mr. Randy Kamp (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we have been very clear about this in the past. We are not proceeding with the consolidation of the marine rescue sub-Centre in Quebec until we are fully confident there is a sufficient bilingual capacity at the JRCC Trenton and Halifax centres.

\* \* \*

#### SMALL BUSINESS

**Mr. Jay Aspin (Nipissing—Timiskaming, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, small and medium-sized businesses are the very engines of our economy. As the House knows, our government is committed to reducing red tape for small and medium-sized businesses in order to help promote growth and innovation in Canada as we continue to focus on job creation.

Could the hon. Minister of State for Science and Technology please highlight the new initiatives that will help small and medium businesses to remain competitive in the global marketplace?

**Hon. Greg Rickford (Minister of State (Science and Technology, and Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario), CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this week, I had the opportunity to

#### Oral Questions

announce our government's concierge service. This concierge service is a one-stop shop to help small and medium-sized enterprises navigate the research and development programs that best fit their needs.

We are delivering on our commitment to supporting investment in research and development, giving them the tools they need to create jobs, innovate, be more competitive and improve the quality of life for Canadians.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### INTERNATIONAL TRADE

**Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Union des producteurs agricoles is worried about the impact of the Canada-European Union trade agreement. More than two months after this agreement was announced, no one has details—not producers and not members of Parliament. We support international trade, but not at any cost.

Can the minister tell us whether they plan on putting a provision in the agreement to compensate cheese producers? If so, how much?

[English]

**Mr. Pierre Lemieux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a well-known fact that the NDP is against international trade. I would encourage the member to think about the pork farmers of Quebec who will benefit greatly from the Canada-European trade agreement.

[Translation]

Our government has always defended the supply management system in Canada, and we maintain that position in the current agreement. The three main pillars of our internal supply management system will remain intact. We will monitor the effects of the Canada-Europe free trade agreement on the revenues of milk producers, and if production levels suffer, we will provide financial support to the producers.

[English]

I encourage the NDP to support the Canada-Europe trade agreement.

\* \* \*

#### NATURAL RESOURCES

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, reference was made earlier today to a report tabled from the special envoy for west coast energy projects. In the very beginning, he cites:

Aboriginal communities hold constitutionally protected rights. The law requires potential impacts on those rights to be taken into account in project development.

In the context of the increasing tensions in New Brunswick in the fracking protests there, does the Prime Minister recognize that he is legally bound by our Constitution to ensure that the Mi'kmaq of Elsipogtog are fully consulted in advance of any fracking on their unceded territory?

*Government Orders*

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, of course we recognize our constitutional obligations. That is why aboriginal consultations are obviously part of our responsible resource development initiatives.

Specifically, the report tabled today was a report that I commissioned to ensure not just that we do fully and properly consult with aboriginal peoples but also ensure that aboriginal peoples have the opportunity to fully participate in and benefit from any resource development that is near their communities or in their communities.

This is an unprecedented opportunity for all Canadians, including aboriginal peoples.

\* \* \*

● (1500)

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it was predicted just last week that the government House leader could not make it through three whole weeks without illustrating his tendency and proclivity toward time allocation, against all the legislative traditions of the House. He almost made it. It is so sad that he had to do it again. He had to shut down debate in the House.

[*Translation*]

The government likes to use the loaded term “obstruction” when it talks about the opposition’s desire to debate its bills. Others would describe this as a living, breathing democracy.

[*English*]

Democracy is about holding the government to account. It is about bringing public awareness to the bills that are presented before Parliament. It is about, as Lord knows the government needs, improving legislation as it is presented.

In today’s debate, for example, on Bill C-15, which is an important bill to the Northwest Territories because of the devolution of powers and revenue to the people of the north, the opposition MPs have raised several important questions about the transfer of that power and how it would affect northern resources, but even in the absence of time allocation, which we encourage the government not to use, the bill will run its course. Likely it will end its second reading by the end of today.

It is disappointing that the debate on the final stage of the government’s latest omnibus budget bill will be limited to a single day on Friday, a day on which the House has limited hours.

What else is in store for the House in the week to come?

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to first start by thanking the House staff, you, and all members of the House for indulging Tuesday night in going through 284 virtually identical amendments from the opposition with regard to that budget implementation bill, all of which simply required deletion. Fortunately, those were reduced by the Speaker to some 16 to make the process more manageable. That did help us to advance the process, notwithstanding the clear efforts by the opposition to obstruct at every stage our

very important economic action measures for the benefit of Canada’s economy, for job creation, and economic growth for Canadians.

[*Translation*]

First let me thank all parties in the House for their co-operation on that. This afternoon we will continue and finish the second reading debate on Bill C-15, Northwest Territories devolution act. If we wrap it up before 5:30 p.m., we will return to the second reading debate of Bill C-11, Priority Hiring for Injured Veterans Act.

Today, all parties in the House worked together to pass—at all stages—Bill C-16, the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation Governance Act. Perhaps this is a sign of the Christmas spirit spreading throughout the parliamentary precinct. I hope it will continue into tomorrow and next week.

Tomorrow, we will have the third reading debate on Bill C-4, the economic action plan 2013 act, no. 2.

[*English*]

As I told the House on Tuesday, the budget implementation bill has a number of very important measures that our government has advanced. Unfortunately, once again we find the NDP opposing it, despite such things as the extension and expansion of the hiring credit for small business, which has the potential to benefit an estimated 560,000 employers and many thousands of employees they might hire into the future. That is something the NDP is voting against. We think it is important that it be put in place right away.

Monday will be the final allotted day of the autumn, which will see us consider a proposal from the New Democratic Party, followed by the supplementary estimates and a supply bill.

During the remaining time available to us next week, I hope to see the House adopt second reading of Bill C-15, if that does not happen today; second reading of Bill C-3, the safeguarding Canada’s seas and skies act; and report stage and hopefully third reading of Bill C-8, the combatting counterfeit products act, which was reported back from the hard-working industry committee this morning.

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**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

● (1505)

[*English*]

**NORTHWEST TERRITORIES DEVOLUTION ACT**

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-15, An Act to replace the Northwest Territories Act to implement certain provisions of the Northwest Territories Lands and Resources Devolution Agreement and to repeal or make amendments to the Territorial Lands Act, the Northwest Territories Waters Act, the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act, other Acts and certain orders and regulations, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure to get up on this important piece of legislation. I just confirmed to the government House leader that we foresee allowing this bill to move on to its next natural stage at the end of today's debate, that of going to committee for some important study.

Bill C-15 and our study of it are important because the bill finally follows through on a promise that was made long ago to the people of the Northwest Territories, which was for the full devolution of a number of powers. The New Democratic member from Western Arctic has been pushing the current and previous governments on this exact same measure.

Some caveats to this bill have been expressed by the Premier of the Northwest Territories and many first nations groups across the territories, one being that the government has included just a bit of a string back to Ottawa, back to the mother ship. It cannot quite completely let go of all of the decisions that will be made with respect to the land and waters of the territories.

This control has an impact on first nations people in particular, because a number of agreements have been made between first nations, the territorial government, and Ottawa. Questions arise as to how those agreements will be affected, particularly by the amendments to the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act, the MVRMA, which creates an environmental screening process for the Northwest Territories, with the exception of—and this is important—the Inuvialuit settlement area, which stands in its own separate body of legislation.

This is important, because someone like myself who represents a northern rural resource-rich part of the country often sees decisions that affect us greatly being made in Parliament with little to no consultation whatsoever, and with very little help back, once those resources are developed, for the services and programs we require not only to support that resource development but also to support our communities.

There is a new way of doing business when it comes to resource development. It is a somewhat precarious one. In times past, this country and its communities, homes, and schools were built on the backs of the resources, the endowment this country has. Those resources and their development allowed communities to come together.

Now we see a new development model in rural Canada. We see fly-in and fly-out camps. We see an explosion of foreign temporary workers under the Conservative government. That does not build communities. It does not build schools, hospitals, and the services people require. It does not build the heart of a community around those resources that we used to see.

This is important for many of us because many of these resources, particularly in the oil, gas, and mining sectors, are by definition non-renewable. They only happen once, and some of them have a certain lifespan. A mine can only be predicted to go on for so many years, perhaps a generation in some cases, and oil and gas developments sometimes have an even shorter lifespan than that.

It seems to me that when we transfer these responsibilities to northern people, in this case the Northwest Territories, we increase

the opportunity and the potential for allowing our resources to build those very same communities.

It is of note and of interesting timing that today, as we are debating this bill and the government is listening to New Democrats, first nations, and the territorial governments, we also see the report by Mr. Douglas Eyford, released just hours ago. It is entitled “Forging Partnerships, Building Relationships”. It is an important title. This is the special commission the Prime Minister just mentioned at the end of question period.

For many years, the Conservative government has absolutely ignored the will and intent of first nations people across all of Canada and in particular in British Columbia. It approaches the whole conversation around pipelines and resource development with the people who happen to live along the route and who happen to be most affected by these projects as one of inconvenience.

We are not an inconvenience. We are central to the conversation. First nations, in particular, have a constitutionally protected right and have land that is not ceded. Rights and responsibilities should be afforded them because the courts say so and our constitution says so, yet the Prime Minister had to go out and hire a special envoy.

He did a remarkable job, I might add. Lo and behold, he went to the affected communities to talk to the very first nations who are impacted and asked them for their opinions. What a revelatory idea.

The government had to go out and hire a special consultant to do the government's job, to go and listen to first nations people and find out what they were interested in, to begin to believe in and put truth to the idea of what section 35 of our charter guarantees, which is the obligation of the Crown, the federal government, to consult and accommodate.

• (1510)

Consult means to understand people, to listen to their interests and world view, and to try to come to some sort of accommodation over the impacts it may have on them if a mine, pipeline or any serious resource development were to go ahead. However, to the government and the Prime Minister in particular, this is somehow news. For years many of us, myself included, have said that while the government pretends to be a friend of the resource sector, it has actually been one of its worst enemies.

I can remember the Minister of Natural Resources saying and then committing to paper in an open letter to the Canadian people that the people who were raising questions, the very people he now says he respects and wants a relationship with, were foreign-funded radicals. That is what he called them. He further said they must be enemies of the state; what overheated, overblown and ignorant rhetoric from a federal minister of the Crown. To then suggest that does not have an impact on a relationship is also ignorant. It is short-sighted.

*Government Orders*

Did he somehow think this would increase certainty on the land base, that first nations would suddenly say, “He called us enemies of the state and foreign-funded radicals, so let us just agree to whatever plans the government has in mind”? Of course not. That is not what a Canadian reaction would be. That is not how first nations have reacted. They have reacted as they properly should. They were insulted. They were told that their rights and views did not matter and if they had any views and ideas that were contrary to what the Conservative government believed, then that must make them enemies of the state.

We hear that kind of language in other countries. It is language and rhetoric that is offensive. My Conservative colleagues across the way are shaking their heads. I agree. How dare a minister of the Crown stand and say anyone opposed to the government's idea must be a foreign-funded radical. That is what he said. He said anyone raising questions must be an enemy of the state. Is this how one builds a relationship? The Conservatives would do well to read the report that we have in hand today. They would do well to listen and actually act upon the recommendations of Mr. Eyford.

The Prime Minister had it here today. One of the specific recommendations was to construct a tripartite relationship with the provinces, the federal government and first nations. The Conservatives have been sitting on the report for four days now. The Prime Minister had an opportunity today to say the government is interested in that recommendation and sees it as so critical to the development of the resources the government claims to care about that it will act and show the leadership that Mr. Eyford and the first nations people of Canada are calling for.

We see in Bill C-15 some attempt by the government to finally, after many years in power, listen to the people of the north, to listen to the idea that giving up some of Ottawa's power in this regard would be a good idea. It did not throw that little string back. It could not quite make it all the way. It is keeping the MVRMA in, so that the federal government has discretion over land and water uses in the territories. We find that a bit unfortunate and somewhat curious. There is a five-year review of this particular article in the bill and that is encouraging to us, but if the Conservatives think that the legislation will not end up in court if they have not properly consulted first nations, then they can expect only that. They will spend millions of Canadian taxpayers' dollars defending their bill in court.

It seems to me so much more efficient to have the consultation up front and make the accommodations before following through. However, time and time again they go the opposite route, the bullying route, saying, “Take it or leave it, this is how it is going to be. We are the almighty powerful federal government and this is how we are going to enact our policies on your land and your territory”. It does not work that way. Small groups like the Supreme Court of Canada have told the government time and time again it does not work that way. The way it is going to work is that constitutional rights in this country will be protected. The New Democrats believe in them and believe in defending those rights each and every day.

When it comes to Bill C-15, a devolution bill allowing a greater transfer of power to the territories, New Democrats will support it. We will allow the debate to go on today so we can hear more views. Perhaps the government will even take some notes. Would that not

be nice for a change, if it showed a little humility from time to time? Who knows? It might even allow Parliament to do its job, which is to hold government to account and improve legislation. Too often, we have seen the other approach from the government, the arrogant approach, the bullying approach that says the legislation is perfect as it is and it will accept no amendments, no changes, no ideas, not just from the opposition but from any witnesses and experts that are brought to the table.

When we are dealing with first nations, it goes a step further. It means the courts get involved. Constitutions must be addressed and redressed. It seems to me that a new day will dawn. I only pray that there will be a conversion on the road to Damascus for the Conservative government, that it will finally realize its bullying approach will not work, that first nations' constitutional rights are guaranteed, and that to listen, consult and accommodate is the only way that this country will generate full prosperity for all people, not just a select few.

● (1515)

**Mr. Mark Strahl (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is nice to follow the opposition House leader, a fellow British Columbian. I am afraid in this case he has picked up his NDP boilerplate without actually looking at the record of the bill.

There have been full section 35 consultations with the Government of Canada and the Government of the Northwest Territories. Over 50 meetings were held with aboriginal groups, a full consultation and accommodation. There were changes made to the legislation that specifically addressed the concerns heard from those aboriginal groups during those consultations.

Perhaps in other cases I would agree. There have been court cases that have shown that there have been problems, but in this case, as the GNWT has said, as we have shown through the record, there were significant consultations and accommodations.

I hope the member will review the blues today from the committee meetings that were held in the Senate and at the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs where the representatives of the GNWT fully endorsed the bill and said it should go forward as planned. They fully recognized that the consultation was completed in a very robust manner.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague and provincial neighbour across the way for his comments, but he would also know that in that consultation, particularly around the MVRMA, which I mentioned in my speech and I am sure he was listening to that part, that representatives from the Métis Nation, the Tlicho as well as a third nation, the Gwich'in Tribal Council, said that in terms of a particular aspect of the legislation that impacted the land use and water use within the territories, there are already land agreements and water use agreements in place.

Bill C-15 would affect those agreements. Those first nations are not outside, contrary to what my friend just described, and he knows this. Therefore, let us be careful how we proceed because we cannot misrepresent how people feel about the entirety of the legislation.

The New Democrats are supporting the bill through to committee. We will hear from these same representatives. Hopefully the Conservatives will allow them to speak. We invite those guests to come because this is a bill that affects them more than it affects us. My bet is that we will hear those same concerns.

That is what true consultation and accommodation looks like.

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his speech on this matter and particularly for standing and being an additional voice in this place for the indigenous peoples of the Northwest Territories.

I am sure the government members on the other side read the same media we do. Hopefully they also reached out to those communities to see if they actually supported the legislation coming forward. Had they done that they would know that both the Gwich'in Tribal Council and the Tlicho have said resoundingly they totally oppose the part of the bill that would change the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act. They say, definitively, their people have spoken and what Canada is proposing is clearly unacceptable.

That does not sound like consent. It does not sound like the Conservatives have even accommodated what the people of the north have asked for, which is to have a direct voice in matters, not to have some central superboard.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Mr. Speaker, this is how the two stories weave together. In terms of the report from the Prime Minister's special envoy today about first nations consultation and accommodation, first nations are interested in resource development in Canada. They want to play a central role to that. They need and demand that their voices be respected. If Conservatives try to bulldoze over top of them, the Conservatives will only have trouble.

There are concerns around one aspect of the bill, and the Conservatives know this. If they did those consultation meetings with the first nations, as our member for Western Arctic has done, they would know that the first nations are in favour of devolution to the territories, but they have agreements in place over land management already. The bill is now subscribing a different view, a different decision-making model, which potentially, not definitively, could take and remove that aboriginal voice from that decision-making.

It is the same thing that the special envoy, Mr. Eyford, is pointing out to the Conservative government, that if they take first nations out of the conversation, if they bully them out of the way, they will resist

as is their constitutional right, which is their moral responsibility to defend the land, not just for this generation but for generations to come.

There are some hard heads on the other side. We have to keep knocking on them until they finally get the message, but they will because first nations people and their allies, New Democrats and many Canadians alike, are determined. We are determined to support and protect those rights.

• (1520)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise to speak on Bill C-15. It is a major piece of legislation, in terms of both its size and its implications for the residents of the Northwest Territories.

I would like to point out to the House that the residents of the Northwest Territories have been trying for a very long time to acquire powers that are similar to those of the 10 Canadian provinces. Their quest is entirely legitimate considering that the Northwest Territories have been part of Canada for a long time and that they are contributing more and more to our country's social and economic sphere, not to mention the fact that, from a geographical point of view, they occupy a huge space, a very large area.

For a long time now, the New Democratic Party has been in favour of enhanced status for the Northwest Territories that will allow them to move forward. With an adequate transfer of powers, they will be able to make progress in taking control of their destiny. Above all, we must recognize that it is entirely normal, legitimate and desirable that the residents of the Northwest Territories should have control over their future. After all, they are in the best position to understand the repercussions of decisions. They are living in their reality and experiencing the problems relating to their territory and their lifestyle, as well as any changes that occur. Things are changing very rapidly in that part of Canada. They can therefore make enlightened decisions that can help them meet the challenges of the modern world, and they can do so more quickly as well.

Of course, the NDP really wants to make sure that we meet their expectations and that we meet them completely and respectfully. In talking about respect, it is not enough merely for us to enact legislation or amend a range of different laws, because a great many laws are affected by this bill. We must also listen to the various groups that make up the society of the Northwest Territories. There are many different nations located in this huge territory. In the Northwest Territories, these groups face realities that are really very different.

This brings me to one very specific element of Bill C-15. The bill replaces the Northwest Territories Act. In addition, it affects the Northwest Territories Lands and Resources Devolution Agreement, and it amends other legislation such as the Territorial Lands Act and the Northwest Territories Waters Act. I would like to take this opportunity to speak primarily about the amendments to the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act.

*Government Orders*

Our work on the Standing Committee on Finance involved the consideration of another omnibus bill, the enormous Bill C-4, A second act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 21, 2013 and other measures. Of course, the omnibus aspect of the bill meant that we were again faced with a catch-all bill containing amendments to legislation ranging from the Supreme Court Act to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, as well as to the law governing labour relations in the public service of Canada.

• (1525)

This bill was a disgrace, and the part that involved the Mackenzie Valley really dealt with the Mackenzie Gas Project Impacts Fund Act. This is a very specific issue, one that is much narrower than the amendments made to the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act.

In reality, the new Mackenzie Gas Project Impacts Fund Act is a marketing campaign by the government. The idea of having financial resources set aside in order to mitigate the impact of the development of the Mackenzie gas project is not something new. It has been around for a long time.

Canada already had the Mackenzie Gas Project Impacts Act. It was passed in 2006, was most recently amended in 2011 and is still in effect.

The people of the Northwest Territories and the first nations have many concerns about this gas project. It has been in the background for a number of years but has still not been implemented, and we still do not have any real idea about when it will get going.

In addition, the Standing Committee on Finance has not heard from very many witnesses about the Mackenzie Gas Project Impacts Fund Act, despite the many hours that have been spent on Bill C-4 over the past few weeks.

Unfortunately, the committee has been able to devote only a few minutes and direct only a few questions to witnesses who are directly involved in the issue.

This is really shameful because the government, in a particularly underhanded way, hid, kept secret and failed to disclose this amendment, which should have been examined separately by the committee that was the most directly concerned, instead of being buried in the omnibus bill sent before the Standing Committee on Finance. That is really a shame.

Basically, it is a sign of contempt for the people of the Northwest Territories. Once we have completed our debates in the House at second reading and we are able to consider Bill C-15 in greater depth in committee, I hope that the government will show a great deal more respect than it did to the Standing Committee on Finance with regard to Bill C-4.

Several years ago, the Prime Minister asked the opposition parties to make suggestions and put forward ideas concerning our shared future. However, every single one of the ideas and suggestions put forward by the New Democratic Party were voted down by the Conservative members on the committee.

Were it not for the fact that Bill C-4 as a whole will have such serious, and even critical consequences, I admit that we might have laughed about the situation. It was almost comical to see my Conservative colleagues on the Standing Committee on Finance putting their hands up automatically.

• (1530)

Unfortunately, these are very serious matters. The new bill concerning the Mackenzie Gas Project Impacts Fund, that was hidden in the middle of the omnibus bill, Bill C-4, has finally been passed, even though no serious consideration has been given to it and even though there has been no consultation with those who are most directly concerned.

In addition to making proposals, as an opposition party, we tried to block the passage of six clauses in Bill C-4 that pertained directly to the Mackenzie gas project. These were clauses 282 to 287. We put forward a motion on each clause, that each one of them be deleted, considering the fact that it was completely impossible to thoroughly study the bill separately from the omnibus bill.

It is very sad that we have reached this point. The government is acting completely unilaterally and is paying no attention to any other opinions. I am not even talking about dissenting opinions; I am talking about reasonable accommodations for matters that should have been discussed and negotiated.

I must admit that Conservative government members sitting on the Standing Committee on Finance and other committees have, on rare occasions, agreed to certain minor concessions, in fact common sense suggestions. Many other common sense proposals were systematically rejected because they were not the government's ideas, which is truly lamentable. After all, both Conservative Party members and those of the other parties represent all Canadians. Consequently, we should respect each other and the various realities and great diversity of opinion among the people of this country. It is utterly unacceptable for a party, particularly one that holds a majority, to turn a deaf ear, to refuse to listen to reason, to refuse even to hear the merits of an idea and to refuse to discuss ideas that will have an impact on thousands of people.

Coming back to Bill C-15 as a whole, I have done everything in my power to shed light on the measures that will unfortunately be adopted without any consideration for the needs and fears of the people of the Northwest Territories. There is nevertheless something positive in all this, and that is why we will support this lengthy bill at second reading. The Northwest Territories are currently governed by a constitution, by specific statutes that restrict its powers relative to those of the 10 Canadian provinces. They obviously limit the power of the Government of Northwest Territories over resources, lands and water and revenue collection. A large portion of the revenue of the Government of the Northwest Territories obviously comes from federal government transfer payments.



*Government Orders*

•(1535)

This agreement is linked to the resources developed and revenues derived from those territories. Although it holds out some semblance of justice, it does not enable the Government of the Northwest Territories to collect its own revenue, at least not completely, and thus to enjoy the freedom and dignity associated with that responsibility and with the consequences of making decisions with respect to its development and the welfare of its population. That will be a major challenge. That is why I have focused on a very specific aspect of this bill.

The enactment of Bill C-15 will result in amendments to 42 different acts. That is a vast legislative field. It is quite extraordinary that we have ultimately wound up with this bill. Once again, I hope that the government will seriously consider discussing this matter in committee with all parties concerned and especially that it will agree to hear, consider and respect the witnesses' opinions on the subject of this major change to the destiny of the Northwest Territories. I have previously said so, and we made a distressing observation.

I had the honour to sit on the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights together with my colleague, our justice critic, and we had some success. However, we also saw the government close its mind completely. We found ourselves facing a very high wall. The government stuck to its position and especially abused its majority. It did not take advantage of its majority; it simply abused it in order to impose its ideas and its version of the facts.

It is entirely valid for someone to have a precise idea about a matter and to defend that idea. I will always respect that in my Conservative colleagues. However, Canada is far too big and diverse a country and has too many aboriginal nations on its land for the government to operate in isolation and to impose its will.

I am not saying that amendments to Bill C-15 are absolutely necessary. However, it would be tragic if our study led us to make amendments that were subsequently disregarded. It is normal for there to be inconsistencies. That is no one's fault; it happens in the normal course of affairs. This is an extraordinary bill, and, as is the case of any extraordinary and far-reaching bill, it is very hard to achieve perfection.

Let us hope the government will be willing to hear the other objections that are made and especially that it will consider the basic needs of the population and representatives of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories and of the tribal councils, which work very hard and must bear heavy responsibility for the welfare of their communities.

•(1540)

[*English*]

**Mr. Mark Strahl (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member spoke again about the necessity of the government, and it seemed to be the government alone, to consider the views of the witnesses who were brought before committee.

I would invite him to read the blues of today's committee meeting with members from the GNWT who said that the bill should not be amended, that it should not be split up and that it completely

addressed all of the concerns. There are provisions in these land claims agreements that allow for this to be done, the single board. They have said that they want this to move forward quickly.

We have heard from that witness today. Why does he not want to listen to that witness, but says that the government should listen to other witnesses? He will not listen to the GNWT, which clearly has endorsed the bill and wants us to move forward with it.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Raymond Côté:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question and his observation.

I hope he will not reproach me for automatically having serious doubts about his choice of quotation because we have so often been served up partial and partisan quotations on various topics. Consequently, it is very hard for us to trust the government.

That being said, if that is the will of the Government of the Northwest Territories, we will obviously complete the study in the House and consider the bill in committee. If the Government of the Northwest Territories can convince the 12 members of the committee that it should be passed as is, then so be it. However, that is to disregard other witnesses, because the representatives of the Government of the Northwest Territories will not be the only ones heard.

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have had the opportunity to raise this question before and I would like to reinforce it. In regard to the natural resources and the revenues that are generated from natural resources, a substantial change is being proposed and is widely accepted as a positive move.

Whether in committee, or at third reading or in response from the government, we hope to get a better understanding and a bit more detail as to how that formula would work. I know there is a percentage and a cap and they will be able to keep their transfer payments and so forth. I wonder if the member might provide some comment on that aspect of the legislation that is being proposed. We in the Liberal Party believe this is a step in the right direction and would be very much interested in the member's take on it.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Raymond Côté:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

Under the proposed agreement, with respect to the development of resources on public lands, we are told that the Government of the Northwest Territories will retain 50% of revenues to a given maximum, whereas the Government of Canada will retain the rest. That is the proposed agreement that is on the table.

It is not always easy, but I still try to avoid preconceived ideas when I begin consideration of a bill and I try to leave the door open to reasonable proposals.

As was said, the Government of the Northwest Territories would ultimately like the measures to be adopted. This has extraordinary potential for taking a step or two toward progress and achieving a result.

*Government Orders*

[English]

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the thoughtful comments from my colleague, particularly what he has to say about the committee, when the bill goes to committee. For us in the NDP, we are working in good faith and we want to bring forward amendments at the committee that would improve the bill, particularly as it relates to the Mackenzie Valley agreement, which is one of the concerns first nations have spoken about.

Could the member comment about what happens at committee? My experience is that no matter what amendments are put forward, they are automatically turned down by the government. I hope this time around there will be some genuine dialogue that takes place and some work at the committee, where the Conservatives will be open to looking at amendments to improve the bill. That is what we are trying to do. We are not holding this up. This is a debate that is taking place today. It will go to committee and that is where the proper process should take place in terms of amendments.

• (1545)

[Translation]

**Mr. Raymond Côté:** Mr. Speaker, that is truly an excellent question from my esteemed colleague.

I am going to make a sad observation about the implementation of the budget, about Bill C-4, which we studied in committee.

Unfortunately, we had to review, examine and vote on 472 clauses. The opposition parties introduced over 60 proposed amendments to that bill, and they were systematically voted down.

That is not even to mention the government's particularly underhanded trick of amending the rules in committee to allow independent members to submit their proposed amendments to the committee instead of here in the House. That showed a lack of respect and it reduced the powers of independent members. Those powers are widely recognized and have been in effect for a very long time.

The government respects virtually nothing, and that completely undermines our trust.

**Mr. Pierre Jacob (Brome—Missisquoi, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Beauport—Limoilou for his brilliant and compelling speech.

I would like to quote Robert McLeod, the Premier of the Northwest Territories. He said, "This Assembly has a vision of a strong, prosperous and sustainable territory. Devolution is the path to that future. Responsibility for our lands and resources is the key to unlocking the economic potential that will provide opportunities to all our residents."

Earlier, my Liberal Party colleague said that our position was a step in the right direction.

Why does my NDP colleague think that Liberal governments spent years ignoring the Canadian north and refusing to listen to the aspirations of northern residents?

**Mr. Raymond Côté:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

I must humbly admit that I cannot answer it, since I cannot read my Liberal colleagues' minds. All I can do is look at what has come out of their actions. I hope their unquenchable thirst for power is not making them forget other public considerations.

It is rather disappointing. The situation could have started moving forward a long time ago. Fortunately, this government is moving forward with the bill after being in power for almost eight years. We have to at least give the Conservatives that.

The Premier of the Northwest Territories will see part of his dream come true and will be able to be master of some of his own destiny. That is why the New Democratic Party will work in a positive and constructive way to pass Bill C-15.

[English]

**Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to join the debate on Bill C-15, which sets the table for the—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** Order, please. If I could interrupt, I remind all hon. members that we have reached the point in the debate where speeches will now be 10 minutes followed by five minutes of questions and comments.

The hon. member for Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing.

**Mrs. Carol Hughes:** Again, Mr. Speaker, I am happy to join the debate and I am happy to say that my speech will be 10 minutes.

The debate is on Bill C-15, which sets the table for the meaningful devolution of federal powers to the Northwest Territories under the lengthy title, "An Act to replace the Northwest Territories Act to implement certain provisions of the Northwest Territories Lands and Resources Devolution Agreement and to repeal or make amendments to the Territorial Lands Act, the Northwest Territories Waters Act, the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act, other Acts and certain orders and regulations". Who would think of having such a long title except the Conservatives, given the fact that we have seen all of the omnibus bills they have put through. This is basically an omnibus act, just about.

It is easy to tell by the length of the title that we are dealing with a large bill, so it is not surprising that the legislation would amend 42 acts as part of the process that would allow the Northwest Territories to take greater control of their own destiny, much the same way as provinces do. It is an important development that reflects the preparedness of the territories to take on a greater role in their administration and become more financially independent as well. We have heard over and over again from first nations, Inuit and Metis people who certainly want this. They want to be as independent as possible.

The New Democrats support the idea and are willing to work with the government on this legislation. We hope that some items can be tightened up at committee to address the concerns we are hearing from our partners in the Northwest Territories throughout this process and look forward to creating stronger legislation that makes sense to all involved, as well as an outcome that will be better than merely acceptable and would allow the Northwest Territories to grow into a more independent jurisdiction.

*Government Orders*

I want to repeat we hope to tighten this. Contrary to what the parliamentary secretary said a while ago, the witness in committee this morning did not say that he did not want any changes. It was very clear that he knew there should be some changes. However, what he said was that what was put forward by the government was basically the direction it had to take in order to move this forward at this point. He never said that he did not want any changes.

I want to be clear that we are not under the impression that this legislation does not have issues that require attention. There are items of concern that must be addressed and we are hopeful there is some willingness on the government side to work with Parliament to address outstanding stakeholder concerns. Again, it is not about just one witness, it is about many witnesses to come and hopefully the government will not try to rush this stage of committee. This has been a challenge for the government in the past, but we remain hopeful at this point.

Certainly, the pan-territorial regulator for the environmental screening of industrial projects is potentially problematic. It does away with a number of regulatory boards and processes, which are known and understood, and replaces them with a single regulator that will supposedly be more responsive, but will also have fewer teeth. We have heard from the government benches today that working groups or subcommittees would be able to address more specific concerns. However, it does not require a leap of faith to imagine that subcommittees or working groups will have the same strength as the entities being replaced, such as regional land and water boards.

The New Democrats are strong supporters of the devolution of more power and authorities to the territorial governments. Although we have no intention of standing in the way of devolution, we are committed to work to ensure that Bill C-15 meets northerners' expectations, not the government's expectations. Many of the reservations we hear about have to do with the changes to regulatory regimes.

With respect to the single regulator, it is important to listen to dissenting voices who speak from experience, people like the Northwest Territories' MLA Bob Bromley, who said in February of 2012, "The federal government's proposal to collapse the regional land and water boards into one big board is disturbing, unnecessary and possibly unconstitutional". He went on to describe it as "a single board does nothing to meet the real problem: failure of implementation".

● (1550)

We also have to recognize that the Conservatives have reserved control over appointments to the environmental review board and maintain control over the approval of licences. This is more like devolution with strings attached than it may seem at first blush. It may be more of a case of devolution in name only if the real power is still dependent on decisions from the minister's desk and his or her hand-picked appointees.

We can also ask if this superboard should not fall into place after outstanding land claims are settled. Is this a case of reaching further than necessary on one item and not challenging ourselves enough on another front? That said, devolution is an idea that has legs and that would give the Northwest Territories residents a greater voice in

decisions related to their economy and environmental protection, even if it comes with strings attached. However, it would be best to fix those strings attached. I stress that we have to address ongoing concerns about the legislation in committee. That stage must be taken seriously by the government. It should not assume that we cannot improve the bill.

The proposed legislation would do some important work that is welcome. It would fix the current scheme so that the government of the Northwest Territories would start to receive revenues from resource development and would rely less on federal transfer payments and taxes to deliver public programs and services. Under the new agreement, the NWT would keep 50% of the revenues collected from resource development on public land, up to a maximum amount that would be pegged to their operating costs or their gross expenditure base. The Government of Canada would retain the remainder. To reiterate, that would be 50% of the revenues collected from resource development.

I can tell members that when it comes to resource development, the NDP has always advocated that shared resources with first nations, first and foremost, are key when we are looking at major investments.

It is my understanding that this arrangement would allow for a little more money to remain in the territories than what is currently provided for by the federal government. That would require that resource development proceed, but it seems reasonable for us to assume that development would take place and that those moneys would become available.

This is a part of the bill that makes sense. However, the strength of a certain part of a bill does not create the authority to ram through the remainder without attempting to tighten up contentious items. If we do not, we will be stuck in a cycle of amending what has been missed at this critical stage. We are tired of seeing that. More and more of taxpayers' dollars are being spent in litigation trying to fix some of the critical pieces.

It is true that there is a danger that we could be constantly locked in discussion mode with no action, but we have to recognize that it is just as dangerous to consult and ignore. The desire of any government to notch an achievement in its belt has to be balanced with the strength of that achievement, which depends on the inclusion of the multiple voices who will be affected.

For the Conservative government, the ability to listen has proven to be a challenge. It is even more of a challenge if the voices the Conservatives are hearing are not entirely supportive of their initiatives. Often there is little in the way of acknowledgement of shared goals with stakeholders if the path to reach them is not virtually the same as that proposed by the government. We see that time and again in the way the Conservative government characterizes New Democrat views on resource development. The Conservatives present our views and policy initiatives in uncomplimentary ways, which is politically convenient but incorrect.

*Government Orders*

We would not be doing the job we were elected to do if we did not scrutinize legislation and propose changes. The Conservatives know as much and have even performed that role themselves, but they are more interested in zero-sum games. We hope that is not the case with the stakeholders in the Northwest Territories who can imagine other and better ways to pursue devolution.

To return to the larger concept of devolution, we have to ask ourselves if we are pursuing this in name more than in action. We also have to ask ourselves what we want from the process and what the best outcome might look like. We can look at other jurisdictions as well as at the history of devolution in Canada. Surely the heart of the matter has to do with improving independence and the ability of local populations to control their own lives. To ensure that this is the outcome, it is imperative to listen to the voices of people who will navigate the new arrangement we are debating. This is all the more true for the voices of first nations, who are significant players in this.

● (1555)

**Mr. Stephen Woodworth (Kitchener Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by making sure that the record is clear about something, and that is that the restructured board would not have permanent panels. Rather, the amendments would allow the chair to establish smaller committees to deal with applications before the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board. Further, in response to consultations, the proposed legislation would require the chair to appoint regionally nominated representatives to these smaller committees when they were considering an application that was entirely within that region.

The proposed amendments demonstrate the government's commitment to ensuring that regional knowledge is not lost. These improvements to the regulatory environment would increase proponent and investor confidence in resource development in the Mackenzie Valley.

I would like to know what the member opposite thinks about our government's support for legislated regional representation on panels. Surely she supports that.

● (1600)

**Mrs. Carol Hughes:** Mr. Speaker, let us be clear. Improvements can be made, and I think we are going to leave it to the witnesses to tell us the concerns they have about the revamping of these boards.

Considering the massive revamp this bill represents, why did the Conservatives reserve control over appointments to the environmental review board and maintain control over the approval of licences? I think that is the bigger question.

**Mr. Craig Scott (Toronto—Danforth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, as a follow-up to the question that was just put, I wonder if my hon. colleague can address the following issue. It may well be that there is some kind of process for the integration of region-specific analysis in the new superboard, as it is being called. It is also the case that what is being extinguished are existing boards that have been negotiated with first nations communities as part of creating those regional boards. Their role in both the co-management regime under those regional boards and in the appointment process to those regional boards is now gone. Does that cause the member some concern?

**Mrs. Carol Hughes:** Mr. Speaker, of course we are extremely concerned about this. We just have to look at the government's record on that front. It is not very stellar.

We have some testimony already from the process that actually took place before. I hope the Conservatives will allow the witnesses to come forward and will listen to what they say with respect to changes that should actually strengthen this so that it would be acceptable to those first nations that are not supportive of having everything thrown in, including the kitchen sink. I hope they will ensure that what they are getting is a good deal, not a deal that will see them going before the court.

**Mr. Mark Strahl (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, contrary to what the member for Toronto—Danforth just said, there are specific provisions in the land claim agreements with the Gwich'in, Sahtu, and Tlicho first nations that allow for a single larger board. These were contemplated during those land claims negotiations. There are specific provisions in each of those agreements that allow specifically for this board. Again, if we want to talk about witness testimony, we heard that today from the minister from the GNWT.

Perhaps the member can talk about how the land claim agreements of those three areas specifically allow for the board that has been envisioned in Bill C-15.

**Mrs. Carol Hughes:** Mr. Speaker, let me be very clear. We understand that the people of the Northwest Territories have worked towards gaining more province-like powers for decades now and want to ensure that they receive the best possible agreement to do that.

As I said before, when the minister was before us today, he was holding back on things he wanted to say. That is because he wants to see an agreement passed before the next federal election. He did not want to say that there should not be changes at this point. I think he wants to be sure, just as the NDP wants to be sure, that when the witnesses come forward and the concerns are raised that those issues are going to be addressed.

I would just ask again that the Conservative government take those into consideration. It should not be "my way or the highway" when it looks at this bill. The government should leave some room for improvement.

● (1605)

**Mr. Craig Scott (Toronto—Danforth, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to continue along the same lines as my hon. colleague and indeed as the questions that just came from across the aisle. The questions were well formulated from a certain perspective, but they miss out on a very important point.

*Government Orders*

It is indeed the case that the regional water and surface water boards would be extinguished by the act and that a certain provision of the land claims agreements would be used as the government's justification for its unilateral right to change those regional boards into a larger superboard. That is where the real issue is. It is being done in a way that steps out of the partnership or the co-management arrangement set up by the land claims agreements, to unilaterally move away from that toward a new structure that does not have the agreement of all the first nations involved. That is the issue. The issue is a fine interpretation of everything in section 22.4.1 of these land claims agreements. It is somehow saying that yes, there can be a larger board. It then goes from that to the idea that this means that the federal government, through Parliament, can be the one to determine what that larger board would look like, with the resistance of certain first nations.

What I would like to do, and what I would like to spend some time on, is relatively unusual. It is important to voice the documented concerns from several first nations governments in the Northwest Territories on precisely this issue. I want to put it in the context of two things before I actually quote from two letters.

Keep in mind that Canada has supported the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. In 2010, we issued a statement of support after some initial reluctance to support the declaration.

Article 19 states:

States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free, prior and informed consent before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them.

My hon. colleague, the member of Parliament for Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, has tabled Bill C-469, an act to ensure that the laws of Canada are consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. It is in that spirit and context that I believe this legislation and the attempt to move to the superboard, without bringing along first nations partners in the previous regional boards that are going to be extinguished, has to be looked at.

Keep in mind that some of this discussion has to be about section 35 of our own Constitution. The Constitution Act of 1982 enshrined, constitutionally, aboriginal rights and the treaty rights of aboriginal peoples. The whole question of consultation, which has to be at least meaningful consultation, whether or not that is evolving into a situation, where in certain contexts the consent of involved first nations peoples is needed, also has to be taken into account.

I have a letter dated July 12, when early drafts of the legislation before us, that is, the sections that do not deal directly with devolution but the sections that deal with amending the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act, was sent to the hon. Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development. It is from the Tlicho government. I would like to read from certain portions of this letter:

Failure to Engage: From the beginning of the discussion about amendments to the MVRMA, the Tlicho position has been the same—All Aboriginal peoples of the Mackenzie Valley desire a system for regulating the use of land and water and resources that is in partnership between themselves and the Governments of Canada and the NWT. Further, an appropriate process for identifying and implementing changes the MVRMA and regulatory system must be a partnership process designed by consensus agreement of the partners. Finally, the objective of this process should

be to strengthen the resource management system for the Mackenzie Valley in order to protect the lands, waters and resources on which the Tlicho rely for the traditional economies, customs, values and way of life as well as to promote sustainable development.

● (1610)

The letter goes on to discuss how, as far back as the fall of 2011, two years ago, aboriginal peoples in the north presented the government with a draft framework for a process respecting changes to the MVRMA and the regulatory system in the Northwest Territories. In the letter, they refer to that as the framework. They attached the document to the letter, so it can be made available. Then they go on to say:

It sets out a good faith process to collaborate and negotiate a new co-management regime that respects the interests of all the parties. We did not get any initial response. In January 2012, at the Crown-First Nations Gathering in Ottawa, we hand-delivered this Framework to the Prime Minister. We finally received a reaction. Minister Duncan rejected without reasons the Framework—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** Order, please. I remind the member of the rule. Please be mindful of that.

**Mr. Craig Scott:** I understand the rule, Mr. Speaker. The minister:

...rejected without reasons the Framework and Canada has refused to engage in the collaborative process. By letter dated April 5, 2012 I wrote to...[the minister] to set up a meeting to deal with the lack of a mandate for the Chief Negotiator to deal substantively with our draft Framework and I requested that "we meet as soon as possible on a government to government basis, so as to resolve this issue". [The minister]...by letter dated June 5, 2012, refused to meet with us by saying "I do not believe that an additional meeting is required at this time". We have not been provided a means to participate meaningfully in this process.

The Tlicho Government then goes on to say it has three major concerns. One is the fact of extinguishing the land and water boards and merging everything into the superboard proposal. Second is expanding the federal minister's role and authority with relation to that board; and the third is mandating statutory time limits on both the superboard and another board.

What is important to note here—and this goes to the heart of the question that was legitimately asked, I believe, by the colleague across the way—is on the issue of extinguishing:

To put it plainly, 22.4.1 of the Tlicho Agreement is the "finish line" and not the "starting gate" for this process. The Wek'èezhii Land and Water Board plays a fundamental role in the environmental security of the Tlicho and in our having a say about what developments can happen in the Wek'èezhii and our ability to maintain our way of life. The Tlicho agreement cannot be interpreted to say that Canada, on its own volition, can force the larger board into existence. Any amendment of such a nature must be part of a process that reflects the interests of all the parties to the Tlicho Agreement and respects the decade's long negotiated compromises that are currently reflected in Chapter 22. If there was an agreed to legitimate reason for the establishment of the larger board, then that is a matter that needs to be negotiated between the parties with the same solemnity as the negotiations that created the Treaty provision.

So it is that this letter is a very good example of why there is concern that there is nothing wrong at all with the devolution part of the act in question, but the tacking on to it of these new provisions turning Mackenzie Valley resources and water management into a superboard is definitely something that is causing concern.

*Government Orders*

Everybody has said that therefore the committee process—not the committee process that is going on right now, but the committee process after second reading—will be crucial. I just urge all concerned to actually listen to the concerns being presented and see whether or not there is some way to make sure that whatever emerges is something that can be said to be an extension of the partnership that these prior land claims agreements represent and the co-management regime they instituted, which is now being, frankly, yanked away semi-unilaterally.

I would end by saying that the letter very eloquently said:

The honour of the Crown cannot be found in Canada's proposed imposition of its will in its "Action Plan" in respect to regulatory reform and the deepening of its powers in the legislated proposal.

...Canada can expand the role of the federal Minister, obliterate the Wek'èezhii Land and Water Board and then impose arbitrary and unneeded time limits on decisions on development in the Wek'èezhii region.... The entire way in which Canada is purporting to impose its Action Plan assumes that the regulatory regime is a federal enterprise that can be interpreted and modified by Canada alone.

The whole point is that it is a mistaken perspective. We need partnership and we need a return to a co-management philosophy.

• (1615)

**Mrs. Kelly Block (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our government's proposed amendments to the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act include many measures to increase environmental protections, including increased fines and the introduction of a civil penalty regime.

We have yet to hear any of your views on increased environmental protection measures in the bill.

The bill would also include amendments to allow for cost recovery of environmental assessments. Again, we have not heard any view from your party on these important additions to the regulatory framework in the Northwest Territories.

What is the NDP's position on our government's efforts to increase environmental protection for the benefit of Canada's north?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** Twice, the parliamentary secretary asked to hear my views on the matter. I am presuming, in fact, that she is actually looking for the views of the hon. member for Toronto—Danforth.

The hon. member for Toronto—Danforth.

**Mr. Craig Scott:** Mr. Speaker, as our hon. colleague across the way just said, it may well be that my colleagues would prefer to hear your views on this matter.

However, quite seriously, I think the short answer is—to the extent that, after more study and the committee process, it turns out that environmental protection is enhanced in ways that are mutually agreeable to all parties and that there is not an element of the bill that ties into the problems I just discussed in my speech—where there may be a higher level of environmental protection but it has been imposed, in terms of the system by which it will occur, there has to be some kind of give-and-take between higher protection and imposition.

Section 57 is very important to know, because it says:

The Governor in Council may, by order and on the Minister's recommendation, prohibit any use of waters that is specified in the order...if the Governor in Council considers

It may well be that this is well-intentioned, but it is also impositional coming from the federal level. We have to see what the balance yields here.

[Translation]

**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe (Pierrefonds—Dollard, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his very well-informed and enlightening speech. I have here several quotes from a June 2011 Auditor General's report, drawn from the chapter on programs for first nations on reserves. In this chapter, the auditor general at the time showed how, despite the government's investments and efforts, the situation of Canada's first nations had not improved in many areas, such as education and housing. The report recommended several structural changes to move forward and achieve results. It reads:

We recognize that the federal government cannot put all of these structural changes in place by itself since they would fundamentally alter its relationship with First Nations.

This report therefore urges the government to develop the partnership in an entirely different way in order to get first nations involved in the process of structural change.

I think this relates to what my colleague was saying about the importance of partnership. I really liked to hear him stress that. Does he have anything else to add on the importance of partnership or on the possible consequences of neglecting to form a respectful and responsible partnership?

**Mr. Craig Scott:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

All that I will say is that, yes, the partnership is really important for the reasons I gave in my speech. It is also important that we commend the Premier of the Northwest Territories for the partnership regarding devolution. However, the problem with the bill now before us is that there is no partnership with regard to the boards that deal with water. That is the problem.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the question to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment is as follows: the hon. member for La Pointe-de-l'Île, Ethics.

Resuming debate. The hon. member for Pierrefonds—Dollard.

• (1620)

**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe (Pierrefonds—Dollard, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, before beginning my speech on Bill C-15, I would like to send a message to the community of Kuujuaq and the team and students at Jaanimarik School, where I taught. It is a place where I had some great times. Before beginning my speech on Bill C-15, I would like to send the people there my warm greetings and my best wishes for the holidays.

*Government Orders*

Yesterday, I was in the House when my colleague from Western Arctic gave his speech on this bill. I can say that I felt privileged to hear a speech from a member who is in such a good position to express opinions and criticisms of the bill. The member works very hard on behalf of his constituents and he knows the reality in the Northwest Territories.

I am going to paraphrase his ideas because I do not have an exact quotation from his speech. The member for Western Arctic said a number of times that they wanted the same powers as we have. I use the word “they” to mean his community. His community wanted the same powers as every other provincial community in this country. That really touched me. He also said he had witnessed a number of the phases of colonialism in the years that he had lived in the Northwest Territories. Again, I found it quite moving and powerful to hear him say this in a debate.

As the member for Pierrefonds—Dollard, I cannot say the things he said. However, I can say that I feel somewhat uncomfortable knowing that people have more or fewer powers depending on where they live. I find it interesting and it also makes me uneasy.

The people of the Northwest Territories want more powers like the powers the provinces have. They have been asking and fighting for them for very long time. However, successive Liberal and Conservative governments have never managed to give them the powers they have been demanding for so long.

I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill C-15. This bill is a step in the right direction, and I am not the only person who thinks that. I feel that important players sat around the table and that they have given their support in principle to Bill C-15, which is a step in the right direction in meeting the demands of the residents of the Northwest Territories and their elected representatives.

Yesterday I had the honour to hear the speech by my colleague from Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou. It was another inspiring and well-informed speech. That member has negotiated historic agreements on behalf of first nations. He said he had previously seen very important agreements negotiated in one year. This proves that very important and complex agreements can be negotiated when there is the political will on all sides to co-operate and move forward.

I am once again paraphrasing my colleague, who is in a very good position to offer such important opinions. An equally important agreement was previously signed within one year. Once again, I repeat that successive Liberal and Conservative governments failed to keep their promises over all those years of struggle by the residents of the Northwest Territories, so congratulations on Bill C-15, which is before us.

I want to emphasize, however, that this bill is not perfect. As my NDP colleagues have noted several times, it has deficiencies. We hope to see improvements made to it before it goes any further.

Consultation and partnership are two concepts that my colleague from Toronto—Danforth mentioned a little earlier. He did a very good job of explaining and elaborating on them. I will not go back over all the details.

However, I would like to talk about an Auditor General's report that was published in June 2011 and specifically about chapter 4 of that report on programs for first nations on reserves. I was a member of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts for two years and was there when it examined that specific chapter of the Auditor General's report. You will see the connection I make with Bill C-15 and consultations a little later.

● (1625)

The report was very critical and very alarming with respect to the quality of life and living conditions of people living on first nations reserves in Canada. This is what it said:

Notwithstanding the considerable efforts made, conditions have generally not improved for First Nations in each of the areas subject to our audit.

The report addressed many issues, including the widening education gap among first nations, the worsening housing shortage and the burden of reporting requirements for first nations, which remains heavy.

Despite investments and efforts, results are slow in coming. Not just any results; we are talking about results in education, housing and other matters essential to human dignity. That is happening here in this country.

I want to point out that this report was released in June 2011 as something of a follow-up to a report released in 2006. It represents an ongoing effort on the part of the auditor general of the time to shed light on what was not working and to make practical suggestions and recommendations to the government. Unfortunately, despite that follow-up, the auditor general did not see any improvements.

What I am saying is important because the auditor general suggested structural changes after observing major problems and challenges. It will not go into detail about the structural changes she recommended, but I want to emphasize how the auditor general recommended going about making the kind of structural changes that would produce meaningful results for people, for children and for families. Once again, in her words:

We recognize that the federal government cannot put all of these structural changes in place by itself since they would fundamentally alter its relationship with First Nations. For this reason, First Nations themselves would have to play an important role in bringing about the changes. They would have to become actively engaged in developing service standards and determining how the standards will be monitored and enforced. They would have to fully participate in the development of legislative reforms. First Nations would also have to co-lead discussions on identifying credible funding mechanisms that are administratively workable and that ensure accountable governance within their communities. First Nations would have to play an active role in the development and administration of new organizations to support the local delivery of services to their communities.

Addressing these structural impediments will be a challenge. The federal government and First Nations will have to work together and decide how they will deal with numerous obstacles that surely lie ahead.

*Government Orders*

That is the background behind the suggestions made by the government's own independent expert and the importance she gives to the role of first nations in any decision-making process, in selecting and implementing any changes. According to the former auditor general, that was crucial to achieving any positive results. That report was released a little over two years ago, maybe two and a half years ago. I hope to see some results. I hope the recommendations of that report will be implemented, which is what the government promised.

Now let us get back to Bill C-15. I drew the parallel and I took the time to clearly describe the context because if consultations were in fact held for the drafting of Bill C-15, then it is troubling to hear the Conservatives say that the bill has the support of the people. It is important to remember that first nations and Métis people are still worried and find it unfortunate that their voices did not carry enough weight in those consultations. Indeed, the role of the government, of any government, is not to simply listen and then make unilateral decisions regardless.

I would like to quote a senior adviser of the Tlicho government:

We believe that more dialogue is needed and that we should be able to make observations regarding the changes. Our point of view must be heard. After all, three parties signed the agreement in 2005.

In closing, I would like to say that work still needs to be done on this bill. I will be proud to support Bill C-15 at second reading, but I hope it will be the subject of serious work in committee. People still want to be heard. They do not want just to be listened to, but rather they want their opinions and their suggestions to really be considered. I have every hope that this will happen in committee. We will see how it turns out and how this bill evolves.

• (1630)

**Mr. Stephen Woodworth (Kitchener Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her comments and thoughts.

[*English*]

In particular, I want to thank her for her desire to support this bill at second reading and for her very kind comments about the fact that the government is moving to redress a request for devolution that the previous government left unanswered and that the government is on the right track.

I want to respond to some of the comments made earlier to make sure the record is clear for anyone listening at home. People need to look at clause 136 of this bill to understand that the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board in fact will continue, with one member appointed on the nomination of the Gwich'in first nation, one member appointed on the nomination of the Sahtu first nation, one member appointed by the Tlicho first nation, and members appointed by other first nations in the Mackenzie Valley region outside the settlement areas in Wek'èezhii and so on.

I want to reassure the member opposite as well that the same degree of consultation with first nations is going to continue in the smaller subcommittees regarding land, water, and waste decisions. I would like to ask the member opposite if in fact she is pleased that the government is continuing to work with these first nations in Canada.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for listing all of the witnesses that will appear before the committee. I am pleased to know that those individuals will appear before committee and that their testimony will be heard. It is an important stage, and I want to congratulate the committee on inviting those representatives to testify.

However, my colleague and I both know that inviting a witness to appear before the committee is not the final step in having experts participate in the committee's review. The testimony also needs to be taken seriously and expert recommendations need to be considered and included in amendments to the bill, if warranted.

I was a member of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women when we were studying a bill about first nations. It was about first nations women, specifically. Numerous people testified and asked, for example, for an extension or an amendment to the bill, but the government had no issues moving the bill forward without amendments because we had heard from some witnesses who agreed with it. It is important to hear from witnesses in committee; however, that needs to be coupled with action and genuine respect for expert testimony.

[*English*]

**Mr. Stephen Woodworth:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I have some concern about whether there may have been a translation issue. I want to make it very clear for the record that the first nations I was referring to would be appointed members of the board under this legislation. I was not referring to first nations being called to committee.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** I am not sure whether that is a point of order, but someone will review the transcript to make sure that the translation was correct.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Winnipeg North.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I always find it interesting when the Conservatives and New Democrats feel it is important to be critical of the Liberal Party. They work hand in hand at times, and I suspect it is because they are somewhat nervous. It can be very challenging for them to challenge the progress that the Liberal Party provided for our great nation over the years. In fact, they are not the first party to deal with devolution of authority up north. We could talk about the Yukon and dozens of other types of agreements on self-government and so forth.

One thing we need to recognize is that we cannot use a magic wand. Only in the New Democrats' dream world do they believe that they can wave a magic wand and make something happen overnight. The reality is that it takes time.

My question for the member is this: given her wholehearted support for making the Northwest Territories and the Yukon, et cetera, into full-fledged provinces, when does she believe it would have been most appropriate, given history, to make the constitutional change to incorporate those territories as provinces?



*Government Orders*

•(1635)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe:** Mr. Speaker, I could just say that it is a good thing the member was able to express his frustration.

However, the fact remains that during the 13 years that the Liberals were in power, and despite the repeated requests of the residents of the Northwest Territories, these people never saw a bill that fulfilled their desires. The facts speak for themselves, and I am sorry if that upsets my colleague. Maybe he was not here during those 13 years; I do not know.

I hope that Bill C-15 will allow us to move forward and that it will meet the expectations of the residents of the Northwest Territories.

**Ms. Françoise Boivin (Gatineau, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I will respond to what my Liberal colleague said.

As far as agreements with the first nations go, this is one of the biggest problems in this country. Everyone is trying to be known as the one who did the best, but nothing ends up getting done. That is what is unfortunate.

My Liberal friends are quick to reference the Kelowna accord. My parents always told me that when you wait until the last minute to solve a major issue, you can make mistakes. That is what happened in the last months of the Liberal regime. I know something about that, since I lost the election in 2006.

That said, I wanted to talk about humility, since Bill C-15 addresses a topic I am not very familiar with, nor are many Canadians. That is because we come from communities where we do not know much about this topic. Everyone wants to be sympathetic, but we do not know everything about the situation. I think this is connected to the importance of democracy.

I have found the debate on Bill C-15 at second reading absolutely fascinating. It has been interesting for a girl like me from Gatineau, a suburb not too far from here where we don't necessarily see these kinds of problems. It has helped me understand the problem facing my colleague from Western Arctic, whose riding represents the third largest land mass, after Nunavut and Quebec. That is not nothing. There may be fewer people, but he still has to meet all of their needs.

This morning, my colleague from Marc-Aurèle-Fortin said that the member for Western Arctic had to visit the communities in his riding by airplane, whereas I only had to cross the bridge. Every evening, when I have finished here, I can take part in activities in my riding. I may finish late, but I sleep in my own bed and I am in my own place. It is quite a small area and therefore not very hard to get around, even though there are more people.

It is another reality. That is when this exercise in which the 308 members of the House may have something interesting to say about a bill becomes extremely important. Not everyone necessarily wants to speak on all topics. In his Thursday question to the government House leader, our House leader said that the second reading debate on Bill C-15 would very probably end quite naturally.

However, debates in the House rarely end quite naturally. Instead an end is usually imposed on them. It feels good to be able to act that way. You come out a winner. Sometimes, even when we tell the

government that we support a bill, it throws a brick in our face. For the government, it is never enough to say that we agree and that we will vote at second reading to send the bill to committee.

Is there anything more natural than to take the time to study a fairly long and complex bill in committee? As a lawyer, I never had the pleasure of practising aboriginal law. When I spoke with colleagues of mine who did, they told me it was quite a specialty. I listened to them talk about treaties, rights and what all that is about. I saw that it could be a complex specialty.

When we sit down with a nation like the first nations and claim we are equals, then we try to impose our ideas, sparks can fly. It is not always easy. Sometimes we hear reactions from certain groups that, rightly or wrongly, are not completely satisfied with the bill.

•(1640)

Those people have a right to be heard as part of the democratic process in place in Canada. This week, importance was attached to a bill that was said to be about democratic reform, whereas in fact it concerns only a few very minor aspects of democratic life in this country. For people who say they are great democrats, one of the most important issues should be the right of members, of duly elected representatives, to speak in the House. They should have the right, in committee, to examine the various issues that may arise, to ensure that when the bill returns to the House, we are able to continue the debate on points that we have to defend in the circumstances in order to produce the best possible act.

Bill C-15 replaces the Northwest Territories Act to implement certain provisions of the Northwest Territories Lands and Resources Devolution Agreement and to repeal or make amendments to the Territorial Lands Act, the Northwest Territories Waters Act, the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act, other acts and certain orders and regulations.

I heard the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development becoming upset because a few members of the official opposition were asking questions and because some speakers were wondering what certain protections or certain provisions might actually mean. This makes me fear the worst. It makes me think that, when we find ourselves in committee again, there will be none of the respect that we expect from colleagues who play the same role we do and represent their constituents. We have a role to play. However, when we ask questions or when we put forward the viewpoint of a particular witness, they tell us automatically that we know nothing about the matter and that we just want to prevent things from going smoothly and moving forward quickly.

As I was saying, when these matters come to the House, they may perhaps be a tiny bit urgent, but this is because the government side has been procrastinating for quite a while. The NDP members will not carry the torch of procrastination that the Liberals and Conservatives have carried so blithely over the years.

*Government Orders*

I will never be uncomfortable to rise and say that I will be working seriously in committee. We are always going to be doing this work, work that goes beyond words, especially if it involves the first nations and aboriginal groups, as it does here. They have the right to be heard. We have so much baggage from working on other bills. Again this morning, at the meeting of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, we were looking at the issue of contraband tobacco. We were meeting with representatives of the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne and the Mohawk Council of Kahnawake. They told us they had not really been consulted. It appears they have been told they are a big part of the problem but at the same time they are not being consulted.

Consulting, as my colleague from Pierrefonds—Dollard said, is making sure that we are talking as equals, not just pretending.

Frequently, the way in which conclusions to bills are drafted leaves the impression that the first nations are being told that they have to take what we give them or they will have nothing. If that is what negotiation is, they are going to find themselves in court and we will not be any further ahead. It will take a lot longer to fix that than if we sat down and talked as equals.

• (1645)

[English]

**Mr. Stephen Woodworth (Kitchener Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my friend's comments across the way and I respect her legal ability, so I would like to suggest that it would not be too difficult for her to read the act. If she looks in the first 30 clauses, she will see the main issues. We all know that if Moses had been a lawyer, the Ten Commandments would have taken 50 tablets instead of two, but the essence of it is there.

I also want to reassure my colleague across the way that Bill C-15 was developed only after consultation with aboriginal groups, northerners, territorial governments, and industry. In fact, aboriginal groups have been active participants in the devolution negotiations with Canada and the Government of the Northwest Territories. Since 2010, when the government announced its action plan to improve the northern regulatory regimes, there have been extensive discussions on the land and water board restructuring proposal. Over 50 meetings were held with aboriginal governments and organizations.

Does my friend not think it is time that this place found the political will to finally move on and complete this devolution?

**Ms. Françoise Boivin:** Mr. Speaker, it is moving on. It is at second reading and probably debate will end in a few minutes. It will go to committee. It is moving along. I wish I could have done something prior, but there was nothing in front of the House prior. I cannot move faster than the government.

I would send the question back to my esteemed colleague. He should bring it on, and we will discuss it and get it done. We try to be the miracle department, but members know how it is.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I know there was a great deal of concern about how the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act is being incorporated into the bill. It is important for us to note that, once passed, it will have a significant impact on a number of pieces of legislation. There was some concern as to whether or not the legislation could have been

broken into two parts, because there was more concern regarding the amalgamating of several land and water boards into one board. There still seem to be some outstanding concerns in relation to that.

What does she believe would have been a better way of approaching this, or does she think we might have been better off having two pieces of legislation to deal with this?

**Ms. Françoise Boivin:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question, but I do not think that my answer will really matter.

[Translation]

It is a very hypothetical question because it is not going to be divided. I would have preferred removing the two little clauses about the Supreme Court of Canada from Bill C-4, but that did not happen. There is a difference between the real situation and what I would have wanted to see or what would have been natural to expect.

Are there parts that are easier to pass than others? As I said at the beginning of my speech, I am going to leave it up to the experts in aboriginal rights and devolution or transfer between a territory and the federal government. Perhaps these matters will also be raised in committee.

Furthermore, we go through these different stages to try to find the best ways of passing provisions that make sense, that remedy a certain situation and do so properly.

**Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I wish first to point out that we are supporting this bill in the hope that it will be referred to committee, so that if there are shortcomings in terms of building consensus with first nations in the Northwest Territories, we will be able to correct them. The NDP accordingly supports the bill, but we do think it will have to be studied very carefully in committee, so that it actually addresses the needs and questions of the people who live in the Northwest Territories.

The constituency of my colleague from Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou borders my own, and I meet him very frequently. He has negotiated similar agreements in the past, including the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement. He has emphasized the importance of recognizing the principles of equality and respect between nations. He has also raised significant concerns about the lack of dialogue and unilateral amendments in the drafting of Bill C-15.

One thing that particularly intrigues me about the bill is how long it took the federal government to act on a nation's demands. While the 500-page James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement was negotiated and signed in just one year, successive federal governments took over 13 years to introduce Bill C-15. First there were the Liberals, and now this Conservative government has come up with what we are considering today. One thing I am especially concerned about, therefore, is why it took so many years to reach this point.

The economic emancipation of the Northwest Territories is one important aspect. As assistant critic on energy and natural resources, I know very well that development in Canada's north will generate jobs. It is hoped that this development will serve the best interests of the people who live there and give them a prosperous and sustainable future without harming the environment.

*Government Orders*

Yesterday, addressing the Economic Club of Canada, the member for Outremont and NDP leader talked about this party's vision to build a sustainable, balanced and prosperous energy future in the 21st century.

Natural resources are a blessing, and the energy sector drives the Canadian economy. The people of the north have a unique opportunity to become a major cog in our economy.

It is hoped that there will be good jobs for northern families, including first nations, so that they can derive the maximum potential from our natural resources in a responsible way that is fair to future generations.

I am aware that energy rates and other costs are high for people in the north. This leads to higher prices for all consumer products. I hope that it will at last become possible to make the cost of living affordable for people in the Northwest Territories.

Sustained development is crucial if everyone is to be included in Canada's economy. We have to promote more sharing of the benefits of development and make sure we put in place conditions so that future developments proceed in a responsible way. "Responsible" means planning so as to take environmental factors into consideration. Where appropriate, it also means including arrangements whereby the polluter pays.

The example of the huge industrial dump that sits close to one of the world's deepest freshwater lakes—the Giant mine tailings pond near Great Slave Lake in Yellowknife—reminds us of the fragility of northern ecosystems.

For decades, those who live in the Northwest Territories have endeavoured to secure powers resembling those wielded by the provinces. The NDP favours the transfer of powers and supports the Northwest Territories in their efforts to assume some federal responsibilities in the north.

Through this transfer affecting land and resources in the Northwest Territories, we are writing a new page in Canadian history. To paraphrase Peter Parker, "With great power comes great responsibility."

I hope that our political leaders and businesses operating in the north will be diligent in doing their duty in the interests of those who live there. I know they will.

● (1650)

One might say that it is always easier to accept such responsibilities when things are being done in practice on our own turf.

The people of the Northwest Territories are best placed to know how their resources should be used, and they should have the final say in the matter. I trust that future developments will take place in partnership with everyone and that instead of regarding first nations as people who need convincing, we will take the opportunity to forge a genuine and sustainable partnership.

We have to develop a true nation-to-nation relationship with first peoples. I can bear witness to the importance of including them as participants in our economy. To that end, we have to support

northern communities in order to develop local talents, so that skilled workers can find employment locally.

After reading this bill, and on the basis of my personal experience, although I do not live in the Northwest Territories, I would really like to take the time to emphasize something. I come from a northern region and I can say to what extent people sometimes feel that the decisions taken make no sense. They wonder whether these people have ever visited the north and if they know how things are done.

With this bill, I am really happy to see that power and authority are being restored to first nations communities and the Government of the Northwest Territories. They will thus be able to manage their natural resources and their public land themselves. This is only logical. When we make our own decisions, they are often more enlightened and better understood.

This bill may still have some shortcomings, however. They will be addressed in committee and, I hope, during consultations with the communities affected and the governments concerned.

This bill will restore power to communities, where there will perhaps be more effective management of their natural resources. We are aware of the potential of our natural resources in the north in the years ahead. Being able to restore this power to communities will give them a real opportunity to build a long-term vision and determine what they want for themselves and for the Northwest Territories and how they wish to develop.

Many such bills are fairly complex, in that they contain numerous clauses and conditions. Detailed study in committee will make it possible to make any needed adjustments to this one. I hope that if amendments are proposed after the witnesses are heard and their evidence is discussed, they will be accepted. The most important thing for all members, however, is to ensure that the bill meets the needs of the people of the north. I hope we will manage to do this.

In the case that concerns us, it is very important not to develop a bill that meets the needs of the government, in the narrow sense. The bill really has to meet the needs of the communities in the Northwest Territories and respond to their desire for emancipation.

In the context of this bill, there is no room for an attitude that seeks to impose things. This really has to be done in consultation, through a process of discussion and in harmony with what these communities want, so that we end up with a practical bill that meets their needs.

There should be no need to revise the bill because errors have crept in, if we take the time to discuss it seriously and welcome open debate, on a basis of equality. We can achieve good results, and the beneficiaries will be the people of our northern communities.

*Government Orders*

• (1655)

[English]

**Mr. Brian Jean (Fort McMurray—Athabasca, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member across the way for complimenting this government on some of the great initiatives we have done, such as setting aside a record amount of land for national parks and taking many steps toward environmental stewardship. I want to confirm with the member that we did consult extensively. In some areas, there was additional consultation because of some concerns stakeholders brought up relating to some of the specific concerns with locals.

Would the member talk a bit about some of the positive things the bill would do, such as increasing existing fines and establishing administrative monetary penalties under the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act and the Northwest Territories Waters Act and taking steps to protect the environment in both of these cases? Would she also like to comment in particular on these new enforcement measures and if they would improve compliance? That is what our stakeholders have told us clearly in consultation. Would she like to provide additional and complimentary comments in relation to this government's move on those two fronts?

• (1700)

[Translation]

**Ms. Christine Moore:** Mr. Speaker, that was a very lengthy question.

In this bill, the positive aspect—and I emphasized this a great deal in my speech—is really the fact that power and authority are being given to the Government of the Northwest Territories. The people of the north are thus being given the ability to manage themselves. What I support and applaud is the opportunity for them to manage their own affairs. This is a priority for me. As a resident of a northern region myself, I believe we are in the best position to manage our own affairs.

That said, a number of more technical details will certainly have to be studied in committee. I believe that most of them were worked out in consultation and logically, therefore, they should meet the needs of communities in the Northwest Territories. However, some elements unfortunately do not necessarily meet their needs.

People will be able to raise any such points in committee and suggest corrections, so that the bill truly meets their needs.

**Mr. Pierre Jacob (Brome—Missisquoi, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Abitibi—Témiscamingue for her speech, which was very detailed and informative, as always.

I would like to quote Nicolas Boileau, as follows:

What is conceived well is expressed clearly,  
and the words to say it arrive with ease.

Why are the Conservatives ignoring the concerns of the first nations and Métis people? Why are they turning a deaf ear to their concerns and why are they proposing the creation of a super board?

**Ms. Christine Moore:** Mr. Speaker, I find it difficult to understand the Conservatives' attitude in general. It is very easy for me to sit down with someone and discuss things as equals,

particularly with aboriginal communities. This is a principle I follow when visiting communities in my riding.

Unfortunately this government seems to be unable to sit down with anyone and just have a discussion. The Leader of the Government in the House of Commons is not even able to sit down with the House Leader of the Official Opposition to discuss the agenda of the House of Commons. Since he is incapable of negotiating, he imposes one gag order after another. We have now had 58 gag orders.

If the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons cannot even speak with our house leader just to discuss the agenda of the House of Commons, what kind of attitude do the Conservatives have when they talk with first nations communities?

That scares me a bit. Maybe their general attitude in politics explains why they are unable to hold discussions on an equal footing with aboriginal leaders.

[English]

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I very much appreciate the opportunity to rise in the House to speak to the bill. In one of my previous incarnations I was assistant deputy of resources for Yukon and I had the privilege of participating in some of the devolution negotiations for Yukon.

I also had the privilege of working in the Northwest Territories back in the 1960s. I know that dates me, but I worked at a fishing camp in Great Bear Lake. That was the moment in time that vested a deep love of the north in me. I look for every opportunity that I can to visit the north and for every opportunity to meet with representatives of northern Canada when they come to the Hill.

I have a high level of respect for all three governments in Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut. I admire the determination in seeking independence and governance of their own peoples and I have incredible respect for the hard work that has been invested in the settlement of first nation final agreements and in moving toward their implementation. Unfortunately, some of those remain unresolved, and I certainly wish those first nation peoples the best in resolving the outstanding issues. They can know that we are behind them so they can move toward self-governance as well.

It is important to understand the governance of the north. Much of the north is also under first nation final agreements and self-government agreements, so there are really three levels of governance. The federal government plays a role in the north. There is the Government of the Northwest Territories and then there are the governments of the distinct first nations and Inuit peoples who have moved forward toward their own system of self-governance. That is why these negotiations take so long: it is because it is important to show respect and due consideration for the rights and interests of all peoples and to carry out consultation.

With regard to Bill C-15, as my colleagues have said clearly, we have every intention to support moving the bill forward to committee for review. I will be encouraging my colleagues who sit on that committee to call for part of the review by the committee to occur in the communities of the north. I make this call in every committee I sit on.

I was very pleased that when I was the environment critic, we did a review of the impact of the oil sands on water. Our committee actually travelled to several communities in Alberta, including Fort Chipewyan, which has borne the brunt of a lot of the impacts of the development there. It is very important that those people who are most directly impacted have the opportunity to participate, not just as witnesses, but to attend and hear first hand what their friends, neighbours, and leaders are saying and what other interested parties are saying on the bill.

I know a good number of the communities of the Northwest Territories are tuning in and watching this debate. Toward the end of my brief comments, I intend to share some of the comments that they asked me to pass on directly, and I will be most pleased to do that.

This is indeed a complex bill. As we have heard, there has been some level of frustration by the peoples of the north of the decision to combine together the legislation moving forward on devolution of powers to the Government of the Northwest Territories with other measures, in particular the measures in part 4 that will provide for changes to the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act. Most of my comments relate to part 4, because it is on those measures that we have heard the most concerns and have heard the hope that there may be amendments at committee stage and later in the House.

It is important to keep in mind that there has been devolution of powers previously. I believe it was almost 30 years ago that powers over education, health care, transport, forestry, and wildlife were devolved to the Northwest Territories government, so clearly the NWT government was found even three decades ago to have the competence and the capability to deliver governance. We should therefore move forward and further devolve those powers, because the governments for the first nations, the Inuvialuit, and the other peoples of the Northwest Territories deserve to have a government close at hand that they can speak to and that they can influence in making decisions about their future, including the exploitation of resources.

The devolution provisions clearly will be very important because the government of the Northwest Territories will be able to shift away from simply getting a transfer from the federal government, having to bow and scrape and say, "We will do thus and so; can you please transfer resources to us?" I think the government would now be able to appreciate at least up to 50% of the dollars that come from revenue from resource extraction, as it should. I am sure that into the future the Northwest Territories hopes that it too will become a full provincial entity, fully controlling decisions about its peoples, its lands, and its waters.

• (1705)

It is also important to point out that the statute would amend up to 42 statutes, including the Canada Student Loans Act, the Territorial Lands Act, the Dominion Water Power Act, the Divorce Act, the Privacy Act, the Canada Oil and Gas Operations Act, the National Energy Board Act, the Northern Pipeline Act, the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development Act, the Canadian Human Rights Act, and the Canada Water Act. Clearly it is a very complex bill that merits very careful review and understanding by all the members of this place and certainly at committee, so that members

### *Government Orders*

feel fully competent and informed in order to pass judgment and to vote yea or nay on the eventual bill.

Part 4 is the area where most of my colleagues in the House have raised concerns. Part 4 deals with the many changes to the Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act, the most significant being the devolution of a system of co-management between the first nation peoples and other governments.

I know from my direct experience in working on these matters in Yukon that for the first nations and indigenous peoples of this country to have a right to have a say in the management of wildlife, water, and other resources in their territories is a matter that has been fought for long and hard. They do have their own distinct territories, and then they have the right for traditional harvest in additional lands. It is very important that they have the opportunity to have a direct say.

Those are the significant provisions that we are hearing from peoples of the north. They wish potential amendments to be tabled in committee and debated, and it should be their right and privilege to come before the committee and to suggest amendments to the bill that would then be given due consideration.

The issue has been raised of the inherent potential contradiction between part 1 of Bill C-15 and part 4, in that part 1 provides for the devolution of powers to the people of the north and then part 4 pulls back the rights and powers of northern peoples to actually make decisions in a lot of matters, including water, wildlife, and so forth.

There has been particular concern with shifting decision-making from the peoples of the north to the federal ministers and cabinet. It has been pointed out that there are specific provisions whereby federal ministers and the federal cabinet would have the power to direct that the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories must withhold final assent to any legislation that is brought forward by the legislature in the Northwest Territories for up to a year.

A lot of concern has been expressed about that. Either they are going to be given the powers to move forward or they are not going to be given the powers to move forward.

I took the time to phone some of the first nations in the north and I want to share some of their feedback.

This comes from president Robert Alexie and vice-president Norman Snowshoe of the Gwich'in Tribal Council. They wish to have their comments on part 4 shared in the House:

The Gwich'in Tribal Council fully supports the Devolution of authority to the GNWT and strong economic development in its region and in the NWT. The MVRMA amendments, however, increase the authority of the federal Minister at the expense of regional decision-making. The Gwich'in have less authority over their Settlement Area now because of these amendments. The residents of the NWT have less authority over the regulatory system under these amendments. Therefore, the Gwich'in support NWT Devolution and reject the MVRMA amendments.

In closing, I will say that a number of other first nations governments express the same concerns and wish to have the opportunity to come forward and share their concerns at committee.

*Government Orders*

•(1710)

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I certainly appreciate my colleague's raising her very thoughtful arguments, particularly as they pertain to indigenous people and their concerns about this bill.

It gives me the opportunity to stand in the House and reflect for a moment on the passing of Nelson Mandela, which we just heard about a few minutes ago. Even here today, as we are debating this bill, when we think of Nelson Mandela, we think of his enormous legacy for human rights and human dignity.

As parliamentarians, it is something that we uphold and honour. Even with this bill today, which is about indigenous rights, equality, and dignity, it is something we reflect on. I hope that we carry it forward as a legacy.

•(1715)

**Ms. Linda Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, I also look forward to the members on that side speaking in support of our sadness at the passing of Nelson Mandela.

Some years back, the House made him an honorary Canadian citizen. Why was that? It was because he was revered around the world for standing up for the right of the peoples of a territory to voice how they should be governed and have equal rights and opportunities.

That is precisely what this legislation should do, not just this bill before us right now, but particularly this bill, because it is talking about the devolution of powers. We must always make sure that we are moving forward with a consistent principle, and that is toward greater self-government. That was the promise of the government: to move toward respecting greater self-governance by our indigenous populations.

Therefore, it is critical that we carefully consider any concerns raised by indigenous peoples in the Northwest Territories about this bill.

**Hon. John Duncan (Minister of State and Chief Government Whip, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to offer brief comment, both on the passing of Nelson Mandela and on the debate we are having today.

I have been in this place for a significant length of time. I was here when Canadian citizenship was conferred upon Nelson Mandela by unanimous consent in the House. That was a very proud moment for all of us.

I have many constituents who are originally from South Africa, some of whom knew Nelson Mandela through personal contact. He was a great man at every level. We have lost a very important person from our midst.

In terms of the bill that we are debating today, it is significant that the Government of the Northwest Territories has been seeking devolution for a long time. When I was the minister of aboriginal affairs and northern development, this became very much a mission along with the Premier of the Northwest Territories at that time.

One of the things that became agreed upon was the need to get to implementation as early as possible. This is how the April 2014 date

came along. Everything that this place can do to expedite getting to implementation in that time frame would be very helpful indeed.

That is just a simple comment.

**Ms. Linda Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, I agree absolutely. It is not enough just to sign agreements or to enact legislation; the government of the day must commit to actually implementing the legislation, and we hear concern after concern from the Government of Nunavut that the government is simply not delivering on its commitments so that it can move forward, deliver self-governance, and have the dollars for capacity.

I know full well, because I was a senior official in the Government of Yukon, that a lot of discussion goes on under the tables about how each one of the territories would like to have the powers devolved, but they are going to and fro over how many resources and how many PYs the federal government would transfer to them. In other words, how many real people would they have in order to deliver the responsibilities that were once the responsibilities of the federal government?

I hope that the government has, in fact, committed sufficient resources so that the Northwest Territories can actually implement these powers that will be extended to them.

•(1720)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, if it is possible to add a very quick comment, I would ask for leave to provide comment on the passing of Nelson Mandela as both the Conservatives and the NDP have done. I would appreciate it if I could have less than a minute.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** Order, please. There is no provision at this point for members or caucuses to make tributes to Mr. Mandela. It is my understanding that something is being discussed among the parties at this point. The members who raised the matter in the context of questions and comments seemed to be able to weave it into the relevance of the matter that was before the House, which was quite clever in my opinion. I do understand that something more formal will be coming from all parties.

Is the House ready for the question?

**Some hon. members:** Question.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** Accordingly the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development.

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

**Hon. John Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, I would seek consent to see the clock at 5:30 p.m.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** It being 5:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper.

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[Translation]

### PERSONAL INFORMATION PROTECTION AND ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS ACT

The House resumed from October 22, 2013, consideration of the motion that Bill C-475, An Act to amend the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (order-making power), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Ms. Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe (Pierrefonds—Dollard, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House to speak to Bill C-475, an act to amend the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (order-making power), which I will refer to as PIPEDA, to make things easier.

I want to begin by putting this bill into context. From May to December 2012, the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics conducted a study on social media and privacy. Numerous witnesses testified as part of that study, including Internet and privacy experts, privacy commissioners, community groups and others.

Those witnesses raised the point that more and more information is being gathered and used for business and marketing purposes. In fact, businesses collect this information, use it and share it without the consent of the individuals concerned, which is in violation of PIPEDA.

Given the concerns raised in committee by the many experts from various fields, the wonderful member for Terrebonne—Blainville introduced Bill C-475 in the House in order to try to respond to those concerns and observations from the community and strengthen the bill in question.

I would add that Bill C-475 is attempting to amend an act that has not been reviewed since 2000. Allow me to digress. I may belong to the last generation that can claim to remember the first day when a computer came into the house. This computer was not in colour and the screen was black and yellow and square-shaped, with blurry graphics.

I remember the first time I typed my homework on a keyboard. I was typing with two fingers and this was very time-consuming. I kept hitting the on/off button with my toe. I would always lose my work because there was no autosave feature for documents at that time. In short, I have a whole lot of memories that I might be able to share with my children and grandchildren one day.

In the meantime, I will point out that it is completely absurd that a privacy act has not been reviewed since 2000. I think I do not need to say more on that subject. It is high time we made changes to this act.

First, Bill C-475, which amends an act that needs to be updated, grants powers of enforcement to the Privacy Commissioner of

### *Private Members' Business*

Canada. Moreover, the commissioner herself emphasized that she wished to have these powers when she appeared before the committee. In other countries and in certain Canadian provinces, the law provides for measures that give more powers to the commissioner. However, this is not the case for Canada. We hope this will change soon.

Who is the commissioner and what powers does she have exactly? This is a good question, and it has to be answered before we say her powers must be increased. I will take the definition used by the Canadian Internet Policy and Public Interest Clinic of the Faculty of Law at the University of Ottawa, which describes the commissioner as follows:

The Privacy Commissioner of Canada acts as an ombudsman who investigates complaints and negotiates solutions.... While the Commissioner does not have the authority to order an organization to change their personal information policies or procedures she may make public any information relating to the personal information management practices of an organization.

That summarizes the commissioner's existing powers. Bill C-475 would enhance those powers.

The commissioner recommends that organizations that refuse to implement the measures she suggests be required to abide by the law and comply with deadlines set by the commissioner, and even be liable to a fine in cases of non-compliance.

The commissioner therefore needs a little more power over Internet-based offenders.

● (1725)

Bill C-475's second goal is mandatory reporting of all data breaches that could harm the individuals concerned. I do not need to go into detail about how the Internet is changing quickly and how now, young and old alike are putting more and more information out there. Things are changing quickly, and we have to ensure that we can keep up with it all, understand it and regulate it.

Companies collect, sell and share this information. Part of the solution is educating people and raising awareness about the kind of information they disclose on the Internet. Still, it makes sense that people should know what is being done with their information because, after all, that information can be very valuable to the companies that can use it. That is not a bad thing in and of itself, but there should be rules for using that information.

People who create a Facebook account are asked to supply quite a lot of information. They are not the ones who decide they want that information to show up on their Facebook page. No, there is a whole form to fill out that includes their year of birth, where they live, their address, favourite movies, favourite music and much more. That is just Facebook. I use Facebook because I am not very well-versed in using other technologies. I joined Twitter just a few months ago because my colleagues and assistants pressured me to. Things are going well so far, but there are still some concerns.

*Private Members' Business*

A closer look at the details of this bill, at what can and cannot be done, at the powers that the Canadian commissioner has compared to commissioners in other provinces and other countries, gives us reason for concern.

Perhaps I am a little paranoid when it comes to technology, but when a window appears with a little red x, I am afraid to even click on it. I wonder if that will even close the window that just appeared without me wanting it to, or if I will be clicking on a link that will give information to some company, or what have you. You know what I mean. It is hard to know what we can even trust anymore. It is not only what I decide to disclose myself, but it goes much further in terms of what information can be collected, whether we like it or not. Information can even be collected without us knowing.

It is therefore high time that we took action to update the Privacy Act.

It is this government's responsibility to move forward on this, and quickly. Things are changing fast, and we need to take a first step. This bill might not solve everything, of course, but it does address some of the concerns expressed by experts and by the commissioner herself in the parliamentary committee's examination. I really hope the government will bring forward something like this. It would be the least it could do.

In closing, I would like to point out that the Union des consommateurs believes that the implementation of the principles proposed by the NDP, through their private member's bill amending the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act, constitutes a real advancement to better protect the privacy of consumers.

I would also like to commend the enthusiasm of my NDP colleague from Terrebonne—Blainville and congratulate her. She has demonstrated her competence in managing this file for our party. She has remained very open and co-operative, and has been extremely innovative and dynamic in her collaboration with stakeholders from all walks of life in this file. She has introduced a very important bill, and I hope that we can continue for the well-being of current and future generations, in order to bring in extraordinary technologies, which can sometimes cause us some concern.

● (1730)

[English]

**Mr. Ed Holder (London West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have had many occasions in my years in Parliament to speak in this House, but never at such an auspicious time. Oh my gosh, when I hear that Nelson Mandela just passed away, I want to share a personal experience, if I might.

My family used to live in South Africa, and much of it still does. They are white South Africans, and they lived there through Nelson Mandela's rise to power. He could have been many things, but he was a great humanitarian. He was forgiving when many might not have been. He was compassionate and understanding when others might not have been. As I make my other comments, they almost seem subdued compared to the very real experience of Nelson Mandela's impact on the world. Others will say things more articulately than I, but I will say that if the world could be measured

by the quality of what Nelson Mandela brought to humanity, this would be a much better world.

I will speak now to Bill C-475 and its impact on organizations and the public. Of course, I am referring to Canada's private sector privacy law, the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act, otherwise known as PIPEDA, which the bill looks to amend.

PIPEDA was developed with an important objective in mind, and that is balance. The act is designed to balance an individual's right to privacy with an organization's need to collect, use, or disclose personal information for legitimate business purposes.

I was president of a large company in London, Ontario, when PIPEDA was first introduced. For those who do not know, that is the tenth-largest city in Canada. I would say we invested considerable funds, as did corporations across Canada, to ensure compliance and to do the right thing, because a corporation must be measured in terms of being honourable and doing the right thing. The costs associated with PIPEDA then and now are very real and ongoing, but in a corporation's business it is important to comply, for the sake of the public, which is what we are talking about in terms of this legislation today.

When PIPEDA was first introduced, the government stated that in order for Canada to become a leader in the knowledge-based economy and in electronic commerce, consumers and businesses had to be comfortable with new technologies and the impact that these technologies would have on their lives. I believe that policy objective still stands. However, in order to maintain that important balance in PIPEDA, we must consider the burden imposed by the proposed requirements of this act and always weigh that burden against the corresponding benefit to society.

We all agree that requiring organizations to report certain data breaches is necessary. Data breaches can pose a serious threat to the protection of our personal information and to the security of organizations and individuals. Reporting certain data breaches publicly would allow individuals to protect themselves, and it would also encourage better data security practices by organizations. That is laudable, yet it must be said that there are ways to achieve these goals without creating an undue burden on organizations and the Privacy Commissioner.

Data breach notification has the potential to be cost-prohibitive while not providing the kind of information the public requires. For example, in the United States, where this process is tracked closely, the average cost to an organization of a single notification is estimated at \$188 per record, and when this figure is multiplied by the number of those potentially affected, any data breach notification could result in substantial cost to companies that must deal with that breach. Based on this data, the total average cost of a data breach to an organization is approximately \$5.4 million.



As most states have mandatory reporting of data breaches, there are hundreds of breaches reported every year. According to the Privacy Rights Clearinghouse, an organization that tracks this, there were 592 breaches reported by the private sector in the United States last year. These incidents involved the information of more than 11 million individuals. That number is extraordinary. As organizations south of the border are required to notify so often, notification fatigue among the public can be a serious result.

● (1735)

When notification processes become simply a matter of sending out a form letter to individuals, there is always a deep concern that these letters become increasingly perceived by recipients as junk mail. We have learned from the experience of other jurisdictions. That is why this government believes the best approach to notification is one based on risk, where notification should be required only for those breaches that represent the potential for significant harm to individuals. In this way, consumers would only receive notifications when necessary and would accord them the attention they deserve, instead of seeing these messages as unwanted spam. What we are talking about here is modernization, not overhaul, as proposed Bill C-475 suggests.

The Privacy Commissioner has been a strong advocate for data breach notification. I would like to point out, however, that even she has not asked to be informed of all breaches, nor has she asked for the responsibility to determine the need for notification of when there is a breach. In fact, in her paper on the reform of PIPEDA published earlier this year, the commissioner proposed that organizations be required to report breaches “where warranted”. This suggests that the commissioner understands the burden of overnotification and supports an approach that would minimize that burden. That is modernization, not overhaul.

Unfortunately, this is not the approach taken in Bill C-475. The bill would require organizations to report to the Privacy Commissioner every data breach posing a possible risk of harm. The average organization is risk-averse, and will err on the side of caution. I know that from my own business experience. As a result, it is likely that all breaches would be reported under these circumstances, undoubtedly resulting in notification fatigue among consumers. Under Bill C-475, the commissioner would have to assess each incident reported to her and determine whether it poses an appreciable risk of harm, warranting notification to individuals. This would impose a financial and administrative burden on the commissioner's office and would likely limit its ability to deal with other complaints under the act.

In the province of Alberta, where the data breach reporting has been in place for two years, the office of the Alberta privacy commissioner has estimated that the average time to process a reported breach and determine whether notification is required is 76 days. In the case of more complex data breaches, this could be much longer. This indicates that the risk assessment process is complex, difficult, and ultimately costly.

My colleague, the hon. member for Terrebonne—Blainville, has provided us with much to consider, including some statistics on data breach incidents. According to my hon. friend, there are 18 privacy breaches every year for every publicly traded company in Canada.

### *Private Members' Business*

We know there are over 3,000 companies traded on the Canadian-based stock exchanges. That would amount to a minimum of 54,000 data breach incidents every year. Given the number of days to assess a single data breach incident, it does not serve the public interest to process each of these 50,000 incidents each year.

Let us remember that the intent is to provide Canadians with timely information about a breach of their personal information so that they can take steps to avoid fraud, identity theft, and misuse of their personal information. I sense the intent of my colleague opposite, but it is not clear to me that my hon. friend has fully considered the administrative and resource implications of dumping this requirement on the Privacy Commissioner's office, and whether it is in the public interest of Canadians to receive so many notifications.

The government is committed to an approach that would require the organization experiencing a breach to conduct the risk assessment based on the sensitivity of the data and the probability that they have been or will be misused. The organization is in the best position to quickly assess the circumstances surrounding a breach of its security safeguards and to determine the risks involved. The government believes that organizations should notify the commissioner and affected individuals of certain breaches, those posing a real risk of significant harm. This allows the commissioner to retain oversight of how organizations are handling the process of risk assessment and notifications to individuals. The commissioner would have the option of initiating an investigation if it were believed that notification did not occur when it was required.

In closing, with appropriate oversight and guidance by the Privacy Commissioner of Canada, the responsibility for determining risk and the need for the notification of individuals should ultimately rest with the organization. I hope I have clarified for members the benefits of a more balanced approach to data breach notification. Again, it is modernization, not overhaul.

I hope colleagues will agree that the approach taken by Bill C-475 would impose unnecessary costs and has the real risk to potentially undermine the primary objective for data breach notification, which is that of providing timely information to individuals when there is truly a risk of harm.

● (1740)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise, but before I provide comment on Bill C-475, as other members have, I just want to reflect on Nelson Mandela, who is now deceased at age 95.

The world has lost a great leader. Many would argue he was one of the greatest leaders we have seen in the last hundred-plus years. Nelson Mandela served as the president of South Africa between 1994 and 1999. We think about where he came from. He went to jail back in 1962, which happened to be the year I was born. Then in 1990, 28 years later, he was released only because of international pressure from around the world in recognizing Mr. Mandela. He came from that situation to ultimately becoming the president of South Africa and everything that happened in between, such as his significant role in abolishing apartheid.

*Private Members' Business*

We have lost a world leader today, an inspiration not to millions but ultimately to billions over the years. It is most tragic. I give my personal very best to all who have been affected.

Dealing with Bill C-475, it is important for us to recognize a few things. First and foremost, the issue of personal information is on the top of many minds. The idea of identity theft is prevalent. We know it is a very serious issue. It happens on a daily basis. Just recently we were talking about cyberbullying, as an example. The technology is out there, and the criminal element is causing a great deal of discomfort for a lot of people in dealing with personal information.

The public as a whole does not believe that the government is doing enough to protect privacy, and the public is watching. This is why I found the previous speaker's comments interesting as he started to outline some of the costs and concerns that he has with regard to Bill C-475—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

• (1745)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** Order. Could hon. members come to order, please? The hon. member for Winnipeg North has the floor, and I would ask all hon. members to refrain from causing a disruption in the chamber.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, in dealing with Bill C-475, it is important for us to recognize that there are some concerns that should and could be easily addressed by allowing the bill to be sent to committee. I would argue that there is a significant advantage if we allow that to take place. The simple reason is that there is a need for more debate. When we go into committee, different stakeholders will be able to get more of the facts on the record. When we talked about the Privacy Commissioner and the additional workload there, I can respect that. We want to hear what the facts are. We do not want to make it overly awkward, costly, and just not practical in some cases. With Bill C-475, we have an opportunity to move forward.

Members will remember earlier this year when literally thousands of student records were released. There was a huge concern all over the country. There were student loan records that were found to have been misplaced or had fallen into the wrong hands. We know that many people were directly affected by it. The government, somewhat kicking and screaming, had to acknowledge its role in not being forthright in releasing that information.

I believe there is some merit to the bill. When we take into consideration the concern that Canadians have as a whole related to the issue of personal information and wanting to see government doing more, I do not see what we have to lose by allowing the bill to be sent to committee.

I chose to stand up for two reasons. One was to emphasize the point that we should allow the bill to be sent to committee. At the same time, as I indicated at the beginning of my remarks, I wanted to get on the record the passing of a great man, Nelson Mandela. I am sure there will be more formal positions taken by many dignitaries around the world in recognition of this iconic world figure.

With those few words, I am prepared to leave it at that, in the hope that we will see the bill succeed and be sent to committee where we

can hear the thoughts of different stakeholders as to what we could be doing to ensure that we are protecting the personal information that people have entrusted to either the government or the private sector. We need to do more. This bill will not necessarily answer all of the problems, but it will at least provide a venue for us to make some changes that could improve our current system.

• (1750)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I see that there has been a huge reaction to Nelson Mandela's death. I was saddened to hear the news. He unfortunately passed away after a long and full life.

I want to take this opportunity to say that the fight against apartheid was a great source of pride for Canadians. We could be very proud of our government, which was a leader in this battle. By making Mr. Mandela an honorary citizen, we paid tribute to him and to the great figures from this country who sought to defend and promote human rights.

I know that there will be more elaborate tributes, so I will speak to the wonderful bill introduced by my colleague from Terrebonne—Blainville. I think it is wonderful because I admire that my colleague is looking to innovate, to get us caught up and to anticipate some very serious problems related to the major changes society is experiencing so rapidly.

I want to read the first part of section 10.01:

For the purposes of this section and section 10.02, "harm" includes bodily harm, humiliation, embarrassment, injury to reputation or relationships, loss of employment, business or professional opportunities, financial loss, identity theft, identity fraud, negative effects on credit rating and damage to or loss of property.

I read that section because I think it is important to understand that our world has changed considerably and has done so very quickly.

I have already mentioned in this House that I used to be an archivist. I therefore understand the importance and value of information, especially when it is nominative information. I worked in this field for a long time, and my job would have eventually included applying the principles associated with the protection of personal information. I would have done it as a professional, but the organization I belonged to as an archivist would have also fully applied these principles.

I am not that old, but I graduated quite a while ago, in the early 1990s. At that time, our tools were far more limited. The emergence of computers began to change things, but the possibilities were much more limited than they are today.

I also had the privilege to read notarial deeds from the first half of the nineteenth century. To give some background, many parents passed on a parcel of land to their descendants. More often than not, the heir was their son. They would place a clause in the deed requesting support from their son as the new owner of the land, because social programs did not exist at that time.

Since that time so long ago, our society has changed so much that we now totally depend on exchanging money to live. Things were different 150 or 200 years ago, when we could depend on the strength of our arms, the bounty of our land and our ability to obtain almost everything we needed without spending a single cent.

There has been a profound change over the last 15 or 20 years. The electronic means with which we carry out our transactions have not only become commonplace, but are also extensively used by all generations.

• (1755)

The Internet and the numerous sites that facilitate transactions and offer new ways to trade and barter create new opportunities. This is like the wild west. Anything is possible, both good things and, unfortunately, abuses by dishonest individuals. It is really deplorable that the government would neglect Canadians and contemplate spying on them through legislation such as Bill C-30. Instead, the government should have taken into consideration these new tools and imposed a requirement to take precautions and report incidents resulting from the loss, theft or unintentional or negligent transmission of sensitive data. In the case of lost or stolen sensitive data, the technology is now so quick that in just a few hours these sensitive data can be used to commit fraud or abuse or to damage someone's reputation. It can be used widely, to the detriment of the aggrieved individual. The hon. member for Terrebonne—Blainville is taking a particularly important, crucial and laudable initiative to the great shame of the government, which should have done this itself.

Since the government was not taking action, the official opposition put forward a proposal and one of its brightest members proposed a solution widely supported by the testimony of leading experts. There are many of them. It is a great pleasure for me to put things in perspective and, more importantly, to call on the government to take a serious look at this bill in committee, because this is an opportunity that we cannot afford to miss. The Governments of Alberta and Quebec are already ahead of the federal government and have plugged some holes. If the federal government does not follow suit and correct the flaws that exist in the legislation, millions of people could potentially become victims. We are aware of the burden that having to comply with the act could represent for organizations. However, the potential harm can be so costly that I am convinced the impact and external costs of the government's negligence would ultimately exceed the costs that may be incurred to comply with the bill introduced by the hon. member for Terrebonne—Blainville.

Again I congratulate my colleague for her initiative. I wish her well and I thank her on behalf of my constituents in Beauport—Limoilou.

• (1800)

[English]

**Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have a great crowd behind me, because this is a really important bill. There is such a great response. I really want to thank my colleague from Terrebonne—Blainville for working on this important piece of legislation. She deserves congratulations for a lot of reasons. It is a great piece of legislation.

### *Private Members' Business*

My colleague was elected in 2011. She is proof positive that an individual MP can advocate for constituents, give a caucus important advice in a critic role, represent NDP values in a critic area, and make concrete legislative suggestions to the House. The fact that we have such a good piece of legislation before us speaks volumes about her ability to make a difference here in Parliament.

The former CEO of Google, Eric Schmidt, said that as of 2010, we create more information in just two days than was ever created up to and including 2003. That is an incredible statistic. It is massive. We create about 2,000 years' worth of information every couple of days. That is just one way of measuring how the digital world we live in today is different even compared to just 10 years ago.

Change is happening quickly when it comes to technology, innovation, and information sharing. It is increasingly an issue for Canadians, because in the last 10 years, with the growth of the digital economy, social media, and Internet access, greater amounts of personal data are shared. They are collected, used, and disclosed.

This bill identifies a problem. The problem is that our privacy laws are not built for a digital age when we create and share so much personal information.

PIPEDA was adopted in 2000. I remember it quite well, because I was a law student, starting in 2001, and we talked about what the implications would be for the groups, organizations, and communities we worked with. At that time, there were almost no social networking sites, microblogging sites, or video-sharing sites. Tumblr and YouTube did not exist, and there was no such thing as Facebook. I remember the first time I ever googled something, and it certainly was not a verb at that time.

Now over 18 million Canadians have a Facebook account, including many of us here in the House. A lot of us use this form of social networking. That number of 18 million Canadians is more than half of Canada's population, which is incredible.

Can anyone remember a time when they could not YouTube a viral video or find an old friend on Facebook? It was a completely different world 10 years ago. Now we are light years ahead of where we were in 2000.

What we are talking about here would transform the digital world in Canada. It is the type of change that affects Canadians on a huge scale. As Canadians, we are incredibly connected. We are the second-greatest Internet users in the world. More than 80% of us access the Internet regularly. Approximately 70% of us think that our personal data is less secure and less protected than it was 10 years ago, and 97% of Canadians would like to know when their personal information has been exposed because of a data breach.

*Tributes*

It is worth noting these statistics, because most Canadians agree with the goals of this bill. It is absolutely unthinkable that we would expose so many Canadians to risks to their online privacy, especially when many people are aware of and concerned about these risks.

We need to update our privacy laws to recognize these changes and keep up with them; otherwise, we risk leaving Canadians unprotected. Canadians have moved on from 2001. It is time that our privacy protection laws moved on as well.

I would like to stress the importance of taking advantage of the opportunity this bill presents. We know that the Conservatives presented a privacy bill, Bill C-12, that came out of the 2006-2007 review of PIPEDA. However, it has been languishing on the order paper since 2011. That is far too long. Not one but two PIPEDA reviews are overdue.

We need privacy protection for the 21st century, but we also need it in the 21st century. Bill C-475 responds to these pressing challenges for protecting our privacy in a new digital age.

In a May 2013 review of PIPEDA, the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada identified pressure points where PIPEDA needed to be changed. The first two of these pressure points, and arguably the most important ones, are addressed in Bill C-475.

• (1805)

The first pressure point identified in the report was enforcement. The report points to the fact that under PIPEDA the Privacy Commissioner is limited to the role of an administrative investigator, and that while she may seek resolution through negotiation, persuasion, and mediation, she actually has no enforcement powers.

The report says:

The days of soft recommendations with few consequences for non-compliance are no longer effective in a rapidly changing environment where privacy risks are on the rise. It is time to put in place financial incentives to ensure that organizations accept greater responsibility for putting appropriate protections in place from the start, and sanctions in the event that they do not. Without such measures, the Privacy Commissioner will have limited ability to ensure that organizations are appropriately protecting personal information in the age of Big Data.

Bill C-475 answers this recommendation in giving enforcement powers to the Privacy Commissioner to order organizations to comply with privacy legislation and to fine them if they refuse to take action within an established time period.

The second pressure point in the Privacy Commissioner's report was to "shine a light on privacy breaches". It recommended that PIPEDA should:

require organizations to report breaches of personal information to the Commissioner and to notify affected individuals, where warranted, so that appropriate mitigation measures can be taken in a timely manner.

This is really common sense. First of all, we want to know when our personal information has been put at risk. As I said before, 97% of Canadians agree that they want to know when there has been a breach in their privacy. The harm that comes from these breaches can include identity theft, financial loss, negative credit ratings, and even physical harm. We should be aware that we have been exposed to a higher level of these risks when our privacy has been breached.

I will wrap up by saying that the Privacy Commissioner stressed that too often the rights of individuals are displaced by organizations'

business needs and that it is becoming increasingly clear that the balance between these rights and needs is no longer there.

I would like the House to know that New Democrats are not stuck in the past. We recognize the imbalance, and with the bill we will take the first steps to make sure to protect the interests of businesses and consumers in the new digital age.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** Order. I understand the government House leader is rising on a point of order.

\* \* \*

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in view of the announcement of the recent death of Nelson Mandela, there have been consultations among the parties and if you seek it, I believe you will find consent for the following motion. I move:

That notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, the House proceed immediately to Ministerial Statements pursuant to Standing Order 33(1); and at the expiry of the time provided for the Ministerial Statements, the House return to the business before it prior to the interruption, provided that the House may sit beyond the ordinary hour of daily adjournment if required to complete Private Members' Business.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** Does the hon. government House leader have unanimous support for the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** The right hon. Prime Minister.

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**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

[English]

**NELSON MANDELA**

**Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, when I look back on the sweep of political history over my lifetime, what may be the most important development of all has been the struggle and the successes against the phenomenon of racial discrimination over the past half century or so. In this regard there has been no more powerful symbol in the world than Nelson Mandela.

*Tributes*

[Translation]

There has been no more powerful symbol of the struggle and the successes against discrimination than Nelson Mandela. With his death, the world is losing a great moral leader and statesman.

[English]

The world has lost one of its great moral leaders and statesmen. Nelson Mandela was imprisoned for 27 years by the former government of South Africa for his part in the struggle that would ultimately end the system of apartheid. Despite his long years of captivity, Mr. Mandela left prison with his mind closed to any settling of scores and his heart open to those he had fought against.

• (1810)

[Translation]

He sought truth and reconciliation, and he worked for greater understanding among all people.

[English]

He demonstrated that the only path forward for his nation was to reject the appeal of bitterness. His magnanimity spared all South Africans incalculable suffering.

[Translation]

Nelson Mandela's enduring legacy for his country, and the world, is the example he set through his own long walk to freedom.

[English]

He showed how people can shape better tomorrows and do so in their own time. Nelson Mandela's long march to freedom, his grace and humility throughout that walk, and the bridge to the future he built for his people as he proceeded along it ensures that his remarkable example will inform others for generations.

On behalf of the Government of Canada and all Canadians, Laureen and I and all of my colleagues wish to extend our condolences to Mr. Mandela's widow, Graça Machel, his entire family, and all citizens of South Africa. Canada, a nation Mr. Mandela honoured by becoming our first-ever honorary citizen, mourns with them and with the entire world today.

[Translation]

**Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, today is a day of great sadness the world over. The courage, values and determination of such an inspiring man will serve as a guiding light for years to come. When he became a Canadian citizen, Mr. Mandela had a few words to say about us.

[English]

I am going to allow myself to quote Nelson Mandela when he singled out Canada and our values.

Your respect for diversity within your own society and your tolerant and civilized manner of dealing with the challenges of difference and diversity had always been our inspiration.

That is what Mr. Mandela said during his first address. As we know, he came here several times.

[Translation]

Let us learn from this larger-than-life statesman. This is what counts: respect for others and the fact that we are all equals. Those are battles worth fighting.

[English]

For 50 years Mr. Mandela fought apartheid and racism. He guided South Africa toward racial equality and democracy at the risk of his own life and at the price of his own freedom. He is rightly considered the father of modern Africa.

[Translation]

I would like to quote Mr. Mandela's inauguration speech, some 20 years ago, when he became president of the Republic of South Africa. He said, "As we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same."

[English]

As Nelson Mandela reminded us during his inauguration nearly 20 years ago, as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.

[Translation]

I wish to extend our sincere condolences to his family and loved ones, to the people of South Africa and to those in the world who fight for equality and freedom.

• (1815)

[English]

**Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are all, wherever we are, deeply saddened and profoundly pained at the passing of a great world historical figure, Nelson Mandela, a person who endured 27 years in a South African prison and emerged to not only preside over the dismantling of apartheid, but in fact to make possible, as president, the establishment of a democratic, multiracial, free South Africa.

It was a little over 13 years ago, precisely on June 12, 2001, that we gathered in the House on a motion unanimously adopted to make Nelson Mandela an honorary citizen of Canada. As we said at the time, this conferral of honorary citizenship will have enduring resonance not only for Canada but internationally.

Let me summarize those considerations that inspired that honorary citizenship and that today really amount to a great testament to his everlasting humanitarian legacy that he bequeathed to each one of us, wherever we are.

The first was that Nelson Mandela was really the metaphor and message for the struggle for human rights and human dignity in our time. If apartheid was the ultimate assault on human rights and human dignity, South Africa was the first post-World War II country to have institutionalized racism as a matter of law. We should not forget that apartheid was not just a racist philosophy; it was a legal racist regime, and it was Mandela who fought and gave full expression to that struggle for human rights and human dignity against this racist legal regime.

*Private Members' Business*

Second, Mandela was the embodiment of the three great struggles of the 20th century: the long march toward freedom, as he put it, the march for democracy, and the march for equality.

Third, Mandela was a role model for nation-building wherever we are. He was the one who inspired the notion of establishing a rainbow coalition, of taking diverse peoples, even antagonistic peoples, adversaries, races, and identities, and welding them into a united rainbow coalition for nation-building.

As one who served as a member of his international legal team, I was privileged to hear the testimonies of those who had worked with him throughout the years in prison and afterward and who said of him the incredible testimony that Mandela was a person without rancour, without any sense of revenge, without any anger at all, a person without any malice—a person, yes, of resilience, yes, of determination, of commitment, but a person open to and therefore capable of welding together those diverse peoples into one nation.

Finally, he was most of all a metaphor for hope, particularly for the young, in his speaking of the importance also of education as a linchpin of the future.

I will close by saying one thing. May his memory serve always as an inspiration for all of us, wherever we are, and may that memory serve as a blessing for this House and everyone in this universe.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to add a few words, not many.

We are gathered in a spirit of non-partisan grieving for someone we had the honour to call a fellow Canadian. Nelson Mandela was marked by two extraordinary things, among many: moral clarity and moral courage.

We know he inspired us. With your permission, I would like to close this session with the words that inspired him, words written in 1888 by William Ernest Henley, which he recited over the 27 years he remained on Robben Island, imprisoned:

Out of the night that covers me,  
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,  
I thank whatever gods may be  
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance  
I have not winced nor cried aloud.  
Under the bludgeonings of chance  
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears  
Looms but the Horror of the shade,  
And yet the menace of the years  
Finds, and shall find, me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,  
How charged with punishments the scroll,  
I am the master of my fate:  
I am the captain of my soul.

Rest in peace, Nelson Mandela, who captained that soul to the safest of harbours. God bless him, his memory, and all who loved him.

• (1820)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** It has been requested that members rise for a moment of silence.

*[A moment of silence observed]*

Thank you.

At this point, the House will revert to the business that was before it prior to the statements.

Pursuant to an order made earlier today, we will now resume consideration of the motion for second reading of Bill C-475, an act to amend the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act with regard to order-making power, as listed under private members' business.

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

*[Translation]*

### PERSONAL INFORMATION PROTECTION AND ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-475, An Act to amend the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (order-making power), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would simply like to add my comments to those of my leader and say just how sorry I am to hear of Mr. Mandela's passing. He was always a great source of inspiration for me.

I have always been part of Amnesty International and other groups that defend human rights around the world. In fact, that is one of the reasons I decided to become a member of the NDP, because it is the party that does the most to defend human rights.

For me, Nelson Mandela has always been a beacon of light and hope. I would like to thank him for everything he did for us, for people around the world and especially for South Africans.

With that, I will continue on another topic altogether, that of technology. I really want to begin my speech by congratulating my colleague, the hon. member for Terrebonne—Blainville. Like me, she was elected in 2011. She is an extremely intelligent and dynamic young woman who has proven that young women have definitely earned their place in politics. She has really proven her willingness to work hard and listen not only to her constituents, but also to all the stakeholders who have an interest in the field of technology and privacy. She consulted them and listened to them, and today she is introducing her bill, Bill C-475. I really do commend her. We are all very proud of her and we thank her for taking this issue so seriously after it had unfortunately been overlooked for so long.

We now know that this legislation has not been updated since 2000. Obviously, a lot has happened since 2000, including Facebook, Twitter, iPhones and smartphones. Technology has drastically changed over the last 13 years, creating a whole new context. We now have to resolve issues that would never have crossed our minds a few years ago.

We have to realize that a number of problems stem from a lack of legislation. This bill aims to solve problems that were ignored for months or even years. The current free-for-all regarding the distribution of personal information is due, in part, to a lack of political will, as well as a legislative void. That is what makes this bill so important.

We cannot continue to do nothing while technology evolves every day. We cannot keep silent and stand idly by while these problems occur.

In fact, my hon. colleague who spoke earlier will rise again shortly to discuss a crucial issue: the fact that people have lost confidence in the system meant to protect their personal information. They have lost confidence not only in companies, but especially in the government, because it did nothing while things kept getting worse.

• (1825)

That is why it is extremely important to restore the public's trust in technologies, in Parliament and in legislation, so that people feel safe at home. This is our job as parliamentarians. When Canadians do not feel safe, it is up to us to do something. Something needs to be done, and it is our job to do it.

This came up in the many consultations, as my colleague pointed out. Unfortunately, 91% of Canadians said they are extremely concerned or very concerned about privacy. That is almost 100%.

I would really like to know what percentage of members of Parliament are concerned. We are all MPs and as parliamentarians we are concerned about Canadians. However, how do we feel as individuals? I would like to do a little survey here and have people tell us honestly whether they are concerned about whether their information is being protected.

For example, seven in ten Canadians reported feeling that they have less protection of their personal information than they did 10 years ago. It is time to ensure that Canadians are and feel safe. This is about feeling safe. We cannot let this situation get worse.

The content of this bill did not come from the NDP alone. It came from the Privacy Commissioner, Internet law experts, consumer protection groups and Canadian citizens, who are, of course, our primary concern. I think it came out of the 2012 study of social media and privacy by the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics.

Parliament has acknowledged this. People came to testify. This bill is not just a partisan NDP initiative. It means something to all Canadians and will enable organizations, lawyers and the Privacy Commissioner to protect Canadians.

There is no reason the Conservatives should refuse to support this bill. The NDP is not alone in going after the Conservatives about this. Canadians, lawyers and the commissioner want this too. How many people have to tell the government to do something before it actually does something?

This is about giving Canada's Privacy Commissioner the power to enforce the law. That is very important. We know that commissioners have an extremely important role to play in analyzing not only the government's actions but everything that has to do with

### *Private Members' Business*

access to information. Giving the commissioner the power to enforce the law will simply strengthen the essential role she plays in identifying problems and telling Parliament which initiatives should be taken.

I would just like to close by saying that our colleague in the House is speaking on behalf of Canadians and Quebecers who are worried as well as all stakeholders who are worried and who all say that we need to act now to protect Canadians' information and privacy.

I would like to thank my colleague from Terrebonne—Blainville for her work and for conveying the wishes of Canadians and stakeholders to the House.

• (1830)

**Ms. Charmaine Borg (Terrebonne—Blainville, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is not easy to speak after hearing the wonderful statements made by the Prime Minister, our leader and the member for Mount Royal. I would like to add my voice to theirs by saying that I am truly saddened by the death of Nelson Mandela. Today we lost a great man and a great symbol of hope.

Despite this, I will still speak to my bill. I am very pleased to close the debate today, although I would like to—and could—talk about it for years and years.

I want to thank all the members who contributed to this debate. Unfortunately, I have to point out that the Conservatives made several erroneous statements that undermined the real debate on Bill C-475. I want to go back to some of those statements today to set the record straight.

The government said it was committed to updating the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act. Unfortunately, the government did not even respect the provision of the act requiring a review of this legislation every five years to update it. This review should have been conducted two years ago. Moreover, the legislative amendments made during the first review in 2006-07, have yet to be implemented. The government is therefore not committed to updating the act.

It is shameful that the government is refusing to vote in favour of Bill C-475 and then has the gall to say it is concerned about Canadians' privacy.

As for the concerns about consultations and the provisions in Bill C-475, I would like to point out that we consulted 11 major companies and business organizations that would be affected by the bill and 15 consumer groups and rights and freedoms advocacy organizations from five provinces, including Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec. We also consulted 15 of the most well-known and important academics in the domain and we heard from approximately 40 experts who shared their opinions about the implementation of the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act before the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics.

*Private Members' Business*

Another issue was the size of the monetary penalty companies would be liable to. There is no list of penalties. There is just one: a monetary penalty will be imposed if an organization fails to correct its non-compliant practices as ordered by the commissioner within the time limit. The bill is balanced because this penalty, which cannot exceed \$500,000, will be imposed according to a list of criteria that assess the severity of the offence and the organization's ability to pay. I should point out that other countries, such as Germany, Australia and France, have much higher penalties.

My colleagues opposite talked about how the privacy commissioner's role would change and expressed concerns about the commissioner's ability to handle these new demands. Rapid changes in the digital world will change the role of moderators as well. What we are asking for in Bill C-475 is what the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada told the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics it wanted to see.

With respect to the ability of the commissioner's office to deal with the new demands, the commissioner explained in committee, during the assessment of their financial statements, that having the power to issue orders and impose sanctions would produce better results that would be more timely and less expensive for Canadians. During that hearing, the commissioner's office proved without a doubt its ability to adapt its services based on economic constraints, while also increasing the office's efficiency.

However, I must say that suggesting that the commissioner's office is incapable of dealing with the provisions it proposed in committee, and without the benefit of any examination, amounts to completely baseless fearmongering.

Bill C-475 is a balanced bill. It proposes concrete measures to protect people's personal information in the digital age. It gives Canadians greater powers to protect themselves when their information is lost or stolen. It reassures Canadians regarding their engagement on the Internet, which is good for our economy.

Bill C-475 provides incentives to organizations for obeying the law. That it crucial to protecting the privacy of our constituents.

I wish to reiterate my desire to work with the members of all parties in order to make the necessary reforms to the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act. I appeal to

the good judgment of all members to vote in favour of Bill C-475 on December 11.

● (1835)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** It being 6:36 p.m., the time provided for debate has expired.

[*English*]

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

**Some hon. members:** Yea.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** In my opinion the yeas have it.

*And five or more members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin):** Pursuant to an order made on Tuesday, November 26, 2013, the division on the motion stands deferred until Wednesday, December 11, 2013, at the expiry of the time provided for oral questions.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for La Pointe-de-l'Île not being present to raise the matter for which adjournment notice has been given, the notice is deemed withdrawn.

[*English*]

The House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:39 p.m.)







# CONTENTS

Thursday, December 5, 2013

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### Government Response to Petitions

Mr. Lukiwski ..... 1787

### Committees of the House

#### Industry, Science and Technology

Mr. Sweet ..... 1787

### Ways and Means

#### Motion No. 5

Mr. Van Loan ..... 1787

Motion ..... 1787

(Motion agreed to, Bill C-16 introduced and read the first time, read the second time and referred to a committee of the whole, considered in committee of the whole, reported without amendment, concurred in at report stage, read the third time and passed) ..... 1787

### Petitions

#### Income Tax Deductions for Tradespersons

Mr. Godin ..... 1787

#### Veterans

Mr. Godin ..... 1787

#### Concussions

Ms. Duncan (Etobicoke North) ..... 1788

#### Sambro Island Lighthouse

Mr. Regan ..... 1788

#### Local Foods

Ms. Quach ..... 1788

#### Consumer Protection

Ms. Quach ..... 1788

#### Internships

Mr. Rathgeber ..... 1788

#### Pensions

Mr. Lamoureux ..... 1788

#### Consumer Protection

Mr. Cash ..... 1788

#### Nuclear Fuel Processing

Mr. Cash ..... 1788

#### Impaired Driving

Mr. Warawa ..... 1789

### Questions on the Order Paper

Mr. Lukiwski ..... 1789

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

### Northwest Territories Devolution Act

Bill C-15. Second reading ..... 1789

Ms. Sims ..... 1789

Mr. Warawa ..... 1791

Mr. Lamoureux ..... 1792

Mr. Godin ..... 1792

Mrs. Groguhé ..... 1792

Ms. Davies (Vancouver East) ..... 1792

Ms. Raynault ..... 1795

Mr. Shipley ..... 1795

Mr. Lamoureux ..... 1796

Ms. Liu ..... 1796

Ms. Raynault ..... 1798

Mr. Allen (Welland) ..... 1798

Mr. Thibeault ..... 1798

Ms. Raynault ..... 1800

Mr. Allen (Welland) ..... 1800

Mr. Stewart ..... 1800

Mr. Allen (Welland) ..... 1802

Mr. Lamoureux ..... 1802

Mr. Nicholls ..... 1802

Mr. Cullen ..... 1804

Ms. Raynault ..... 1804

Mr. Lamoureux ..... 1804

Mr. Thibeault ..... 1806

Mr. Carmichael ..... 1807

Ms. Liu ..... 1807

Ms. Ashton ..... 1807

Mr. Angus ..... 1809

Mr. Thibeault ..... 1809

Mr. Giguère ..... 1809

Mr. Strahl ..... 1810

Ms. Jones ..... 1811

Mr. Angus ..... 1811

Mr. Clarke ..... 1813

Ms. May ..... 1813

Ms. Raynault ..... 1813

Mr. Strahl ..... 1814

Ms. Davies (Vancouver East) ..... 1815

Ms. Jones ..... 1815

Mr. Dubé ..... 1815

Mr. Strahl ..... 1816

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

### Leaside Sports Hall of Fame Inductees

Mr. Carmichael ..... 1817

### Airplane Crash of November 29, 1963

Mr. Giguère ..... 1817

### Saint John Public-Private Partnership

Mr. Weston (Saint John) ..... 1817

### Guelph Lawn Bowling Club

Mr. Valeriotte ..... 1817

### Birthday Congratulations

Mr. Goldring ..... 1818

### Media Charity Drive

Ms. Turmel ..... 1818

### Community Service

Mr. Toet ..... 1818

<b>Battle of Hong Kong</b>	
Mr. Chong .....	1818
<b>Violence Against Women</b>	
Ms. Freeman .....	1818
<b>Volunteers</b>	
Ms. Brown (Newmarket—Aurora) .....	1819
<b>Violence Against Women</b>	
Mr. Mulcair .....	1819
<b>New Democratic Party of Canada</b>	
Mrs. Block .....	1819
<b>Governor General's Medal of Bravery</b>	
Mr. Eyking .....	1819
<b>Volunteers</b>	
Mr. Armstrong .....	1819
<b>Ethics</b>	
Ms. Quach .....	1820
<b>Northern Sovereignty</b>	
Mr. Leef .....	1820

## ORAL QUESTIONS

<b>Rail Transportation</b>	
Mr. Mulcair .....	1820
Mr. Harper .....	1820
Mr. Mulcair .....	1820
Mr. Harper .....	1820
Mr. Mulcair .....	1820
Mr. Harper .....	1820
<b>Ethics</b>	
Mr. Mulcair .....	1821
Mr. Harper .....	1821
Mr. Mulcair .....	1821
Mr. Harper .....	1821
Mr. Goodale .....	1821
Mr. Calandra .....	1821
Mr. Goodale .....	1821
Mr. Calandra .....	1821
Mr. Garneau .....	1821
Mr. Calandra .....	1821
Mr. Mulcair .....	1821
Mr. Harper .....	1821
Mr. Mulcair .....	1821
Mr. Harper .....	1822
Mr. Mulcair .....	1822
Mr. Harper .....	1822
Mr. Mulcair .....	1822
Mr. Harper .....	1822
Mr. Mulcair .....	1822
Mr. Harper .....	1822
Mr. Mulcair .....	1822
Mr. Harper .....	1822

Mr. Mulcair .....	1822
Mr. Harper .....	1823
Mr. LeBlanc (Beauséjour) .....	1823
Mr. Calandra .....	1823
Mr. LeBlanc (Beauséjour) .....	1823
Mr. Calandra .....	1823
Mr. LeBlanc (Beauséjour) .....	1823
Mr. Calandra .....	1823

## Rail Transportation

Ms. Sitsabaiesan .....	1823
Mr. Watson .....	1823
Mr. Mai .....	1824
Mr. Watson .....	1824

## Pensions

Mr. Caron .....	1824
Mr. Sorenson .....	1824
Mr. Rankin .....	1824
Mr. Sorenson .....	1824

## Consumer Protection

Mr. Shory .....	1824
Mr. Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam) .....	1824

## Aboriginal Affairs

Ms. Ashton .....	1825
Ms. Leitch .....	1825

## Status of Women

Ms. Ashton .....	1825
Ms. Leitch .....	1825

## National Defence

Ms. Mathysen .....	1825
Mr. Nicholson .....	1825
Mr. Chicoine .....	1825
Mr. Nicholson .....	1825
Ms. Duncan (Etobicoke North) .....	1825
Mr. Nicholson .....	1825
Mr. Garneau .....	1826
Mr. Nicholson .....	1826

## Natural Resources

Ms. Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue) .....	1826
Mrs. Block .....	1826
Ms. Crowder .....	1826
Mrs. Block .....	1826

## Foreign Affairs

Mr. Komarnicki .....	1826
Mr. Obhrai .....	1826

## The Environment

Mr. Simms .....	1826
Mr. Kamp .....	1827

## Search and Rescue

Ms. Papillon .....	1827
Mr. Kamp .....	1827

## Small Business

Mr. Aspin .....	1827
Mr. Rickford .....	1827

<b>International Trade</b>	
Ms. Brosseau .....	1827
Mr. Lemieux .....	1827

<b>Natural Resources</b>	
Ms. May .....	1827
Mr. Harper .....	1828

<b>Business of the House</b>	
Mr. Cullen .....	1828
Mr. Van Loan .....	1828

### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

<b>Northwest Territories Devolution Act</b>	
Bill C-15. Second reading .....	1829
Mr. Cullen .....	1829
Mr. Strahl .....	1830
Ms. Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona) .....	1831
Mr. Côté .....	1831
Mr. Strahl .....	1833
Mr. Lamoureux .....	1833
Ms. Davies (Vancouver East) .....	1834
Mr. Jacob .....	1834
Mrs. Hughes .....	1834
Mr. Woodworth .....	1836
Mr. Scott .....	1836
Mr. Strahl .....	1836
Mr. Scott .....	1836
Mrs. Block .....	1838
Ms. Blanchette-Lamothe .....	1838
Ms. Blanchette-Lamothe .....	1838
Mr. Woodworth .....	1840
Mr. Lamoureux .....	1840
Ms. Boivin .....	1841
Mr. Woodworth .....	1842
Mr. Lamoureux .....	1842
Ms. Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue) .....	1842
Mr. Jean .....	1844
Mr. Jacob .....	1844

Ms. Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona) .....	1844
Ms. Davies (Vancouver East) .....	1846
Mr. Duncan (Vancouver Island North) .....	1846
(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee) .....	1846

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

<b>Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act</b>	
Bill C-475. Second reading .....	1847
Ms. Blanchette-Lamothe .....	1847
Mr. Holder .....	1848
Mr. Lamoureux .....	1849
Mr. Côté .....	1850
Ms. Leslie .....	1851

### Business of the House

Mr. Van Loan .....	1852
Motion .....	1852
(Motion agreed to) .....	1852

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

<b>Nelson Mandela</b>	
Mr. Harper .....	1852
Mr. Mulcair .....	1853
Mr. Cotler .....	1853
Ms. May .....	1854
The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin) .....	1854

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

<b>Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act</b>	
Bill C-475. Second reading .....	1854
Ms. Péclet .....	1854
Ms. Borg .....	1855
Division on motion deferred .....	1856

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