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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, November 28, 2018

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, November 28, 2018

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

• (1405)

[*English*]

The Speaker: It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem, led by the hon. member for Peace River—Westlock.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

TRANSPORTATION

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as of yesterday, passengers can carry knives on planes thanks to the Minister of Transport, whom we also have to thank for destroying protected land in Mascouche to build an airport, against the advice of pretty much everyone there. He is also behind the loss of a big contract to a German company at the expense of workers in La Pocatière.

The Minister of Transport, a minister from Quebec, has a pretty bleak record. It is definitely less than stellar.

This week, a historic delegation from the north shore came to Ottawa to meet with him and settle the Highway 138 extension issue once and for all. Without a reliable access road, lower north shore residents are isolated and at risk. The people of the north shore deserve this government's respect. The minister has an opportunity to do something good for them and for Quebec for once.

Is it not about time?

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[*English*]

OTTAWA RIVERKEEPER

Mr. William Amos (Pontiac, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand in the House today to acknowledge the tremendous work of Meredith Brown, of Ottawa Riverkeeper, who will be stepping down from her position as riverkeeper after 15 years of stellar advocacy.

Ottawa Riverkeeper is a non-profit charity whose special responsibility is to be the full-time public advocate for the Ottawa River watershed. It is the riverkeeper's job to educate, identify citizen complaints and figure out solutions to problems that affect our watershed.

Meredith Brown has served the public interest, working tirelessly to protect and restore our watershed. Under her leadership, the organization has grown from one to 10 employees and now includes hundreds of volunteers. Fundraising efforts are more solid than ever, and relations with the Algonquin nation have improved dramatically.

I would like to thank this Pontiac constituent for her hard work, her dedication and her commitment to protecting our right to swim, drink and fish in the Ottawa River. We need leaders like Meredith Brown to continue to ensure the ecological integrity of our habitats across Canada.

On behalf of the entire national capital community, I thank Meredith. *Meegwetch. Merci.*

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KENT COUNTY AGRICULTURAL HALL OF FAME

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last week, along with the member for Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, I attended the Kent County Agricultural Hall of Fame. Robert Kerr and Art Schaafsma were honoured this year as inductees, and George and Ruth Bieber were honoured posthumously. The list of their achievements would require much more time than is allotted. Suffice it to say, their accomplishments are extraordinary.

I have visited Ukraine, where the topsoil is 10 feet deep, but it cannot match Kent County's production, and its crop output pales in comparison. The difference is the people, like those inducted into the hall of fame, who have helped make Kent county one of the most productive agricultural areas in the world.

I take this opportunity to congratulate Robert Kerr, Art Schaafsma and George and Ruth Bieber as well as the hundreds of farmers, both past and present, who have helped give Kent county its rich agricultural history.

*Statements by Members***NASEEHA**

Mr. Omar Alghabra (Mississauga Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, mental health issues know no ethnic or cultural boundaries. Too many of our youth from cultural communities suffer in silence, so I want to tell members about Naseeha, which is an organization that offers support to youth.

Naseeha is Arabic for advice. It was founded by Yaseen and Summayah Poonah over 10 years ago. They started with a volunteer helpline for Muslim youth with the aim of providing teens with support that understands their situation without judgment or shaming. Today Naseeha employs professional counsellors and has open phone lines seven days a week. They receive calls from tens of thousands of people from all backgrounds, from all over Canada and around the world. They deal with issues such as depression, bullying, suicide, domestic violence, radicalization, intergenerational challenges and identity questions. Naseeha is a valuable partner to organizations such as CAMH, school boards and the Kids Help Phone line.

I want to thank the directors, staff and volunteers for their excellent support.

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[*Translation*]

TWO FAMILY DOCTORS HONOURED

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskaing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Dr. Lianne Gauvin of Hearst has been given the community teacher of the year award by the Ontario College of Family Physicians. This award recognizes excellence in a community family medicine preceptor working with students and residents.

Dr. Gauvin was nominated by her students, who praised her for her extraordinary empathy for her patients.

● (1410)

[*English*]

In rural and northern Canada, family doctors play a big role in the health of our communities, so it is nice when their hard work is acknowledged. That is also the case for Little Current's Dr. Dieter Poenn, who has been recognized by the College of Physicians and Surgeons as family physician of the year, the highest honour presented to a family doctor who makes a significant impact for patients. The award is no surprise to Dr. Poenn's colleagues, who testify to his skill as a physician, leader and educator and note that he also serves as coroner for the region.

Please join me in thanking Dr. Gauvin and Dr. Poenn for their dedication and in congratulating them on their awards.

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ALBANIAN INDEPENDENCE DAY

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is Albanian Independence Day.

[*Member spoke in Albanian*]

[*English*]

After 500 years of Ottoman rule, an independent Albania was proclaimed on November 28, 1912. On this day, the Albanian flag was raised in Vlora, which is why this day is also called Flag Day.

[*Translation*]

Albanian Independence Day is usually celebrated by wearing red, which is the colour of the Albanian flag and traditional Albanian clothing.

[*English*]

This is followed by gala events and ceremonies, held in Albania and throughout the diaspora, that involve customary Albanian music and dance.

On this day, I would like to salute Albanians across our country, including the Albanian Canadian Community Association of Toronto and the Albanian-Canadian Excellence society, and Albanians everywhere as they celebrate their nationhood.

[*Member spoke in Albanian*]

[*English*]

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GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Mr. Speaker, November 25 to December 10 marks 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence. It is tragic that in 2018, this is still a reality that so many Canadians experience on an ongoing basis. We are faced with daily reminders in the news and in our communities that we can and must do better. It is clear that everyone in our society has a role to play in ending gender-based violence.

I would like to take a moment to draw attention to WIN House, in Edmonton, which does tremendous work to support women and children fleeing domestic abuse. WIN House provides a safe place, emergency services and comprehensive programs to help support and empower victims. I recently had the opportunity to visit its facilities. I want to thank the staff for their hard work and the safe refuge they have created.

Because of organizations like WIN House, victims do not need to be defined by their experiences. Together we can work to ensure that gender-based violence is a thing of the past.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Ms. Kamal Khera (Brampton West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for the residents in my riding of Brampton West, the recent increase in reported gun violence is a very concerning issue. Over the summer, I, alongside my colleagues from Brampton, appeared before the Peel Police Services Board to voice our concerns about what we are hearing from constituents to ensure that policy changes are made to reflect the community's feedback.

Statements by Members

I want to let the residents of Brampton West know that our government does not take these reports lightly. We are stepping in to ensure that police agencies have the resources and tools they need to combat gun violence with the \$86-million investment recently announced by our Minister of Public Safety. This investment, along with the introduction of common-sense firearms legislation and our work with Peel Police Services, forms a comprehensive plan to ensure that all Bramptonians feel safe and secure in our community.

* * *

SITUATION IN YEMEN

Mr. Sven Spengemann (Mississauga—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise with a heavy heart to draw attention to the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Yemen. According to a recent report by Save the Children, 85,000 children under the age of five may have died of starvation since the onset of hostilities three years ago, while 14 million people remain at risk of famine. In times of war and conflict, the most vulnerable segments of the population, women, children and the elderly, also suffer the most.

Today I call on my colleagues from all parties in both chambers, and on parliamentarians around the world, to do everything they can to draw attention to this unconscionable suffering, to highlight channels for humanitarian relief, to amplify calls for a ceasefire, and to support the efforts of the United Nations, particularly those of UN Special Envoy Martin Griffiths, whose work includes the negotiation of access points for aid delivery.

The tragedy in Yemen calls into question everything that defines us as morally conscious beings. It must be brought to an end.

* * *

PETER KLEIN

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Peter Klein, born Horst Klein, passed away on the morning of Wednesday, November 7, 2018, at age 84. He is survived by his loving wife Christa and his three children, Daniella, Dagmar and Christopher.

As a young man, Peter became a master pastry chef, and eventually, Peter and Christa moved to Westbank, where they started their own business, Peter Klein Fine Cakes and Pastry Ltd.

Despite business and health challenges, Peter remained ever the baker. His greatest honour was to bake the annual Canada Day cake for Westside Daze. To the delight of everyone in attendance, he baked a massive six by four cake, a Canadian flag with white icing and strawberries. He did this every year for 12 years, earning him the love of his community and a Diamond Jubilee medal. In his final year making the Canada Day cake, he trained his successor, Anja Dumas, who plans to continue this important tradition.

On behalf the community, local Rotarians, and the Westside Daze committee, I say rest in peace. I will miss Peter as a friend. He was certainly a great Canadian. I appreciate all he did for me and for the community.

● (1415)

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, November 25 to December 10 is the UN women's 16 days of activism against gender-based violence. This year, the UNiTE campaign is using #HearMeToo and #OrangeTheWorld.

Gender-based violence can take many forms. Sexual violence and harassment; domestic assault; the use of rape as a weapon of war; attacks on women human rights defenders; violence against the LGBT community; the particular vulnerability of indigenous, racialized and disabled women; cybersexual violence; and trafficking of women and girls are just some examples.

This year, I would particularly like to draw attention to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime's Blue Heart campaign to end human trafficking.

[Translation]

We all have a role to play in ending silence and impunity. During the 16 days of activism, let us join this worldwide movement against gender-based violence.

* * *

[English]

RICHMOND HILL

Mr. Majid Jowhari (Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I have the privilege of welcoming my constituency youth council to Ottawa, where they are visiting for the day to learn how government works first-hand. These are smart, driven and compassionate young Canadians who have chosen to get involved and make a difference.

Last week, they joined me as I partnered with the Mental Health Commission of Canada to host the Headstrong summit. This partnership is the first in Canada and once again, Richmond Hill is at the forefront. Headstrong is a youth-oriented initiative to break the stigma around mental illness, partnering with schools and sharing lived experiences.

It was a fantastic opportunity for these young women and men to connect with other youth advocates who understand the importance of breaking the stigma and helping those who struggle with their mental health. I welcome them once again.

* * *

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on Monday night, I stood in the House during the emergency debate to discuss the announcement that the GM plant in Oshawa was closing. Some 2,800 unionized and non-unionized workers will lose their jobs because of this decision.

Statements by Members

The cities of St. Thomas and London, the Township of Southwold and the County of Elgin met a similar fate with the closure of the St. Thomas assembly plant in Talbotville when Ford announced that it was closing. Then the community was hit once again when the Sterling truck plant announced it would be closing its doors and moving out of Canada.

Families across the region were impacted by these job losses. Auto haulers, cafeteria employees, secondary suppliers, all of these companies and workers fell victim to these closures. We need to support the families of Oshawa by all levels of government working together.

I urge the government to work with all federal party members to find a solution for the workers and families in the Oshawa region.

* * *

[*Translation*]

PAOLETTI GRACIOPPO THERRIEN

Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today, I would like to highlight the work of Paoletti Gracioppo Therrien, a chartered professional accounting firm whose team is here with us on Parliament Hill. Giovanni Paoletti, Santo Gracioppo and Benoît Therrien started the firm in 1983. Today, it has become an indispensable part of the greater Montreal area's accounting community.

[*English*]

If people are looking for passion, personalization and quality, search no more because Paoletti Gracioppo Therrien is the place to go. Through its services and its uncompromising work, it makes tax season a breeze and not a nightmare. Over and above the personalized services and the passion for its work, Paoletti Gracioppo Therrien supports various charitable causes and gives back to the community every chance it has.

Grazie Giovanni Paoletti, Santo Gracioppo and Benoît Therrien for hard work over the past 35 years and to many more to come.

* * *

• (1420)

NANJING MASSACRE

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, December 13 marks the 81st anniversary of the Nanjing massacre. In recognition of crimes against humanity and in the spirit of never again, I am calling on the government to declare December 13 of every year as Nanjing massacre commemorative day. Up to 300,000 people were killed. An estimated 200,000 women from occupied territories in Asia were tricked or coerced by the Japanese Imperial Army into sexual slavery.

The UN recognizes 19 countries where sexual violence is used as a tactic of war. If we can learn from history and commit to preventing it from happening again, humanity benefits.

Order of Canada recipients Joy Kogawa and Dr. Joseph Wong from Canada ALPHA, Satoko Norimatsu from Japanese Canadians Supporting Nanjing Massacre Commemorative Day, CACA, NCCC, CCC of Greater Vancouver and Toronto, Korean Senior Citizens of Greater Vancouver, Canada Philippines Solidarity for Human Rights,

along with close to 40,000 petitioners across the country are in support.

I hope all members will as well.

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GORD BROWN MEMORIAL CANADA 150 OUTDOOR RINK

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am standing today to acknowledge an event happening this evening on behalf of the United Way Leeds & Grenville and in celebration of our dear friend, the former member of Parliament for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, Gord Brown.

The United Way Leeds & Grenville has teamed up with the Gord Brown Memorial Canada 150 Outdoor Rink project to offer hockey enthusiasts the opportunity to raise money to help make positive changes to lives in this community. It really was Gord's vision to create a better life for all the citizens of Leeds & Grenville, so let us all help him with his vision.

* * *

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. René Arseneault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, due to the current crisis facing the francophone community of Ontario, official languages minority groups have reason to wonder if their rights will be questioned every time a new government comes to power.

[*Translation*]

As our Canadian society evolved, our predecessors rightly agreed to protect and promote linguistic minorities wherever they are located across the country.

Canada's Official Languages Act is indispensable for accomplishing that goal.

[*English*]

However, we all know the strongest of laws is meaningless if the political will to enforce it is absent or if the majority is unwilling to adopt it as a fundamental principle.

[*Translation*]

Beyond the act, I am asking my colleagues in the House to appreciate the importance of valuing both official languages so that minority communities no longer have to worry and so that our official languages become the pride of the entire nation of Canada.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government negotiated a bad deal for our farmers, we have tariffs on softwood lumber, steel and aluminum, there is a crisis in our oil and gas sector, and now the Canadian automotive industry is going through an accelerated downturn. All of that is happening under this Prime Minister's government.

Instead of standing up and offering the usual platitudes, when will the Prime Minister stand up and fight for Canadian workers and for the industries that employ them?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been fighting to protect Canadian workers and industries since the beginning.

We created the strongest economic growth of the G7 in 2017. We created the lowest unemployment rate in 40 years. In our latest economic statement, we responded to the calls from Canada's industries by investing \$14 billion to help them invest in our jobs and success in this country for years to come.

We will continue to listen to workers and to work with them and our industries to build a better Canada.

* * *

[English]

CARBON PRICING

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is the Liberal policies that are actually hurting the ability for businesses to invest in Canada and create jobs. It is the Liberal policies in Ontario that created massive increases in energy costs, something that our competitors around the world do not face. Liberal increases to payroll taxes make it more expensive for employers here in Canada to keep jobs here. Now the carbon tax is making it more difficult to invest in Canada. We know that because the government admits it. Will the Prime Minister give the same exemption to other businesses that he has granted to large industrial emitters?

• (1425)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are concerned about our seniors, we are concerned about future seniors, which is why we strengthened CPP for future generations, something the members opposite oppose, which is something the member indicated right now.

We are making sure that we take action by lowering small business taxes to actually support our small businesses across the country. We invested in an accelerated capital cost allowance program that is going to help our businesses be more competitive.

As to making sure that we put a price on pollution, Canadians know that the way to build the economy of the future and the jobs of the future is to prepare for the transition, and that is what we are doing.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is the Prime Minister's policies that are transitioning the auto sector right out of our country. He knows that his carbon tax is

Oral Questions

making it more difficult to keep jobs here in Canada because he said it himself. That is why the Liberals have granted a massive exemption to large industrial emitters.

Workers in Oshawa are fighting to keep their jobs. The least the Prime Minister could do is help them in that fight. Will he repeal the carbon tax so that Canadian auto sector jobs can stay right here in Canada?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have continued to invest in businesses and workers right across this country. Of course, our hearts go out to the workers in Oshawa, who are facing these cuts, but we continue to stand with them and we will continue to fight for them.

In terms of understanding, the best way to secure jobs for the future is to take genuine action on climate change and support our economies and our families to thrive through the transition to a lower-carbon economy. That is what we are doing. The members opposite have no plan and instead just try to play politics.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is going to have to put on his teaching hat here and explain the logic on this one.

For large industrial emitters, the carbon tax will kill jobs, so they need a massive exemption to protect them from competition from other countries, but that very same carbon tax will somehow create jobs in the auto sector. That makes no sense. A carbon tax is bad for all Canadian workers. Now that we have seen the impact of this policy, chasing future jobs and investment away, will he do the right thing and cancel his carbon tax?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, obviously all of our hearts go out to the workers and we plan on supporting them. I have to highlight that when I spoke with the Premier of Ontario, we agreed we were going to put partisanship aside and focus on how we were going to support the families that are suffering and worried because of the decisions taken.

On the question of the carbon tax, of pricing pollution and putting a price on that pollution, we know that making sure that pollution is not free is how we are going to move forward on protecting jobs, on protecting our future and protecting the environment for future generations.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. I have heard a number of interventions, including by the member for Barrie—Innisfil. I would ask him to restrain himself and try to remember that we speak when it is our turn.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

* * *

NATURAL RESOURCES

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is not just the auto sector that the government's policies have had a devastating effect on, but also the energy sector in Canada.

Oral Questions

It was the Prime Minister's decision to kill the northern gateway project, which would have opened up Asian markets. It was his decision that killed the pipeline that would have brought western energy to eastern Canadian markets. As a result, there have been drastic job losses in Alberta.

The Prime Minister knows that under the Conservative government, four major pipeline projects were built. His preference is to phase-out the energy sector. Was it always his intention to phase-out the energy sector before the next election?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have always worked to demonstrate that we understand that growing the economy and protecting the environment need to go hand in hand, and we will continue to do that.

[Translation]

It has been 14 days since the Ontario Conservative government cut services to francophones. In those 14 days, the Leader of the Opposition has not asked me a single question on this important issue. We think it is very important to talk about this and to stand up and defend francophones.

That is why I am very happy at the prospect of sitting down with the Leader of the Opposition to discuss this matter later.

* * *

• (1430)

[English]

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the announced closure of the GM plant is devastating for the families of the 2,500 workers and the community. However, it is not just workers and families in Oshawa who are worried about the future; it is all auto workers across the country.

The Prime Minister must do more than just express his disappointment. He must demonstrate some leadership and develop a national strategy, such as the one proposed and advocated by the member for Windsor West, if he wants to make sure that our auto industry does not just survive, but thrives. Will he do so?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, obviously we continue to stand with the workers at the GM plant and those right across the country. We know that the auto sector is a vital element of our economic growth. That is why we fought so hard for it in renegotiating the NAFTA deal.

Specifically, since November 2015, our government has invested \$389 million in 37 projects undertaken by Canada's automotive sector, resulting in nearly \$4.1 billion in total investments in the sector. That is the work we are doing to support auto workers in this country, and that we have done over the past three years.

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, that is throwing money at it. It is not having a strategy.

[Translation]

This week, it was GM, but other closures could be coming. That is why the federal government needs to develop a coordinated strategy

to save jobs. It also needs to make sure that Canada's automotive sector shifts towards manufacturing electric and hybrid vehicles.

The Prime Minister expressed his disappointment, but now he needs to show some leadership.

Will he convene at least one summit on the future of the auto sector with unions, the industry, the provinces, and the mayors of the municipalities and communities whose economies rely on the auto sector?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been working with unions, industry, workers and communities for three years now to attract investments. We have invested \$4.1 billion in Canada's automotive sector because we believe in the future of our workers and our industry.

We will always put the quality of Canadians' work front and centre, and that is why we are attracting investments from around the world.

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the closure of the GM plant in Oshawa is terrible news for thousands of families. Workers are angry.

How can a government hand over billions of our dollars to a company without first obtaining a guarantee that jobs here will be protected?

Will the Prime Minister fight to keep jobs in Oshawa, or will he continue to give gifts to big corporations without asking for anything in return?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will absolutely continue to fight. When I spoke to GM's CEO, I reminded her that GM has a long and proud history in Oshawa, thanks to the workers who gave their all to a job they loved.

As I told the workers' representatives yesterday, we will be there to support the workers and their families, who are going through tough times. We are also developing an industry plan that will focus on new initiatives related to technology, talent, infrastructure and consumers.

[English]

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the industry minister said in the House, "read my lips". The people of Oshawa have been reading those lips all week and what they see is a Liberal government that will do nothing to save their jobs.

The Prime Minister is throwing away another \$14 billion to corporate CEOs but has shown that he is not willing to do a thing for Oshawa auto workers and thousands of others whose jobs are threatened by the closure.

Why has the Prime Minister not convened an emergency meeting of labour, business and elected representatives to save those jobs? Why will the Liberals not act?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the member opposite had better relations with labour, he might have learned that I sat down with Jerry Dias yesterday and had an excellent conversation with labour about what we are going to do as our next steps to fight for those GM jobs, to support our workers.

We are going to continue to work with labour, and yes, with industry, and with workers and local community leaders right across the country, but particularly in Oshawa right now, to make sure that we are doing everything we can to support those families.

* * *

• (1435)

MEMBER FOR BRAMPTON EAST

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on Friday past, the Prime Minister announced that effective immediately the Liberal member for Brampton East would be resigning. We have heard that it had to do with health problems; then it was gambling problems.

We have heard as well that the Ethics Commissioner delisted his investigation on the basis of the Prime Minister's announcement of the member's resignation. Yesterday, the Speaker clarified that the member certainly has not resigned. As a result, the Ethics Commissioner has re-listed the inquiry and the investigation going on. The RCMP has sought access to records.

When did the Prime Minister know that the member for Brampton East was under investigation by the RCMP?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member informed us of challenges he is facing and put out a public statement on his decision to resign. We agreed that his decision, which he announced in his statement, was the right one to take.

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we appreciate the clarification on the member's decision, but what we are seeking is to know when the Prime Minister knew that the RCMP was investigating the member.

The Globe and Mail is reporting today that the member publicly questioned senior officials of the RCMP and other law enforcement agencies earlier this year about the way they investigate money laundering. At the same time, the Mounties were probing his multi-million dollar gambling activities and sought to determine the origin of the funds.

The member was removed from this committee on September 19. When did the Prime Minister know he was under RCMP surveillance?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we learned about the member's challenges last week when he came forward and told us about his gambling addiction.

We also will highlight how important it is to ensure that everyone understands that the RCMP's investigations happened completely independently and without their giving advice or notification to any politicians of investigations that they needed to undertake.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this week, The Globe and Mail reported that not only did the Liberal member for Brampton East gamble away millions of dollars at casinos—and by the way, we wonder where he got all that money—but he was also under RCMP investigation for months. This is an extremely worrisome, even troubling, situation. This is another case of a Liberal MP caught up in some wild shenanigans.

My question for the Prime Minister is simple and is the same as the one my colleague asked just now.

When did the Prime Minister find out that the RCMP was investigating this member?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I learned about the member's challenges last week, and we immediately recommended that he take action. We agree with his decision to leave the House and to step down from his duties as a member of Parliament. Obviously, the RCMP will continue its investigation free from any political interference, or even the perception of interference.

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are talking about a Liberal MP. Last I checked, he had not been expelled from caucus. He was part of the delegation that went to India, the disastrous trip the Prime Minister organized with several other members, in case anyone has forgotten. The Liberal member even invited his old boss to come along. It is actually rather ironic, when you think about it. He was a member of the Standing Committee on Finance and was asking the RCMP about how it investigates money laundering. The Prime Minister is telling us today that he has known about this situation only since last week.

Can he confirm the date?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I found out about the situation facing the hon. member last week. We then accepted the member's suggestion that he withdraw from politics. We know there are still many unanswered questions, and the RCMP is seeking those answers. We are confident that the RCMP will do what it takes in order to fully understand what happened.

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[*English*]

NEWS MEDIA INDUSTRY

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it has been a week since the Liberals announced their undefined, mis-targeted, temporary patch of a \$600-million plus election year bailout for Canada's struggling news industry. Owners and publishers who get million dollar cheques and bonuses and partisan big union bosses, not surprisingly, praise the bailout, but dozens of this country's most respected journalists have denounced it because it casts a dark shadow over the independence of their craft.

Does the Prime Minister now understand how unacceptable this bailout is an election year?

Oral Questions

•(1440)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a free and independent press is the cornerstone of any democracy. We understand that. We also understand that the transformation of the news industry and the digital challenges it is facing require new models to support strong, independent journalism. That is why our government is choosing to step up to defend the independence and the strength and the capacity of journalists to do their job in this country.

We know that attacking journalists, as the members opposite like to do, is not the way to strengthen our democracy. We will support the capacity of journalists to do their job independently.

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is clear from that answer that the Prime Minister does not understand the economic and technological realities that have created this crisis for our free and independent Canadian news industry. This bailout is not a long-term remedy. It is a temporary patch that ignores, for example, suggestions from the Public Policy Forum, like ending tax writeoffs for advertisers on foreign digital platforms or resizing the mandate of Canada's semi-private public broadcaster.

Why will the Prime Minister not listen to Canada's independent journalists?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the conspiracy theory being peddled by Conservatives is insulting to the intelligence of Canadians and to the professionalism of journalists. The Conservatives think Canadian journalists can be bought. We do not. We know that their work is essential to our democracy. France, Sweden, Germany, the U.K. and many others took action to support journalism without compromising its independence.

Newspapers are going through a crisis. That is why we are taking action right now to help them get through this crisis and continue to stay strong and defend our democracy the way they always do.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. Most members from all parties can sit through question period and hear things they do not like without reacting. I am sure the rest are adults and can also do so.

The hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley.

* * *

MEMBER FOR BRAMPTON EAST

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister chose to appoint the member for Brampton East to the very powerful finance committee. While there, he used his access to senior Finance officials and money laundering experts to ask very troubling questions. I will quote:

How many resources does FINTRAC have to go after each little \$10,000 transaction? If I'm money laundering, I'm not doing transactions in the millions to catch attention. I'm doing them at the \$10,000, \$15,000 limit to get away with it.

Those questions were so disturbing they raised red flags with the RCMP.

Did the Prime Minister or anyone in his office find those questions so disturbing that they acted upon them?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week, the member stated his intentions after informing us of the challenges he is facing. As I said, we agreed with the decision he has taken to step down.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is claiming ignorance—

The Speaker: Order. Apparently there were problems hearing. Is the audio working now?

The hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, these answers are not going to satisfy. I do not think the Prime Minister is fully understanding the gravity of this situation. He is claiming ignorance, but on September 19, in the middle of its study on money laundering, the Prime Minister removed the MP from the finance committee. The RCMP, FINTRAC and the Ethics Commissioner are all investigating this colleague and friend of the Prime Minister. He said he knew nothing. He did nothing.

Once again, did the Prime Minister remove the member of Parliament for Brampton East from the finance committee because he was using his position to avoid possible prosecution?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, no, we did not.

* * *

[Translation]

FINANCE

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, before the global financial crisis of 2008, Minister Flaherty paid down nearly \$40 billion of our debt. To be fair, I will say that previous Liberal governments did the exact same thing. These decisions prepared us for the coming crisis.

Now, we are still seeing problems in the energy and auto sectors, increasing interest rates and potential upcoming crises.

How much of our national debt has the Prime Minister paid down?

•(1445)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during the financial crisis of 2008, the Conservative government put billions of dollars into the Canadian economy but did not manage to stimulate economic growth for Canadians. On the contrary, Stephen Harper's Conservative government posted the worst economic growth of any prime minister since R.B. Bennett during the Great Depression, many decades ago.

We know that investing in Canadians, investing in infrastructure and investing in the future is what Canadians need.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, now he wants to blame the Conservatives for a global financial crisis that started outside of our borders and from which Canada was the first country to recover and after which the first to balance its budget.

At the time, the Liberals said spend more, spend now, spend faster. They wanted the deficit to be even bigger. We managed to control the deficit, balance the budget and come out stronger than before. The question is this. He promised the budget would balance itself in 2019. When will the budget balance itself?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, twice in that answer the member opposite talked about the fact that the Conservatives got to a phoney balance just in time for the election. The way they did that was by cutting services to our veterans, cutting the Canadian Border Services Agency, cutting programs and opportunities for Canadian and by cutting and saving on things like the implementation of Phoenix. They brought together a phoney balance that hurt Canadians, that hurt the services and that is why Canadians kicked them out.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, basically, every fact he stated was false in that response, but that will not distract from the reality.

He likes to talk about what Canadians chose in the last election. Well, Canadians were told that the budget would balance itself in 2019. In good faith, they trusted the then Liberal leader that he would keep his word. Now the deficit is three times the size he promised and there are deficits for another quarter century to come. When will the budget balance itself?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, \$150 billion, that is how much the Conservative government added to our deficit, without growth or jobs to show for it.

We watched over the creation of close to 600,000 new jobs in Canada, the lowest unemployment rate in 40 years, the fastest growth in the G7 last year. We have done that because we are investing in the middle class. We lowered taxes for the middle class and raised them on the wealthiest 1%. We delivered a Canada child benefit that helps nine out of 10 Canadian families—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I am hearing some language that is unparliamentary, and I would ask members to remember what the rules are in that respect.

The hon. member for Carleton has the floor.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, stating falsehoods about our record will not distract Canadians from the promise he made to them in the last election. He said that if he were elected, we would have three tiny, temporary deficits. Since that time we have had large deficits. This year it is three times the size he promised. Next year, when the budget was supposed to balance itself, it in fact will be bigger than it is right now. The question one more time is this. He promised the budget would balance itself. When?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the last election, Canadians had a choice between a

government that was committed to cutting and balancing the budget at all costs or our government that was looking at investing in communities, investing in Canadians, supporting small businesses, lowering taxes on the middle class and raising them on the wealthiest 1%.

Canadians made the right choice. We have grown the economy, we have created 600,000 jobs and we have seen the unemployment rate drop to record low levels. The economy is doing well because we are investing in Canadians.

* * *

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Fin Donnelly (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this week we have learned that it is impossible to clean up the 250,000 litres of oil spilled near St. John's. This environmental disaster is Newfoundland's largest oil spill ever.

It turns out the Liberals' so-called oceans protection plan does not protect oceans after all: first the *Marathassa*, then the *Nathan E. Stewart* and now this. No wonder British Columbians do not trust the Liberals on Trans Mountain.

Newfoundland proves the Liberals do not have a credible spill recovery operation in place. Canadians want to know: Is this the Liberals' idea of world-class oil spill response?

• (1450)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have our historic investments in an oceans protection plan of \$1.5 billion. We will work with local communities, partner with top scientists, partner with indigenous communities and demonstrate that we have the capacity to respond to spills and to protect our coasts and the livelihood of those who depend on them.

We know that there is always more work to do, but we have focused on investing smartly, on trusting science and on working in partnership with provinces, municipalities and indigenous people to keep our oceans safe.

* * *

[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the meeting of party leaders to discuss the French-language services crisis in Ontario is a step in the right direction.

However, as much as the Liberals love their consultations, getting together for a little chit-chat is not enough. At some point, there has to be action. That is what Franco-Ontarians want, and they are the people the Prime Minister should be listening to.

Can the Prime Minister confirm that he plans to take action and that this meeting is not just a smoke screen?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has regularly made historic investments in our official language minority communities.

We will keep working with communities across the country. We will keep working with Franco-Ontarians and others to defend their institutions and their communities and to ensure that their economies and their communities remain successful for years to come.

I am happy to have the chance to sit down with the other party leaders to talk about how we can address this issue, as it is one on which we can all come together.

* * *

[English]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Gordie Hogg (South Surrey—White Rock, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I recently met with community members and representatives of the Nature Conservancy of Canada. They were all particularly concerned about protecting our land, water, oceans and wildlife.

Like many British Columbians, I recently heard the Minister of Environment and Climate Change announce that we were investing \$7 million to expand Canada's iconic Darkwoods Conservation Area in the Kootenays of British Columbia.

Would the Prime Minister please explain what further actions are being taken to protect our nature, our biodiversity, our Canada?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for South Surrey—White Rock for his hard work on the file and for his outstanding fashion sense.

Last week, we were thrilled to announce our \$7 million investment in the expansion of the Darkwoods Conservation Area. This investment builds on the historic action we are taking to protect nature in Canada, including committing \$1.3 billion this year alone to protecting our lands, water and wildlife.

We will continue to work hard to protect our natural heritage for our children and grandchildren.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, dark clouds are looming over Canada's economy.

In the past few weeks alone, we lost 2,500 jobs in the auto sector, 3,000 jobs in the aerospace sector, and 19,000 jobs in Alberta's energy sector alone. What is more, Canadians invest much more in the United States than Americans invest in Canada.

That is the record of the Liberal Prime Minister who took no precautions to deal with this reality.

What is the Prime Minister going to do other than impose the Liberal carbon tax?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it troubles me to hear not only a Conservative, but a Quebecker talk about his concern over our leadership on the environment.

We know that the way to build a stronger economy for the future is to protect the environment at the same time. Quebeckers regularly express their support for the idea of putting a price on pollution. They want us to do even more and that is what we will do.

The member opposite should reconsider his position that would obstruct a price on pollution and a plan to deal with climate change while growing the economy.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to hear the member for Papineau talking about Quebec and the environment. I am very proud of my Conservative colleagues and I am very proud to be a member of a party that was able to lower greenhouse gas emissions by 2.2% when it was in office. It does not take a rocket scientist to understand that. The facts speak for themselves.

Meanwhile, while more and more clouds are gathering in Canada's economic sky, the only thing the Liberal government is proposing is a carbon tax.

Why is it doing that?

● (1455)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent is really concerned about the environment, I would encourage him to talk to his leader and have him share with us his plan to deal with climate change.

The Conservatives have no plan to tackle climate change, but Quebeckers expect better, just like the rest of Canada.

* * *

[English]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's policy has just cost thousands of Ontarians in auto their jobs and he has forced more than 100,000 Albertans out of work, with no end in sight. He insults Albertans by just saying that he "feels that frustration" and "understands that anxiety", while the finance minister says he is "watching carefully".

It is within the Liberals' control to fix this crisis they created. The reality is that three companies wanted to build pipelines when he was elected, now they are all gone. This crisis harms workers and families in every single province.

Instead of empty platitudes, what exactly will the Prime Minister do today to fix the mess he has made?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to be in Alberta last week to listen directly to the concerns of folks in the oil sands and business leaders in Calgary. We know there is work we need to do together, and we will do it.

The one thing they asked for was the one thing they have been asking for more than a decade: to get our resources to new markets other than the United States. For 10 years, that Conservative government, which pretended to be a great friend to Alberta, was unable to deliver on the one thing they asked for more than anything else.

We are focusing on getting things done the right way, and that is exactly what we will do.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, over 2,000 Albertans were in Calgary last week to tell the Prime Minister not to come back until he had a solution to fix the problem he had created.

He vetoed the northern gateway pipeline and he killed the energy east pipeline. He said that spending billions of dollars on the Trans Mountain pipeline would get it built, and he cannot get construction started. He gave Canadian money to go to the U.S. to compete with Canada. He landlocked Canadian oil, costing provinces billions of dollars.

He defends using tax dollars to stop Canadian pipelines. His job killing carbon tax and Bill C-69 will make that discount permanent. When will he withdraw his “no more pipelines” bill, Bill C-69?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the Conservatives' strategy of shouting and shaking their fists at things actually got things done, Mr. Harper would have gotten 10 pipelines built to new markets, but he did not.

We have taken a different approach. We have approved the LNG Canada terminal in B.C., the largest private sector investment in Canada's history. We expanded export capacity for the Alberta Clipper project. We approved the Nova Gas pipeline, the Line 3 replacement project, the Arnaud apatite mine, Woodfibre LNG, the Ridley Island propane terminal and more. We are doing things the right way to get them done for Alberta.

The Speaker: Order, please. It sounds as if I am already in the hockey rink, where it will be hopefully as noisy as this tonight, but in a better way.

The hon. member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue.

* * *

[Translation]

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, everyone is worried about the replacement of overnight staff by an automated weather station at the Rouyn-Noranda airport.

The automated system proposed by Nav Canada is not 100% reliable, especially for detecting freezing rain. Other airports, such as those in Windsor and Bathurst, are also affected.

Following a meeting with Nav Canada, the mayor of Rouyn-Noranda complained that the consultation process is ill-suited to the regions.

Will the Prime Minister opt for people's safety and maintain overnight services in Rouyn-Noranda and elsewhere?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I told the citizens of Rouyn-Noranda when I was there a few months ago, we take their concerns very seriously. We have undertaken to have Nav Canada continue consultations in order to make the right decision for the people living there and to ensure safety and the services required.

* * *

[English]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Georgina Jolibois (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have been dragging their feet to finish the Wollaston Lake road project. For 30 years, the Hatchet Lake Dene First Nation has been fighting to get this all-season road done to make its community accessible. Without it, it has to fly in its already overpriced food and supplies. Northerners deserve answers.

Why are the Liberals ignoring Hatchet Lake Dene First Nation and refusing to complete the Wollaston Lake road project once and for all?

● (1500)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, no relation is more important to this government than that with indigenous peoples, and that is why we are moving forward on a true nation-to-nation relationship in partnership with them. It is also why we are taking concrete action on definitive projects that are going to make a difference, whether it is ending boil water advisories, building new schools, or building roads and community infrastructure.

We are going to continue to work hand in hand with indigenous communities right across this country to give them opportunities to grow their economies and make sure that they have every opportunity that all Canadians have.

* * *

[Translation]

ETHICS

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the evidence in Vice-Admiral Norman's legal proceedings have revealed that the President of the Treasury Board told two different stories about political interference in the case of the ship *Asterix*. In the House, he stated that his role was to ask questions about procurement contracts. However, when interviewed by the RCMP, he said that that was not his job. Both versions cannot be true.

Does the Prime Minister still have confidence in his President of the Treasury Board?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question. As he should know, it would be inappropriate for me to comment on this matter as it is currently before the courts.

[English]

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the President of the Treasury Board cannot seem to keep his story straight. What he told this House is completely different from what he told the RCMP.

We are not asking the Prime Minister about a court case. We are asking about whether a minister can be trusted, and whether he told the truth.

I have a simple question for the Prime Minister. Does the President of the Treasury Board still have the full support of the Prime Minister?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to say that every single member of my cabinet, including the President of the Treasury Board, continues to enjoy my full confidence.

* * *

HUMAN RIGHTS

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada, at the Prime Minister's direction, just voted against eight measures at the United Nations designed to hold Cuba accountable for things like the release of political prisoners, the promotion of gender equality, abuses that prevent freedom of assembly and speech, and Cuba's prohibition on the workers' right to strike.

In doing so, Canada stood against these measures with the regimes of Iran, Syria and North Korea. Will the Prime Minister reverse his shameful position on these votes?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we continue to stand as a strong voice for human rights around the world in a broad range of cases. We will always make decisions on the best way to both support Canadian interests and defend Canadian values at any multilateral forum, whether it be the UN or anywhere else.

Canadians can count on us to stand up for the values and priorities that we hold dear.

* * *

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (London North Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in my community of London, Ontario, the Pillar Nonprofit Network supports more than 600 non-profits, social enterprises and social innovators by helping them share resources and knowledge, and building connections between non-profit, business and government organizations.

Could the Prime Minister tell the House what the government is doing to support organizations such as Pillar, as well as the many social enterprise businesses and organizations like it across the country?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for London North Centre for

his hard work and for highlighting the important role social innovation and social finance play in developing innovative solutions for pressing social problems and community needs.

The social innovation and social finance strategy co-creation steering group recommended creating a social finance fund to help accelerate the growth of social enterprise in Canada.

Last week, we committed \$755 million for a social finance fund which will help generate up to \$2 billion in economic activity and help create and maintain as many as 100,000 jobs over the next decade.

* * *

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it has been revealed that under the Prime Minister, over 3,000 veterans had to wait over a year to have a decision made about their worthiness to receive the benefits they have earned. That is completely unacceptable.

The Prime Minister said he would not take them to court. He is doing just that. He said they were asking for too much. He broke his promise on pensions. The Prime Minister has been failing our veterans for the past three years in government. When is he going to stop pointing fingers and take responsibility for his failures?

• (1505)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, I will take no lessons from Conservatives on how to treat our veterans. They shuttered nine veterans service centres in order to create a phony budget balance just in time for the election. They nickel-and-dimed our veterans while using them as props in photo ops.

What we have done is invested over \$10 billion in veterans over the past three years. We have ensured that we are improving services, that we are improving supports to families, and that we are giving veterans the services they need, including following through on a pension for life commitment that we made to veterans.

We will continue to stand up for our veterans.

* * *

HUMAN RIGHTS

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this year is the 81st anniversary of the Nanjing massacre. Approximately 300,000 people were killed and an estimated 200,000 women from Japanese-occupied territories were tricked or coerced into sexual slavery. A family member told me today my grandmother and mother never stopped talking about what happened and how shameful it was that so much of the world never even knew.

On behalf of Order of Canada recipient Joy Kogawa and nearly 40,000 Canadians, I ask: Will the Prime Minister declare December 13 every year as Nanjing massacre commemorative day, yes or no?

Private Members' Business

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, of course we deplore the horrific events that took place in Nanjing 80 years ago. All Canadians can agree that the loss of life and violence that so many civilians faced should never be forgotten. We will never forget those terrible acts. The memory of these victims and survivors must be addressed in the true spirit of reconciliation.

* * *

[Translation]

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in recent weeks, the government has signed four new agreements to fund superclusters across Canada.

Would the Prime Minister tell the House how this important initiative will prepare talented Canadian workers for the innovative jobs of today and tomorrow?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Mount Royal for his hard work and for that important question. Our plan is to grow the economy and create middle-class jobs by transforming ideas into concrete solutions.

Under the innovation supercluster initiative, we are teaming up with companies of all sizes, academic institutions and not-for-profit organizations.

Together, the five superclusters are projected to create more than 50,000 jobs and grow Canada's economy by more than \$50 billion over the next 10 years.

* * *

[English]

JUSTICE

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last week, Conservatives and New Democrats worked together to try to fast-track a bill that would effectively fight forced organ harvesting. This bill has the support of high-profile Liberals like Irwin Cotler, but the government chose to delay the bill, substantially reducing its chances of passing.

Victims have waited too long. Why are the Liberals delaying action on the forced harvesting and trafficking of human organs?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is an issue we take very seriously. Obviously, the protection of Canadians is something that is fundamental for any government to be responsible for. We will continue to work with all interested parties to move forward on this important initiative.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Hon. Hunter Tootoo (Nunavut, Ind.): Mr. Speaker,

[Member spoke in Inuktitut]

[English]

My question is for the Prime Minister.

His government has refused to include the Government of Nunavut as a signatory to two Dene treaties. These treaties will infringe on and limit the territorial government's legislative authority. Observer status just does not cut it. The Government of Nunavut has to be a full participant. As the premier has said, the Government of Canada cannot simply shove this agreement down Nunavummiut's throat. This is unprecedented.

Will the Prime Minister tell this House why his government has excluded the Government of Nunavut as a signatory to these important treaties?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to advancing reconciliation with indigenous peoples to the conclusion of modern treaties. Treaty negotiations are conducted in confidence between the parties at the negotiating tables. We are hopeful that the modern treaties will meet the interests of all negotiating partners and will be concluded in the very near future.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Vancouver East is rising on a point of order.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Mr. Speaker, if you seek it, I think you will find unanimous consent of the House for the following motion: That the House recognize that 81 years ago Imperial Japanese army forces raped an estimated 20,000 to 80,000 Chinese women and girls and approximately 300,000 people were killed; that, after the Nanking massacre, the military sexual slavery system of the Japanese military expanded rapidly, and an estimated 200,000 women from Korea, the Philippines, China, Burma, Indonesia and other Japanese occupied territories were tricked, kidnapped or coerced to work in brothels to serve as "comfort women" to the Imperial Japanese army; that western eye witnesses in Nanking described the atrocities as "hell on earth"; that the House of Commons, in 2007, unanimously passed a motion in recognition that the Imperial armed forces of Japan used women as sex slaves during the Second World War; therefore, in the opinion of the House, the government formally acknowledge this by declaring December 13 of each year as Nanking massacre commemorative day in Canada.

● (1510)

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

STANDING COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITIES

The House resumed from November 21 consideration of the motion and of the amendment

The Speaker: Pursuant to an order made on Tuesday, November 27, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the amendment of the member for Trois-Rivières to Motion No. 177 under Private Members' Business.

Private Members' Business

Call in the members.

● (1520)

[*Translation*]

(The House divided on the amendment, which was negatived on the following division:)

(*Division No. 961*)

YEAS

Members

Aubin	Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu	Benson
Blaikie	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Boulerice	Boutin-Sweet
Brousseau	Cannings
Caron	Choquette
Cullen	Davies
Donnelly	Dubé
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)	Dusseauit
Duvall	Fortin
Garrison	Gill
Hardcastle	Johns
Jolibois	Julian
Kwan	Laverdière
MacGregor	Malcolmson
Marcil	Mathysen
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	Moore
Nantel	Pauzé
Plamondon	Quach
Rankin	Sansoucy
Ste-Marie	Stetski
Thériault	Trudel
Weir— 45	

NAYS

Members

Abouttaif	Albas
Albrecht	Aldag
Alghabra	Alleslev
Allison	Amos
Anandasangaree	Anderson
Arnold	Arseneault
Arya	Ayoub
Badawey	Bagnell
Barlow	Baylis
Bennett	Benzen
Bergen	Berthold
Bezan	Bibeau
Bittle	Blair
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)	Block
Boissonnault	Bossio
Boucher	Brassard
Bratina	Breton
Brison	Caesar-Chavannes
Carrie	Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)
Casey (Charlottetown)	Chagger
Champagne	Chen
Clarke	Cooper
Cuzner	Dabrusin
Damoff	DeCoursey
Deltell	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Diotte
Drouin	Dubourg
Duguid	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Easter	Eglinski
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Eyking
Eyolfson	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)	Fergus
Fillmore	Finley
Finnigan	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fragiskatos	Fraser (West Nova)
Fraser (Central Nova)	Freeland
Fry	Fuhr
Gallant	Garneau
Genuis	Gerretsen

Gladu	Godin
Goldsmith-Jones	Goodale
Gould	Gourde
Graham	Hajdu
Harder	Hardie
Hébert	Hehr
Hogg	Holland
Housefather	Hussen
Hutchings	Iacono
Jeneroux	Joly
Jordan	Jowhari
Kang	Kelly
Kent	Khalid
Khera	Kitchen
Kmiec	Kusie
Lake	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)	Lebouthillier
Lefebvre	Leslie
Levitt	Liepert
Lightbound	Lobb
Lockhart	Long
Longfield	Ludwig
Lukivski	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacKenzie	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maguire	Maloney
Martel	Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)
May (Cambridge)	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McColeman	McCrimmon
McDonald	McGuinty
McKenna	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)	McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendès	Mihychuk
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Sœurs)	
Monsef	
Morrissey	Motz
Murray	Nassif
Nater	Nault
Ng	Nicholson
Nuttall	Obhrai
Oliphant	Oliver
O'Regan	Ouellette
Paradis	Paul-Hus
Peschisolido	Peterson
Petitpas Taylor	Philpott
Picard	Poilievre
Poissant	Qualtrough
Raitt	Ratansi
Rayes	Reid
Rempel	Richards
Rioux	Robillard
Rodriguez	Rogers
Romanado	Rudd
Ruimy	Rusnak
Sahota	Saini
Sajjan	Samson
Sangha	Saroya
Scarpaleggia	Schieffe
Schmale	Schulte
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Shields	Shipley
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Simms
Sopuck	Sorbara
Sorenson	Spengemann
Stanton	Strahl
Stubbs	Sweet
Tabbara	Tan
Tassi	Tilson
Trost	Trudeau
Van Kesteren	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Vaughan
Vecchio	Viersen
Virani	Wagantall
Warawa	Warkentin
Waugh	Webber
Whalen	Wong
Wrzesnewskyj	Yip
Young	Zahid— 240

PAIRED

Nil

Private Members' Business

The Speaker: I declare the amendment lost.

[English]

The next question is on the main motion. Shall I dispense?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

[Chair read text of motion to House]

• (1525)

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

(Division No. 962)

YEAS

Members

Abouttaif	Albas
Albrecht	Aldag
Alghabra	Alleslev
Allison	Amos
Anandasangaree	Anderson
Arnold	Arseneault
Arya	Aubin
Ayoub	Badawey
Bagnell	Barlow
Barsalou-Duval	Baylis
Beaulieu	Bennett
Benson	Benzen
Bergen	Berthold
Bezan	Bibeau
Bittle	Blaikie
Blair	Blaney (North Island—Powell River)
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)	Block
Boissonnault	Bossio
Boucher	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Brassard
Bratina	Breton
Brisson	Brosseau
Caesar-Chavannes	Cannings
Caron	Carrie
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)	Casey (Charlottetown)
Chagger	Champagne
Chen	Choquette
Clarke	Cooper
Cullen	Cuzner
Dabrusin	Damoff
Davies	DeCoursey
Deltell	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Diotte
Donnelly	Drouin
Dubé	Dubourg
Duguid	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)	Dusseau
Duvall	Easter
Eglinski	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Ellis
Eyking	Eyolfson
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fergus	Fillmore
Finley	Finnigan
Fisher	Fonseca
Fortier	Fortin
Fragiskatos	Fraser (West Nova)
Fraser (Central Nova)	Freeland
Fry	Fuhr
Gallant	Garneau
Garrison	Genuis
Gerretsen	Gill
Gladu	Godin
Goldsmith-Jones	Goodale
Gould	Gourde
Graham	Hajdu
Hardcastle	Harder
Hardie	Harvey
Hébert	Hehr

Hogg	Holland
Housefather	Hughes
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Jeneroux
Johns	Jolibois
Joly	Jordan
Jowhari	Julian
Kang	Kelly
Kent	Khalid
Khera	Kitchen
Kmiec	Kusie
Kwan	Lake
Lambropoulos	Lametti
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Lauson (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Lauson (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
Laverdière	Lebouthillier
Lefebvre	Leslie
Levitt	Liepert
Lightbound	Lobb
Lockhart	Long
Longfield	Ludwig
Lukiwski	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacGregor	MacKenzie
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maguire
Malcolmson	Maloney
Marcil	Martel
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)	
Mathysen	
May (Cambridge)	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McCauley (Edmonton West)	McColeman
McCrimmon	McDonald
McGuinty	McKenna
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
McLeod (Northwest Territories)	Mendès
Mihychuk	Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Érables)
Soeurs	
Monsef	Moore
Morrissey	Motz
Murray	Nantel
Nassif	Nater
Nault	Ng
Nicholson	Nuttall
Obhrai	Oliphant
Oliver	O'Regan
Ouellette	Paradis
Paul-Hus	Paupé
Peschisolido	Peterson
Petitpas Taylor	Philpott
Picard	Plamondon
Poillievre	Poissant
Quach	Qualtrough
Raitt	Rankin
Ratansi	Rayes
Reid	Rempel
Richards	Rioux
Robillard	Rodriguez
Rogers	Romanado
Rudd	Ruimy
Rusnak	Sahota
Saini	Sajjan
Samson	Sangha
Sansoucy	Saroya
Scarpaleggia	Schieffe
Schmale	Schulte
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Shields	Shipley
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Simms
Sopuck	Sorbara
Sorenson	Spengemann
Stanton	Ste-Marie
Stetski	Strahl
Stubbs	Sweet
Tabbara	Tan
Tassi	Thériault
Tilson	Tootoo
Trost	Trudeau
Trudel	Van Kesteren
Vandal	Vandenbeld
Vaughan	Vecchio
Viersen	Virani
Wagantall	Warawa
Warkentin	Wauha
Webber	Weir

Private Members' Business

Whalen
Wrzesnewskyj
Young

Wong
Yip
Zahid— 288

Warawa
Waugh
Wong— 81

Warkentin
Webber

NAYS

Nil

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

[Translation]

PENSION BENEFITS STANDARDS ACT

The House resumed from November 23 consideration of the motion that Bill C-405, An Act to amend the Pension Benefits Standards Act, 1985 and the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act (pension plans), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: Pursuant to an order made Tuesday, November 27, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-405 under Private Members' Business.

● (1535)

[English]

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

(Division No. 963)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif	Albas
Albrecht	Alleslev
Allison	Anderson
Arnold	Barlow
Benzen	Bergen
Berthold	Bezan
Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis)	Block
Boucher	Brassard
Carrie	Clarke
Cooper	Deltell
Diotte	Eglinski
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Finley	Gallant
Genuis	Gladu
Godin	Gourde
Harder	Jeneroux
Kelly	Kent
Kitchen	Kniec
Kusie	Lake
Lauzon (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Liepert
Lobb	Lukiwski
MacKenzie	Maguire
Martel	McCaughey (Edmonton West)
McColeman	McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo)
Motz	Nater
Nicholson	Nuttall
Obhrai	Paul-Hus
Poillievre	Raitt
Rayes	Reid
Rempel	Richards
Saroya	Schmale
Shields	Shipley
Sopuck	Sorenson
Stanton	Strahl
Stubbs	Sweet
Tilson	Trost
Van Kesteren	Vecchio
Viersen	Wagantall

Aldag	Alghabra
Amos	Anandasangaree
Arseneault	Arya
Aubin	Ayoub
Badawey	Barsalou-Duval
Baylis	Beaulieu
Bennett	Benson
Bibeau	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Blaney (North Island—Powell River)	Boissonnault
Bossio	Boulerice
Boutin-Sweet	Bratina
Breton	Brison
Brosseau	Caesar-Chavannes
Cannings	Caron
Casey (Cumberland—Colchester)	Casey (Charlottetown)
Chagger	Champagne
Chen	Choquette
Cullen	Cuzner
Dabrusin	Damoff
Davies	DeCoursey
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Donnelly	Drouin
Dubé	Dubourg
Duguid	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)	Dusseau
Duvall	Easter
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Eyking
Eyolfson	Fergus
Fillmore	Finnigan
Fisher	Fonseca
Fortier	Fortin
Fragiskatos	Fraser (West Nova)
Fraser (Central Nova)	Freeland
Fry	Fuhr
Gameau	Garrison
Gerretsen	Gill
Goldsmith-Jones	Goodale
Gould	Graham
Hajdu	Hardcastle
Hardie	Harvey
Hébert	Hehr
Hogg	Holland
Housefather	Hughes
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Johns
Jolibois	Joly
Jordan	Jowhari
Julian	Kang
Khalid	Khera
Kwan	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation)
Laverdière	Lebouthillier
Lefebvre	Leslie
Levitt	Lightbound
Lockhart	Long
Longfield	Ludwig
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacGregor
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Malcolmson
Maloney	Marcil
Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia)	
Mathysen	
May (Cambridge)	May (Saarnich—Gulf Islands)
McCrimmon	McDonald
McGuinty	McKenna
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendès	Mihychuk
Miller (Ville-Marie—Le Sud-Ouest—Île-des-Sœurs)	
Monsef	
Moore	Morrissey
Murray	Nantel
Nassif	Nault
Ng	Oliphant
Oliver	O'Regan

NAYS

Members

Routine Proceedings

Ouellette
 Pauzé
 Peterson
 Philpott
 Plamondon
 Quach
 Rankin
 Rioux
 Rodriguez
 Romanado
 Ruimy
 Sahota
 Sajjan
 Sangha
 Scarpaleggia
 Schulte
 Sgro
 Sheehan
 Simms
 Spengemann
 Stetski
 Tan
 Thériault
 Trudel
 Vandenbeld
 Virani
 Whalen
 Yip
 Zahid— 205

Paradis
 Peschisolido
 Petitpas Taylor
 Picard
 Poissant
 Qualtrough
 Ratansi
 Robillard
 Rogers
 Rudd
 Rusnak
 Saini
 Samson
 Sansoucy
 Schiefke
 Serré
 Shanahan
 Sidhu (Brampton South)
 Sorbara
 Ste-Marie
 Tabbara
 Tassi
 Tootoo
 Vandal
 Vaughan
 Weir
 Wrzesnewskyj
 Young

under “Department of Citizenship and Immigration”, and reports the same.

[*English*]

HEALTH

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 21st report of the Standing Committee on Health entitled, “Bill C-316, An Act to amend the Canada Revenue Act (organ donors)”. The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report it bill back to the House with amendments.

I would like to compliment the member for Calgary Confederation for tabling this important legislation.

After considerable testimony, Bill C-316 has received the unanimous support of the committee. I hope that all MPs take that into consideration at a later date.

I want to thank the CRA for its positive approach to help us get through and resolve this. I also want to thank the committee members for helping get the bill through to this point so quickly and efficiently.

● (1540)

TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITIES

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 26th report of the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities entitled, “Supplementary Estimates (A), 2018-19: Vote 1a under Canadian Air Transport Security Authority, Vote 1a under Canadian Transportation Agency, Votes 1a, 5a, 10a, 15a and 20a under Department of Transport, Votes 1a, 5a and 10a under Office of Infrastructure Canada and Vote 1a under Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority”.

* * *

PARLIAMENT OF CANADA ACT

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-422, An Act to amend the Parliament of Canada Act (by-election).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my friend and colleague, the member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, for his support for the bill. Just getting through his riding name sometimes is enough to celebrate.

It is a very simple yet important piece of legislation that I am introducing this afternoon. It would simply require that in the event a member of Parliament, for whatever reason, is no longer able to occupy their seat and continue their work on behalf of Canadians, the Prime Minister would no longer have open-ended discretion as to when he or she might call a by-election. This would ensure that voters in that riding would be assured, if the bill were to become law, that they would have a representative in a reasonable amount of time. We are suggesting that within 45 days after the vacancy of a seat, the Prime Minister would be required to call a by-election.

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded divisions, Government Orders will be extended by 25 minutes.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

PARLIAMENT OF CANADA ACT

The Speaker: I have the honour to lay upon the table a document concerning the designation of premises for the purposes of the definition of “parliamentary precinct” in section 79.51 of the Parliament of Canada Act.

* * *

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

* * *

[*Translation*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. Nick Whalen (St. John's East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the 22nd report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration. The committee has considered supplementary estimates (A), 2018-19, Vote 1a under “Immigration and Refugee Board” and Votes 1a, 5a, and 10a

Routine Proceedings

We did not think this was really much of a concern, because in years past members of Parliament have vacated their seats and by-elections have been called. Unfortunately, however, with this Prime Minister, over the last number of months he has been playing politics with the calling of by-elections. If you will recall, Mr. Speaker, this helped unify all of opposition parties to call on the Prime Minister to simply get on with it, to allow the people in various ridings to have the representation they are entitled to under our Constitution, and not to play games with the calling of by-elections. The bill would make those games no longer possible.

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

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

MOTION FOR TRAVEL

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties. I suspect that if you were to seek it, you would find unanimous consent for me to move a motion related to travel for standing committees.

I move:

That, in relation to its study of Canada's Contributions to International Peacekeeping, seven members of the Standing Committee on National Defence be authorized to travel to Dakar, Senegal, and Bamako and Gao, Mali, in the Winter or Spring of 2019, and that the necessary staff accompany the Committee.

That, in relation to its study of Shared Services Canada, seven members of the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates be authorized to travel to Ottawa, Ontario in the Winter or Spring of 2019, and that the necessary staff accompany the Committee.

The Speaker: Does the hon. Parliamentary Secretary have the unanimous consent of the House to propose the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Speaker: The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

[*Translation*]

PETITIONS

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, for weeks, months, years, the people of Trois-Rivières have been eagerly awaiting the return of train service. However, instead of just waiting for a response, they are taking action. Every week, dozens of people from Trois-Rivières and the surrounding region add their names to the petition.

The petition calls on the Minister of Transport to finally provide funding for VIA Rail's high-frequency rail project, which will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote economic development in several regions in Quebec and Ontario.

I am proud to present another instalment of this petition while awaiting a favourable response.

[*English*]

CHAMPLAIN MONUMENT

Mr. Bruce Stanton (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions.

The first is from a group of citizens in my riding of Simcoe North who are bringing attention to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change in respect to the Champlain Monument that is situated in Couchiching Park. It was removed mid-year in 2017, with the idea of having it restored and replaced by this time this past summer in 2018. However, that did not occur and the petitioners are bringing attention to this and seeking the agreement of the minister to make sure that this monument is back in the park for the coming summer.

● (1545)

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Bruce Stanton (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is on behalf of dozens of citizens to bring attention to Parliament in respect to concerns about the international trafficking in human organs and the fact that there are two bills before Parliament at the moment, Bill C-350 and Bill S-240 in the Senate.

The petitioners are seeking Parliament's quick attention to this proposed legislation and that it be passed as soon as they possibly can.

HOUSING

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be presenting a petition initiated by Kate Chung for the Older Women's Network Living in Place campaign, which calls for the national and provincial building codes to be changed to mandate that all new multi-unit housing be universal in design so that anyone of any age or ability could live there. I would like to thank Ms. Chung as well as Doris Power and Judi Gilbert for their advocacy on this issue. I am pleased to have presented this petition.

CANADA SUMMER JOBS INITIATIVE

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present two petitions today. The first deals with the issue of the Canada summer jobs program, a question that I know we will be discussing again in the next few months. The petitioners call on the government to defend freedoms of conscience, thought and belief and to withdraw the attestation requirement from the Canada summer jobs program. In particular, they reference the freedoms guaranteed in section 2 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which they feel oblige the government to respect their freedoms of conscience, in this case.

Routine Proceedings

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is to do with Bill S-240. That bill, which has now passed the Senate and moved to the House, deals with the scourge of forced organ harvesting. The petitioners call on the government to support efforts to move as quickly as possible to bring this bill forward. I know that we saw delays during the first hour by the government. The petitioners and I are hoping this will move forward now as quickly as possible.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, because bulk commercial anchorages, basically free parking in the Salish Sea, are causing threats to sport fishing, fish habitats, tremendous light and noise impacts on waterfront property owners, and a risk of oil spills in Plumper Sound, with near misses of three bulk carriers, I have two petitions to table in the House.

In one petition, petitioners from Ladysmith, Chemainus, and Saltair call on Transport Canada to suspend the use of “outside of port anchorages” in the area targeted by the interim protocol and call on the Government of Canada to develop a comprehensive strategy to address the inefficiencies that are leading to the port of metro Vancouver being jammed. Bulk commodity exports have increased 40%, while anchorage use has increased 400%. We have a problem.

Also, the petitioners from Gabriola Island are asking that five new bulk anchorages not be established off the coastline of their island.

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present petitions from several hundred Canadians, similar to those from my colleague from Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, asking the government to act on Bill S-240, which has come before the House. They are urging the Parliament of Canada to move quickly on the proposed legislation to amend the Criminal Code to ban the horrible incidence of organ harvesting for financial gain.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to table a petition on behalf of residents of coastal British Columbia. They are calling on the government to work with the provinces, municipalities and indigenous communities to develop a national strategy to combat plastic pollution in and around aquatic environments. They would like regulations aimed at reducing plastic debris discharged from stormwater outfalls, the industrial use of microplastics and the consumer and industrial use of single-use plastics. They would also like permanent, dedicated annual funding for the cleanup of derelict fishing gear, community-led projects to clean up plastic and debris on our shores and education and outreach campaigns.

Further, they are calling on the government to adopt my motion, Motion No. 151, which Parliament will be voting on next week, to establish a national strategy to combat plastic pollution. With the amount of plastic arriving on our shores, they are calling on the government to make this an urgent priority.

● (1550)

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition, signed by several hundred Canadians, urging the House to pass Bill S-240, which is being sponsored by my colleague, the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan. The petitioners are urging Parliament to pass Bill S-240 to prohibit Canadians from travelling abroad to receive organs that have been harvested.

MARINE CONSERVATION

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is great to stand once again on behalf of the amazing residents of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford. The petitioners recognize that the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard have a renewed mandate to increase the protection of Canada's marine and coastal areas. They also recognize that a conservation area in the southern Strait of Georgia is needed to protect the marine environment there. Therefore, the petitioners are calling upon the Government of Canada to establish a southern Strait of Georgia national marine conservation area by consulting with and gaining the support of first nations, local governments, businesses, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders.

FIREARMS

Hon. Diane Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present yet another petition signed by constituents from my beautiful riding of Haldimand—Norfolk who are deeply concerned about the Liberal government's Bill C-71. They are concerned that all this bill would do is recreate the ineffective long-gun registry and punish law-abiding gun owners. Instead, they ask that the government invest more money in our front-line police forces to help them tackle the true sources of firearms violence.

NANJING MASSACRE

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition from thousands of Canadians. In fact, in total, close to 40,000 Canadians signed this petition, either in this format or online. Some of them, by the way, have not been verified yet because of the sheer volume of the petitions, which are sitting in a box in my office.

Routine Proceedings

The petitioners are calling for the government to declare December 13 Nanjing massacre commemorative day each year. They note that in 1937, the Imperial Japanese Army raped 20,000 to 80,000 Chinese women and girls and killed an estimated 300,000 people. Documents on the Nanjing massacre are included in the UNESCO Memory of the World Register, and western eye witnesses at the time described these atrocities as hell on earth.

After the Nanjing massacre, the military's sexual slavery system for the Japanese military expanded rapidly, and approximately 200,000 women from Korea, the Philippines, China, Burma, Indonesia and other Japanese-occupied territories were tricked, kidnapped or coerced into working in "comfort stations" to serve as "comfort women" to the Imperial Japanese Army.

The crimes against humanity perpetrated during the Nanjing massacre are not merely a regional issue. It is an issue of international justice, which is acknowledged by various provinces across Canada through different commemorative events. Canada has a rich humanitarian tradition of advocating for peace and recognizing global atrocities, in which women and children are often brutal casualties of war and armed conflicts. To that end, I hope the government will act on this.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following question will be answered today: No. 1975.

[Text]

Question No. 1975—**Mr. Guy Lauzon:**

With regard to the government's decision to change the word "illegal" to "irregular" in reference to illegal border crossers on the Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada website on July 10, 2018: (a) when was the change ordered; (b) who ordered the change; (c) what role did the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship or his office play in the name change taking place; (d) did the Minister or anyone in his office approve the change; (e) was the change made as a Liberal political response after the Minister verbally attacked the Ontario Premier, and the Ontario Minister of Children, Community and Social Services and Minister Responsible for Women's Issues on July 9, 2018; and (f) if the answer to (e) is negative, on what date did the department decide to make the change?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship did not order the change of the word "illegal" to "irregular" on IRCC's website. The decision to standardize the terminology was made by the department to minimize the mischaracterization of asylum seekers as being in Canada illegally. In accordance with Canadian and international laws, until their claim is decided, or if they are found to be a refugee, a person will not be charged with an offence based on how they entered Canada. The updates to the website were made on an ongoing basis, and incrementally from the fall of 2017 to the summer of 2018 to reflect the fact that it is not illegal for someone to claim asylum in Canada after entering at any point along the Canada-U.S. border.

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, furthermore, if the government's response to Questions Nos. 1976 to 1979 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 1976—**Mr. Martin Shields:**

With regard to Correctional Service Canada, broken down by year since 2008: (a) what is the average number of individuals in a maximum security penitentiary; (b) what is the average number of individuals in a medium security penitentiary; (c) what is the average number of individuals in a minimum security penitentiary; (d) what is the average number of individuals serving their sentence in the community; and (e) for each number in (a) through (d), what capacity percentage does that number represent?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1977—**Ms. Rachel Blaney:**

With respect to the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) and the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) for the period since January 1, 2017: (a) how many seniors of 75 and older get GIS in Canada; (b) how many eligible seniors at 75 and older are not receiving the GIS; (c) how many seniors at 75 or older receiving the GIS have their benefits temporarily or permanently suspended pending a CRA investigation; (d) for what reasons does the CRA suspend a GIS benefit, and what is the breakdown of the numbers of cases for each reason; (e) how many of the seniors 75 and older, who had their benefits suspended, had them reinstated later; (f) what is the average length of time for the reinstatement of the benefits mentioned in (e); (g) following the reinstatement mentioned in (e), is a retroactive payment made for the unpaid GIS; (h) if the answer to (g) is affirmative, is it a lump sum payment; and (i) did the CRA ever have cases where benefits were paid during an investigation to determine the continued eligibility?

(Return tabled)

S. O. 52

Question No. 1978—Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach:

With respect to Lyme disease-carrying ticks and Lyme disease in Canada: (a) what percentage of Lyme disease cases are thought to be reported; (b) what percentage of people who receive treatment for Lyme disease develop post-treatment Lyme disease syndrome; (c) what percentage of people with untreated Lyme disease infections experience intermittent bouts of arthritis; (d) what percentage of untreated Lyme disease patients are at risk of developing chronic neurological complaints months to years after infection; (e) based on all epidemiological data collected since Lyme disease became a nationally-reportable disease, what is the most recent data available about Lyme disease cases, broken down by (i) province, (ii) month, (iii) symptom, (iv) incidence by age and sex; (f) what is Lyme disease's (i) ranking among vector-borne diseases in Canada, (ii) ranking among nationally notifiable diseases; (g) is it possible to have more than one tick-borne infection, and, if so, (i) are possible co-infections being investigated and tracked, (ii) does one's chance of having multiple tick-borne infections depend on geographic location, and, if so, what areas are particularly at risk, (iii) what is the rate of co-infection by province; (h) since 2012, how has a warming climate impacted Lyme disease, in particular, (i) how has warming impacted tick distribution by province, (ii) how has warming impacted the distribution of Lyme disease by province; (i) what does the government project will be the effect of climate change on (i) the geographical range of ticks in 2020 and 2050, (ii) the distribution of ticks across Canada, (iii) human Lyme disease infections, (iv) the distribution of Lyme disease infections in Canada; (j) what are Health Canada's recommended treatment guidelines for Lyme disease, and what was the process used to develop them; (k) what tests does Health Canada recommend for diagnosing cases of Lyme disease; (l) what is the percentage accuracy of the recommended tests in (k) at each stage of disease, namely, when a patient has an erythema migrans rash, when a patient is in the early disseminated stage (days to weeks post-tick bite), and when a person is in the late disseminated stage (months to years post-tick bite); (m) what tests for diagnosing Lyme disease are available and recommended in Canada during each of the stages of the disease mentioned in (l); (n) can patients be treated based solely on their symptoms or must they have had positive test results; (o) is the government aware of any organization that recommends physicians who are familiar with diagnosing and treating Lyme disease, and, if so, where can this information be accessed; (p) what percentage of patients with Lyme disease respond well to antibiotics; (q) what percentage of patients with Lyme disease experience fatigue, muscle aches, sleep disturbance, or difficulty thinking even after completing a recommended course of antibiotic treatment; (r) what research has been undertaken regarding the benefits and risks of a longer course of antibiotics; (s) what follow-up has Health Canada undertaken to ensure that patients have access to a longer course of antibiotic treatment if required; (t) what are Health Canada's recommendations and treatment, if any, concerning those who suffer post-treatment Lyme disease syndrome; (u) do these individuals in (t) have access to medical means (drugs or other) to provide relief even if their symptoms are neither known nor written in a nomenclature; (v) if there is no treatment or recommendation, is research underway to help these patients in (t); (w) what resources, if any, does Health Canada provide to clinicians regarding diagnosis, treatment, and testing; (x) what resources, if any, does Health Canada provide to clinicians for continuing medical education on the topic of Lyme disease; (y) what, if any, case definition and report forms does Health Canada make available concerning Lyme disease, and when were each of these forms last updated by Health Canada; (z) what specific actions are Health Canada and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research undertaking regarding prevention of Lyme disease, including, but not limited to, (i) programs of research, (ii) programs of service, (iii) education programs for the public and healthcare providers; (aa) what resources have been provided to each initiative identified in response to (z); (bb) what, if anything, is Health Canada doing with national surveillance data regarding Lyme disease, in particular, (i) what is it doing to maintain such data, (ii) what is it doing to analyze such data, (iii) what resources has it allocated to such activities; (cc) in what epidemiologic investigations on Lyme disease is the government currently involved in some capacity; (dd) what financial resources is the government providing for any such study in (cc); (ee) with regard to diagnostic and reference laboratory services studying Lyme disease, does the government have this expertise, broken down by agency and by expenditures since 2015; (ff) if the answer to (ee) is negative, does the government fund provinces or agencies, broken down by (i) agency name, (ii) expenditures since 2015, (iii) type of agency (public or private); (gg) are the provinces following Health Canada's diagnostic recommendations, and, if they are not following them, why not; and (hh) what, if any, steps is Health Canada and the Canadian Institute for Health Research taking to develop and test strategies for the control and prevention of Lyme disease in humans?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1979—Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach:

With regard to the Canada Summer Jobs program since 2013, broken down by year: (a) what are the criteria used by the government to prepare the list of non-profit organizations and public and private sector employers sent to each member of the House of Commons; (b) have these criteria changed; (c) what are the government's priorities in selecting these employers; (d) how many jobs have been created by this program, broken down by (i) length of employment (6 weeks, between 7 and 10 weeks, between 11 and 15 weeks, and 16 weeks), (ii) type of employer, specifically sole proprietorships, incorporated organizations, community groups, chambers of commerce and public sector employers; and (e) what are the budgets and expenditures of the Canada Summer Jobs program?

(Return tabled)

[English]

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all notices of motions for the production of papers also be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY DEBATE

CANADA'S OIL AND GAS SECTOR

The Speaker: The Chair has notice of a request for an emergency debate from the hon. member for Lakeland.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I request an emergency debate on the Canadian energy crisis, which is a national emergency. It impacts all of Canada and disproportionately hurts Alberta.

The oil and gas sector has already lost more than 100,000 jobs and over \$100 billion since 2015. That is eight times the GDP and more jobs than the entire aerospace sector, or almost as many jobs as the entire auto sector, which would rightfully be a national emergency for any other federal government and all MPs.

The ongoing and widening price differential for Canadian oil is threatening to add an estimated 20,000 new job losses starting in January 2019. Major producers with decades of history in Alberta are cancelling expansions and curtailing production and are at risk of going bankrupt. ATB Financial predicts that this crisis could cause a recession in Canada, and the Bank of Canada already estimates no new energy investment in Canada after 2019.

Government Orders

As you said in your recent decision to grant an emergency debate on the closure of the GM plant in Oshawa, economic events that cost thousands of jobs deserve an emergency debate. This crisis in the energy sector is such an emergency. It has already put more than 120,000 Albertans out of work, and it is causing job losses across Canada, with no end in sight.

Why is this an emergency today? Over the past decade, Western Canadian Select has sold for an average of \$17 U.S. less per barrel than West Texas Intermediate. This month, the differential hit a record of around \$50 U.S., close to where it remains today, wreaking havoc on the industry, and by extension, on the entire Canadian economy. Every day, \$50 million to \$100 million is lost in Canada because of this differential. Even the Prime Minister said last Thursday, "This is very much a crisis." However, it is a direct result of federal government policies, and it is within the federal government's power to fix it.

The Liberals' cancellation of the northern gateway pipeline, which would have exported to the Asia-Pacific, and the Liberals' killing of the energy east pipeline proposal, which would have secured Canadian energy independence and exports to Europe, have disadvantaged Canada, especially with regard to the U.S., which continues to be not only Canada's number one energy customer but also, right now, Canada's number one energy competitor. Of course, the Trans Mountain expansion remains stalled indefinitely because of the Liberals' failure, with no start of construction estimated for even next year and not a single shovel in the ground at the start of this year, as the Liberals promised.

This lack of pipeline capacity and the landlocking of Canadian oil because of federal government policies that have stopped new export pipelines are direct causes of the price discount.

The private sector and the provinces warn that the Liberals' "no more pipelines" bill, Bill C-69, will stop all new pipeline proposals in the future in Canada. That should be a concern for every single member of this House of Commons, given that the energy sector is the number one private sector investor in Canada, that energy is Canada's second-biggest export and that Canada is home to the third-largest reserves in the world and the fourth-biggest exporter of Canadian energy, with a track record of responsible energy development literally second to none on this planet.

This emergency in the Canadian energy sector and the catastrophic job losses not only in Alberta but rippling through all sectors across all provinces is a national emergency. The Prime Minister has said it is so. Therefore, I would submit to you that an emergency debate is needed to get the answers Canadians deserve and demand.

•(1555)

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Lakeland for her intervention and I am prepared to grant her request for an emergency debate to be held later this evening.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

CRIMINAL CODE

Hon. Bill Blair (for the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada) moved that Bill C-75, An Act to amend the Criminal Code, the Youth Criminal Justice Act and other Acts and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to speak on behalf of the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada to Bill C-75, an act to amend the Criminal Code, the Youth Criminal Justice Act and other acts and to make consequential amendments thereto.

This legislation represents a key milestone on our government's commitment to modernizing the criminal justice system, reducing delays and ensuring the safety of all Canadians. Delays in the criminal justice system affect public safety, undermine public confidence in the administration of justice, adversely impact the rights of accused persons and fails to provide Canadians good value for money.

When proceedings are stayed due to delays, the criminal justice system itself fails. Perpetrators are not held responsible for their actions, the innocent are not given the opportunity to truly clear their name and victims suffer.

Uses of delay in the criminal justice is not a new one. In the early 1990s, tens of thousands of cases were stayed due to delay following the Supreme Court of Canada's historic decision in the Crown and Askov.

As we know, the Supreme Court's subsequent decisions in Jordan and Cody set out a new legal framework for assessing delays. That framework included a transition period in assessing the cases for which charges had been laid prior to the release of the decision.

Given that this period will come to an end next summer, we have no time to lose. We must do everything we can to improve the efficiency of our criminal justice system.

Fortunately, we have many helpful studies and reports including the in-depth study of the Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs. Its July 2017 report is entitled "Delaying Justice is Denying Justice". After hearing from a sum total of 138 witnesses, the standing committee concluded that the causes of delays were wide and varied. It issued a call to the legal community, including judges and federal-provincial-territorial ministers of justice and attorneys general to "take decisive and immediate steps to address the causes of delays and to modernize our justice system." It also called in the Minister of Justice to show leadership "in taking the necessary reformative action".

Government Orders

I know the minister feels extremely privileged to have been entrusted with the responsibility to address this urgent issue, which also forms part of the mandate letter given to her by the Prime Minister. The Minister of Justice has taken several significant steps to improve the criminal justice system. In total, she has made now 240 judicial appointments and elevations to superior courts right across the country. In 2017 alone, the minister made 100 appointments, more than any other minister of justice in the last two decades. This year she is on pace to meet or exceed that number.

At the same time, the last two budgets presented by our government have allocated funding for an unprecedented number of new judicial positions, which are necessary to allow courts to respond to growing caseloads, including criminal matters. In all, our government has seen the creation of 75 new judicial positions over the past two years.

In fact, earlier this year, chief justices in Alberta and Quebec noted that for the first time in a long time, they were starting to notice positive trends in terms of delays. That is a very encouraging sign. The significant efforts made by judges, courts, governments and other actors in the justice system are paying off.

I will use the rest of the time that I have today to address our government's legislative response to criminal justice system delays.

● (1600)

[*Translation*]

I would like to thank the members of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights for their thorough study of the bill.

The committee heard from 95 witnesses and examined a significant number of documents on a highly complex subject. There were 58 briefs submitted by various stakeholders, including representatives of police forces, Crown attorneys, defence attorneys, legal aid programs, victims' rights advocates, representatives of indigenous groups, and academics.

The discussion on the admission of routine police evidence by affidavit was particularly important, and our government was listening.

Although our intentions were commendable, we admit that our approach, as proposed, could have had unintended consequences, especially for unrepresented accused persons.

The committee gave that concern due consideration, and we accepted its amendment in that regard.

[*English*]

The reforms in this bill were also generally well received by all sides. There were some concerns heard regarding the provision, the proposed reverse onus, in the context of intimate partner violence due to operational issues that some had experienced with what is known as dual charging; that is where both perpetrators and victims are charged after a victim has had to use physical force to defend herself.

Supporting survivors of domestic violence and ensuring that more perpetrators are brought to justice was part of our platform in 2015, and the reverse onus provisions, which do just that, were maintained in the bill after the committee study.

We know, including most recently, from the Supreme Court of Canada decision in *Antic* that the problem is not the law itself but in how it has been applied. It is important to note that provinces and territories have developed policies and training in this area. We have a solid legal framework, yet a disproportionate number of indigenous and vulnerable and marginalized accused are being denied bail. Those who are being released are being required to follow too many onerous conditions, with a strong reliance on sureties in a number of jurisdictions.

The proposed new process contained in Bill C-75 talks about judicial referral hearings, which will provide an off ramp for administration of justice offences that do not actually cause harm to a victim. This proposal has been supported enthusiastically, both by residents in my riding of Parkdale—High Park and by Canadians right across the country, who are concerned about the disproportionate overrepresentation of indigenous and racialized persons in our criminal justice system.

What we have advanced is a shining example of exactly what the Supreme Court of Canada and the Senate committee report were imploring when calling for “a cultural shift among justice system participants that moves them away from complacency and towards efficiency, cooperation and fairness.”

My colleagues will also recall that Bill C-75 includes two proposals in relation to preliminary inquiries. First, the bill proposes to restrict preliminary inquiries for adults accused to offences punishable by life imprisonment, for example, murder or kidnapping. Second, it will permit the judge presiding over the preliminary inquiry to limit the issues to be explored and the number of witnesses to be heard at the preliminary inquiry.

The approach in Bill C-75 with respect to preliminary inquiries reflects the extensive consideration and consultation on various options throughout the years and the best evidence available, and ultimately proposes a balanced approach between various interests at stake. It also proposes an approach that was endorsed and supported by the provincial and territorial ministers of justice during the extensive consultations undertaken by the minister with her provincial and territorial counterparts.

One topic that was a particular focus for the committee was the reclassification of offences. Reclassification will result in amendments to many provisions in the code, both for the purposes of hybridizing existing indictable offences that carry a maximum penalty of imprisonment of 10 years or less, and to create uniform maximum penalty of imprisonment on summary conviction of two years less a day.

The reclassification amendments were supported by the minister's provincial and territorial counterparts, who felt strongly that these amendments would give prosecutors much-needed flexibility based on the gravity of cases before them.

Government Orders

Notably, the reclassification amendments are procedural. They change how conduct that is not deserving of an indictable sentence range can be treated. It is already a well-known feature of our criminal justice system that prosecutors assess the facts of the case and the circumstances of the offender to determine which type of sentence to seek from the court.

Importantly, nothing in the bill proposes to lower the sentences that would be awarded under the law. These reforms would not change the fundamental principles of sentencing. We value the variety of perspectives and knowledge that the many witnesses contributed to the Standing Committee on Justice's study.

Bill C-75's proposed reclassification of indictable offences, punishable by maximum of 10 years imprisonment or less, does not treat these offences any less seriously for sentencing purposes.

Nonetheless, this is an important point. The justice committee heard compelling testimony from witnesses on the terrorism and advocating genocide offences. Our government recognizes that these are crimes against the state, against society at large for the purpose of advancing a political objective, in the case of terrorism. In the case of advocating genocide, these are crimes not just against society at large but crimes against humanity.

I say that with some experience in the area, as a former prosecutor at the UN war crimes tribunal for Rwanda. I know first-hand that there is no more reprehensible crime known to law than genocide, which is advocating for the destruction, in whole or in part, of a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group.

The standing committee unanimously recommended that these offences be carved out of the reclassification approach in Bill C-75. We thank the committee for its diligent work in this area, and agree wholeheartedly with this amendment.

• (1605)

On that note, we moved consequential government amendments to remedy an unintended error from one of these committee amendments in order to reflect the committee's objective of removing these offences from the list of those that were being reclassified.

We also welcomed the committee's amendments to section 802.1 of the Criminal Code to allow the provinces and territories to set criteria permitting agents, that is non-lawyers, such as law students, articling students and paralegals, to appear on summary conviction offences punishable by more than six months imprisonment and to allow agents to appear on any summary conviction offence for the purpose of an adjournment.

One of the unintended consequences of the proposal to reclassify offences in the Criminal Code is that agents would not have been able to appear for individuals on most summary conviction offences unless authorized by the provinces and territories. The justice committee helpfully amended section 802.1 of the Criminal Code to enable provinces and territories to establish criteria for agent representation on summary conviction offences with a maximum penalty of greater than six months imprisonment in addition to the current authority to create programs for this purpose as well as to allow agents to appear on any summary conviction offences for adjournments.

This amendment would address concerns over access to justice issues. It would maintain jurisdictional flexibility while also recognizing regional diversity in how legal representation is regulated across Canada.

On this point, I would underscore that access to justice informs not only the core aspect of the bill, but in all of the efforts we are undertaking at the justice ministry and the efforts made by the minister. The minister has brought this issue to the attention of her provincial and territorial counterparts so they will take the requisite prompt legislative action to set the necessary criteria for this important matter relating to access to justice.

• (1610)

[*Translation*]

I would also like to talk about the jury reforms proposed in Bill C-75. These changes will make major improvements to our jury selection process by abolishing peremptory challenges for Crown and defence attorneys, allowing judges to direct that a juror stand by for reasons of maintaining public confidence in the administration of justice, modernizing challenges for cause, empowering judges to decide challenges for cause, and allowing trials to continue with the consent of the parties in the event that the number of jurors is reduced below 10, in order to avoid mistrials.

The under-representation of indigenous peoples and visible minorities on juries is a major concern. This problem has been well-documented for years. We believe that eliminating peremptory challenges will significantly improve the diversity of juries.

Peremptory challenges give both the accused and the Crown the power to exclude potential jurors without having to provide a reason. They have no place in our courtrooms, given the potential for abuse. Once this bill has passed, Canada will join countries like England, Scotland and Northern Ireland, which abolished peremptory challenges in 1988.

We must remember that provincial and territorial laws and processes play an important role in determining candidates for jury duty and the methods used to compile jury lists.

The federal government is just one piece of the puzzle. However, I am pleased to see that federal, provincial and territorial government representatives are working together on a wide range of jury-related issues in order to make further recommendations on how to improve Canada's jury system. I believe that the questions raised during the committee's study of Bill C-75 will help with these deliberations.

I was also pleased to see that the committee was generally in favour of the more technical proposals aimed at reducing delays and improving efficiency in our system, in particular with respect to removing the requirement for judicial endorsement for the execution of out-of-province warrants, clarifying the signing authority of clerks of the court, and facilitating remote appearances.

Government Orders

[English]

As well, I wish to highlight the committee's unanimous support of the repeal of section 159 of the Criminal code, a proposal that has been well received in the LGBTQ community, as well as the proposed amendment to repeal the vagrancy and bawdy house offences, which have been historically and improperly used to target consensual adult sexual activity. These amendments continue our government's important work to address discrimination against LGBTQ2 Canadians.

Importantly the committee also supported Bill C-75's proposal to repeal the abortion offences that the Supreme Court of Canada struck down as unconstitutional in the Morgentaler decision in 1988. Our government will always protect a woman's reproductive rights and her right to choose what to do with her own body.

As I have already stated, Bill C-75 proposes comprehensive reforms that will help to ensure that an accused person's right to be tried within a reasonable time is respected and that all justice system participants, including victims and witnesses, do not face delays.

At the same time, we are deeply conscious of the need and have heard the call for sentencing reform, including mandatory minimum penalties. The minister remains committed to advancing change.

The courts have made it clear that many mandatory minimum penalties present serious challenges from a constitutional perspective. The minister has been clear that her view is that judges should be provided the necessary discretion to impose sentences appropriate to the offender before them.

That said, we need to ensure we put in place sentencing reform that will stand the test of time. Mandatory minimum penalties are being litigated quite extensively. There are cases in which the Supreme Court has upheld the mandatory minimum penalty and there are cases in which the court has not.

We want to ensure we have taken all steps and done our due diligence as we continue to work on sentencing reform so the changes we make will stand the test of time.

The bold reforms proposed in the legislation have been the subject of extensive discussions, consultations and collaboration with the minister's provincial and territorial colleagues. Our commitment to prioritize key legislative reforms that we felt cumulatively would have the biggest impact in reducing delays in the criminal justice system remains strong.

This discussion and the consultations have included extensive debate within this very chamber itself. The House has debated Bill C-75 for a total of 14 hours and 45 minutes thus far. Ninety-five witnesses in the course of 27 hours were heard by the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights during extended sitting hours. A total of 28 members of the opposition benches from multiple parties have spoken out on the bill.

Further to that, we have listened to the standing committee's recommendations and to key stakeholders who have committed to address the issues of delays in the criminal justice system. Bill C-75, as amended, is a result of this commitment and reflects the beginning of a culture change that the Supreme Court was calling for in its

Jordan and its Cody decisions. I therefore urge all members to support this important legislation.

• (1615)

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to ask the parliamentary secretary about judicial referral hearings. At justice committee, a concern was raised about the fact that with the judicial referral hearings, a breach of an administrative offence, a breach of an order or bail condition, that this breach would not then be entered into the CPIC system.

In my riding of St. Albert—Edmonton, we saw the consequences of not having that information brought before a justice of the peace when Constable Wynn was shot and killed by someone who had an extensive criminal record, including 38 outstanding charges for failing to appear. Now, with Bill C-75, there is no guarantee that the totality of someone's record will even be entered into the CPIC system. What is the government doing to address that?

Mr. Arif Virani: Madam Speaker, I thank the opposition critic for his contribution in today's debate, but also extensively at the justice committee. I also want to highlight the tragedy that occurred with respect to Constable Wynn. I know it affected the member's community in particular. The member has been vocal about it, as he should be in advocating for his constituents here in this chamber.

With respect to the administration of justice offences, the concept of a judicial referral hearing was well-thought-out and well planned. It was meant to address a specific problem in the system, which is the overrepresentation of marginalized communities within the criminal justice system. I am speaking about indigenous persons, racialized persons, marginalized persons, people suffering under addictions, etc. What we have found is those persons have been suffering and overly criminalized within the system because of breaches of what we call administration of justice offences. Therefore, a breach of a bail condition or a breach of a curfew results in a further criminal charge and a further criminal record, perpetuating the cycle of criminalization of these individuals.

It was in an effort to reduce that cycle, and to move such people from the system and address the court delays that the member opposite has discussed extensively in this House, that we made the amendments. The amendments are there for a purpose. We are confident that we are on the right path to addressing that overrepresentation problem by amending this legislation in that manner.

• (1620)

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have a lot of respect for the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice. We know that at committee many witnesses came forward and testified that mandatory minimums in fact contributed to the backlog. I know that the parliamentary secretary discussed this in his speech. If he knows that this is a problem and it is helping contribute to the backlog in our court system, here is a 302-page bill. The Liberals have had an opportunity to fix it right here today.

Government Orders

Maybe the member can explain to this House why the Liberals have not amended and fixed this problem right now, when we have heard at committee, in testimony from witnesses, that this is something that needs to be fixed, that mandatory minimums actually doubled under the previous Harper government, and that is contributing to the backlog in our court system.

Mr. Arif Virani: Madam Speaker, as I indicated in my opening comments here in this chamber, the issue of mandatory minimums is a pressing one. It is an issue that the minister is seized of. It is one that she is committed to working on.

We believe fundamentally in empowering judges to exercise their discretion to apply the most appropriate penalty given the context of a particular case. We also believe fundamentally in reform that will stand the test of time, not a piecemeal reform that would be challenged continuously in the courts. There are mandatory minimums that have been upheld by the Supreme Court and there are mandatory minimums that have been defeated and not upheld by the Supreme Court.

What we are doing is a comprehensive study and analysis of the issue so we can put forward to this House and for all Canadians a suite of proposals that would address the problem writ large in a comprehensive, sensible and evidence-based way. That would address the problem that the member opposite has rightly identified as was raised in committee and in this House, and is a problem that the minister is seized of.

Mr. Michael Cooper: Madam Speaker, I want to ask the parliamentary secretary a question regarding judicial appointments. He talked about the fact that the government has been appointing judges, but I say it is too little, too late. He can cite whatever number he wishes, and he did mention that the government is establishing new judicial posts. In the Budget Implementation Act of 2017, funding for 14 new judicial posts was provided for in the province of Alberta. Today, a year and a half later, seven out of the 14 remain vacant. Is that a record of action?

Mr. Arif Virani: Madam Speaker, the record of action is actually quite clear, and it is what I outlined in my opening statements. The actual record of the government is tremendous in respect to appointing judges. Was there a delay at the start of our mandate? Absolutely there was. Why was there a delay? It was because we took under our wing and under our mandate reforming the system of judicial appointments to make it inclusive of people's lived experience, to make it inclusive of merit that was hitherto ignored by the previous government. What has resulted is a diverse judiciary that actually reflects the community that it adjudicates.

The previous government's record was 30% appointment of women. We have appointed 56% women. We have appointed 3.1% indigenous individuals, 12% persons who are visible minorities, 6% who are LBGQTQ and 30% who are bilingual. That point needs to be underscored in terms of the threats that Conservative governments at a different level are putting on bilingualism in this country.

That is a record that we will stand by and we will defend, and it applies across this country including in Alberta, the area that the member represents.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, we heard just a few moments ago that the priority for the

government was eliminating mandatory minimums. I remind the member that Liberals have now been in power for well over three years. With the idea that they get around to things or that something is a priority, they obviously need to understand that they are in government now and need to take action.

I am deeply concerned by certain provisions that the Liberals seemed to ram through committee. On the reverse onus positions, the considerations have been flagged by some witnesses, including Jonathan Rudin of Aboriginal Legal Services, that the provisions could actually perpetuate the overrepresentation of indigenous women in incarceration. Michael Spratt pointed out the concerns around restricting of preliminary inquiries. There are witnesses who brought forward concerns. The Liberals did not seem willing to address those concerns in any way.

Finally, the Liberals have now been in power for three years. Crime prevention programs that were gutted under the former Conservative government have not been restored in any way by Liberals. We know that \$1 of crime prevention funding saves us \$6 in policing, justice, court and prison costs. Why is the government not willing to get things right, and why is it so slow to meet the commitments it made back in 2015?

• (1625)

Mr. Arif Virani: Madam Speaker, I will take issue with pretty much all of what the member just articulated in this chamber. In terms of the position of Aboriginal Legal Services, what it did at committee was laud our initiative in respect of the overrepresentation of indigenous people in the criminal justice system. Specifically, Jonathan Rudin gave testimony at that committee about the elimination of peremptory challenges and what that will mean to avoid the situation such as the trial of Gerald Stanley, which had a homogenous all-white jury rendering a verdict with respect to an indigenous accused. That is specifically the kind of change needed to address concerns that the member opposite and I share with respect to the overrepresentation of individuals.

With respect to intimate partner violence, there was clearly a discussion about it at committee. There was discussion about the important steps we are taking to address intimate partner violence, and about expanding the definition so dating partners and former dating partners are included in the analysis so adjudicators and actors within the criminal justice system could take more seriously domestic violence and address this serious scourge on our system.

With respect to what we are doing with the broader system delays, we are acting on multiple fronts. We have a role to play, as do the provinces and territories. I note for the member's edification the contribution we made just yesterday to Pro Bono Ontario, a system that was gutted by the current provincial government in Ontario. We are shoring it up with \$250,000 of new funding to reduce the number of self-represented litigants in our courts, which contributes to the delays that we would seek to address and I am sure the member opposite would seek to address as well.

Government Orders

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise once again to speak to Bill C-75. One of the biggest problems with Bill C-75 is that, although the objective of the legislation is to reduce delay in Canada's courts, it actually does very little to reduce delay. For a bill that is designed to reduce delay, the fact that it does not reduce delay is a pretty big problem.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and other Liberal MPs who have spoken on the bill in this place have patted themselves on the back about, as they have put it, the good work of the justice committee, which heard from 95 witnesses, as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice just stated, and that Liberal MPs listened to the key stakeholders and acted on the concerns raised by stakeholders.

In the three years I have been a member of Parliament I have never seen a piece of legislation more widely criticized in virtually all aspects of this massive 300-page bill than Bill C-75. Despite the rhetoric from across the way about listening to key stakeholders, the reality is that on issue after issue, the Liberals did not listen. They ignored the concerns raised by key stakeholders at committee. Instead they rammed the bill through committee and, other than a few minor changes, we are largely stuck with a very flawed bill, a bill that is problematic in so many different ways.

In that regard, let me first highlight the issue of hybridization. Putting aside the issue of watering down serious indictable offences, which is certainly a serious concern, from the standpoint of reducing delay, hybridization is going to download even more cases onto provincial courts. Some 99.6% of criminal cases are already heard before provincial courts, and if any member questions my statement about the fact this would result in the further downloading of cases, do not take my word for it. Take the Canadian Bar Association's word. The Canadian Bar Association, in its brief to the justice committee said that hybridization, "...would likely mean more cases will be heard in provincial court. This could result in further delays in those courts..." No kidding. Despite what the Canadian Bar Association said, the government said, "No problem. We'll just download more cases on to provincial courts".

Then, there were public safety concerns raised about hybridization. One of the concerns raised was by John Muise, a former member of the Parole Board. He noted that offences being reclassified included breaches of long-term supervision orders. Long-term supervision orders apply to the most dangerous sexual predators in our society. We are talking about individuals who are so dangerous that after they complete their sentence, they are subject to a long-term supervision order for up to 10 years, with many stringent conditions.

• (1630)

John Muise said that it is a serious problem to treat breaches of these orders which are imposed on the most dangerous of people and that they should remain solely indictable, mainly because a breach of a long-term supervision order is a sign that these very dangerous offenders are returning to their cycle of violence and exploitation of vulnerable persons. We are not talking about marginalized people here, as the hon. parliamentary secretary referred to with respect to minor administration of justice offences, breaches of orders, which should be treated seriously. In this case, we are talking about the

most serious offenders. Instead of heeding the advice of John Muise, the government said, "No problem; we'll move ahead", forgetting about what a member of the Parole Board of Canada had said.

As well, Mr. Chow, deputy chief constable of the Vancouver Police Department, appeared before our committee. He said that there was another problem to reclassifying some very serious indictable offences as it relates to taking a sample and putting it into a national DNA database. Right now, if someone is convicted for one of those offences as an indictable offence, the Crown could apply to a judge to take a DNA sample to be put into the national DNA data bank. However, with Bill C-75, if the offence was prosecuted by way of summary conviction and the individual was convicted, it would be a summary conviction offence rather than an indictable offence, and no such application could be made.

In talking about the impact that might have upon police investigations, Deputy Chief Constable Chow noted in his testimony that of the 85 offences that are being reclassified, as a result of DNA samples being taken over the last number of years, 19 homicides and 24 sexual assaults were solved. However, instead of listening to Mr. Chow, instead of listening to Mr. Muise, the government said, "We don't care. We're moving ahead."

Then there is the issue of preliminary inquiries. The government is limiting preliminary inquiries to be held if the maximum sentence is life imprisonment, and for all other offences with a lesser maximum penalty, a preliminary inquiry would no longer be available. The government claims that this will help speed up the court process. Witness after witness begged to differ with the government. The brief submitted to the committee by the Canadian Bar Association stated on limiting preliminary inquiries:

This would not reduce court delays and would negatively impact the criminal justice system as a whole.... Any connection between court delays and the preliminary hearing is speculative at best.

• (1635)

If members do not want to take the word of the Canadian Bar Association, perhaps they might be interested in taking the word of the Barreau du Québec, which stated:

The Barreau du Québec opposes this amendment. By limiting the use of preliminary inquiries, some argue that we can speed up the judicial process and thus reduce delays. We believe that limiting preliminary inquiries in this way would be ineffective or even counterproductive.

Then there was Philip Star, a criminal defence lawyer from Nova Scotia, who said before the committee in respect to preliminary inquiries:

They're incredibly helpful, not only to the accused, but to the Crown and ultimately to our system, by cutting down on delays....

Government Orders

So much for the government's assertion that limiting preliminary inquiries is somehow going to reduce delays.

It gets better, because Laurelly Dale, another lawyer, a defence counsel, who appeared before the committee said:

Two major studies have concluded that preliminary inquiries do not contribute substantially to the problem of court delay. Preliminary hearings facilitate the resolution of potentially lengthy and expensive trials in superior court. They are often used instead of rather than in addition to trials. They expedite the administration of justice. It is far easier and quicker to get a two- to four-day prelim, as opposed to a one- to two-week trial in superior court.

Then there is Michael Spratt, who said:

There is a delay problem in our courts, but preliminary inquiries are not the cause of that delay.

Witness after witness, as I said, told the government that this is not going to work. It is not going to reduce delay. Did the government listen? Did the Liberal members on the justice committee listen? Apparently not.

Further testimony on prelims was from Sarah Leamon who said:

...87% of them actually resolve after the preliminary inquiry process. It saves the complainant,—

—in the context of a sexual assault complainant—

—in the vast majority of circumstances, from having to testify again and from being re-traumatized.

While the Liberal members opposite say they listened, the evidence before the committee and the response of the government to the evidence before the committee demonstrates exactly the opposite.

Even if one accepts the reasoning of the government, despite all of the evidence before the committee that limiting preliminary inquiries will in fact reduce delay, it is important to note that preliminary inquiries only take up about 3% of court time across Canada. To the degree that this is going to have a beneficial impact, the fact remains it is a very small piece of the much larger problem of backlog and delay in Canada's courts.

Let us look at the issue of judicial referral hearings, and the evidence that was before the committee on judicial referral hearings. Serious concerns were raised, including by John Muise, a former member of the Parole Board of Canada, as well as from Mr. Chow from the Vancouver Police Department, about the fact that individuals who commit an administration of justice offence, who are referred to a judicial referral hearing, would not have that breach of an order or other administration of justice offence entered into CPIC.

● (1640)

Right now, if someone does commit an AOJ offence, it is entered into CPIC, but thanks to the government's judicial referral hearing process, that would not happen. As I mentioned when I posed a question to the hon. parliamentary secretary, the consequences of not presenting the full CPIC record before a judge or justice of the peace can have devastating consequences. My community learned this when Constable David Wynn was shot and killed by someone who had an extensive criminal record, including an extensive record of administration of justice offences.

Now the government is saying that the court would not even have the benefit, if that CPIC record were to be presented, of the totality of that offender's criminal record because, after all, those offences would not be entered into CPIC. When I asked the parliamentary secretary what the government intended to do to fix this serious public safety issue, which was brought up more than once before the justice committee, he regretfully did not have an answer.

I should note again that in terms of judicial referral hearings, while they will have an impact on undermining public safety because those breaches will not be entered into CPIC, the impact of administration of justice offences on the backlog in our system is actually quite limited. That is because AOJ offences are typically dealt with as tagalong offences. What I mean by that is that they are usually dealt with at the same time that the main or underlying charge is dealt with. Therefore, in terms of the amount of court time and court resources that are being used for the purpose of dealing with administration of justice offences, in fact, it is quite minimal.

Again, members should not take my word for it. They should take the word of Rick Woodburn, the president of the Canadian Association of Crown Counsel. Here is what Mr. Woodburn said to the justice committee:

I can tell you from the ground, they don't clog up the system. They don't take that much time. A breach of a court order takes very little time to prove, even if it goes to trial—and that's rare. Keep in the back of your mind that these charges aren't clogging up the system.

Did the Liberals keep that in the back of their minds? Apparently not because they just went ahead with the judicial referral hearing process without a plan, without any thought of the serious public safety issues that were raised before the justice committee.

Then there is the issue of peremptory challenges. Peremptory challenges have nothing to do with delay, but they were added to this bill. The basis upon which the government has decided to eliminate peremptory challenges is that somehow it will increase the representativeness of juries. Witness after witness said quite the opposite, but instead of listening to those witnesses, the government just moved ahead.

Taken together, the record is very clear. Ninety-five witnesses gave evidence at committee and on issue after issue, the Liberals ignored the evidence. The Liberals ignored the witnesses and as a result, we have a very flawed bill that is not going to get to the heart of the problem, which is to reduce the delay and backlog in Canada's courts.

Government Orders

•(1645)

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the member opposite for his contribution to today's debate and, again, for his contribution to the justice committee. To assert as the member just did that somehow the government is not listening attentively to, or indeed hearing, and validating the work being done in committee is just patently false. Fifty amendments to the bill were accepted at committee. Some were from the member opposite and his party. They included four key areas relating to routine police evidence; the use of illegal agents; the hybridization of terrorism and genocide offences that I outlined in my speech, with amendments proposed by the Conservative Party; and finally, the bawdy house and vagrancy provisions, which were also addressed and accepted at committee. Therefore, to assert in this chamber that somehow the committee's work was not validated is simply incorrect.

My question is about those important changes to the bawdy house and vagrancy provisions, because more than just those, there is a key provision in the bill to repeal section 159 of the Criminal Code. To simplify matters for people watching, section 159 basically says that consensual sexual activity among a gay young couple is illegal, whereas among a heterosexual young couple it is perfectly legal. By removing 159 we would be creating equality for young gay couples in Canada. Does the member opposite agree with this kind of change being commensurate with the approach that is necessary in 2018 to address LGBTQ discrimination in Canada?

Mr. Michael Cooper: Madam Speaker, section 159 is an unconstitutional and inoperative section of the Criminal Code. In other words, it is one of these zombie laws. I fully support the removal of zombie laws, including section 159.

I am surprised that the hon. member would pat the government on the back for taking this step, given the government's record of dragging its feet. It was all the way back in the fall of 2016 that the government introduced Bill C-28 to remove section 159 of the Criminal Code. What happened to Bill C-28? Two years later, it is stuck at first reading. The Liberals could have passed that bill with unanimous consent, but because of the inaction of the government, section 159 remains in the Criminal Code.

To highlight the incompetence of the government, after introducing Bill C-28, in March of 2017, it also introduced Bill C-39. It also would have removed section 159 and other zombie sections of the Criminal Code. What happened to Bill C-39? It is stuck at first reading. Quite frankly, the only thing keeping section 159 from being removed from the Criminal Code is the government.

•(1650)

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, the hon. member for St. Albert—Edmonton and I sat on the justice committee last year. I certainly appreciated the subject matter we dealt with. It is a committee that demands a lot of responsibility from its members. It requires a lot of maturity, because the subject matter is always very weighty. When we are deliberating on legislation affecting the Criminal Code, there is a real sense that the actions we take when we amend that statute will have real-life consequences for people.

He is right when he talks about the government's slow legislative agenda. I will just correct him, however. Bill C-28 was actually the victim surcharge bill, but it was residing at first reading. Bill C-32 was also residing at first reading. We also had Bill C-38 and Bill C-39. The Canadian public got the feeling that the Minister of Justice, despite coming to power with a bold agenda to reform our criminal laws, was just kind of stringing the public along and giving us little crumbs, saying "Yes we're going to fix this". Now, we finally have Bill C-75, which I liken to a giant amoeba that has swallowed all of those previous bills, but also added a whole bunch more. We are finally getting to the stage, three years later, where we get to debate this.

I agree with him that some of these bills could have been passed really quickly, like the zombie provisions of the Criminal Code. Scholars and professors have been calling for decades for the Criminal Code to be cleaned up, and we could have passed that bill very quickly, but we are only dealing with it now.

Would the hon. member agree that when we are looking at sections, like section 287, which deals with abortion, and section 159, that they could have been dealt with very quickly by the House and that it is a real shame that we are only doing that now?

Mr. Michael Cooper: Madam Speaker, I would agree that the Criminal Code should accurately reflect the law in Canada. Therefore, inoperative sections of the Criminal Code should be removed. The consequences of not doing so can be very, very serious.

We saw that happen in the case of the conviction of Travis Vader in respect of two second-degree murder convictions that were overturned because the trial judge applied an inoperative section, section 230, of the Criminal Code, which had been struck down in the Martineau decision all the way back in September 1990 when I was just starting grade 1, and yet almost three decades later, that inoperative section is still there in the Criminal Code.

The McCann family pleaded with the government to move forward. I stood with them. They are from my community of St. Albert. They cannot believe that almost two years later, Bill C-39, which would remove sections 230 and 159, is stuck at first reading.

Here we are, all because the government simply cannot get it done

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from St. Albert—Edmonton for the fine work he does on the justice committee and for serving as the deputy shadow minister of justice.

The intent of Bill C-75, as indicated, is to streamline our justice system. I am wondering if the member could comment on the government's inability or unwillingness to fill judicial vacancies and how that impacts the streamlining and efficiency of our justice system.

Government Orders

● (1655)

Mr. Michael Cooper: Madam Speaker, on the issue of judicial vacancies, I feel like a broken record. I wish I could stop talking about it, because I would have thought that after two years, the government would actually have done something about filling judicial vacancies. However, they have not done anything. Filling judicial vacancies is the easiest and most straightforward thing to do to address the backlog in our courts. It's not the be-all and end-all. It would solve all of the problems, but it would certainly be a starting point.

With respect to the government's record, it can cite all of the appointments it has made, but, frankly, only after it let judicial vacancies reach record levels. When it comes to filling the vacancies, the government has established 14 new spots in Alberta and provided the funding to fill them. However, a year and a half later, seven out of the 14 judicial vacancies remain vacant.

That is simply unacceptable. That is the record of a government that does not take filling judicial vacancies seriously.

Mr. Arif Virani: Madam Speaker, very briefly, as to the competency of the government, I would point to our medical assistance in dying bill, Bill C-45, and Bill C-46, and our appointment of 240 judges.

The member opposite took issue with peremptory challenges. The question I would put to him is on this issue. First of all, we have not just eliminated peremptory challenges, but are allowing judges to ensure that any jury will be diverse and represent the community it serves. We emphasize challenges for cause.

Does the member opposite believe, as in England, as it was done 30 years ago, that it is important that if one seeks to stand aside a juror, one has a reason for that, other than simply just the way that juror looks, and that one can enunciate that reason in front of an impartial adjudicator?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): A brief answer from the member for St. Albert—Edmonton.

Mr. Michael Cooper: Madam Speaker, I would cite the Canadian Bar Association, which has said that in the case of peremptory challenges, “they are more frequently used to the benefit of Indigenous and other racialized persons”. The Bar Association went on to say that the bill's amendments to the jury process “abolishing peremptory challenges, seem insufficiently considered. If legislative reform is required, it should be based on empirical data generated through a thorough examination of the jury system.”

Indeed, that was said before the committee. There was a lot of evidence about how this is actually going to make it less likely that juries are representative. One of the proposals was perhaps in—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry. I did ask for a brief answer. Maybe the member for St. Albert—Edmonton will be able to add that to a question.

Resuming debate, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would have thought the Conservatives would be a

bit more excited about the fairly comprehensive changes in Bill C-75 that would serve our country well.

Prior to the last election, our government made some commitments, and we are seeing some of those commitments fulfilled within this legislation. That is a positive thing.

I want to pick up on the bigger picture of justice. If we were to canvass Canadians and many different stakeholders about their expectations of the judicial system, I would suggest that they would have three big expectations.

The first would be keeping our communities safe, which is also very important to this government, and I would like to think important to all members. This legislation makes significant strides towards keeping our communities safe.

A second would be protecting victims. When it comes to our justice system, one would like to think there is a vested interest in protecting victims. When I say “protecting victims”, I mean that we should be going out of our way to prevent having any victims in the first place. I will comment briefly on that shortly.

The third priority, or expectation, is accountability for offenders.

These three priorities would be accepted by all Canadians. Bill C-75 moves the ball further ahead on these three principles.

There is a difference between the Conservatives' approach to justice issues and this government's approach. Put differently way, there is a difference between the Stephen Harper approach to justice issues and the approach this Liberal government has taken on justice-related issues, whether in this or previous legislation.

We need to recognize that a vast majority of incarcerated individuals will leave our jails. They will go back into our communities. As such, we have a responsibility to ensure that our system allows for better integration. If we are successful at that, we will prevent having further victims in the future. We on this side of the House recognize that.

Listening to speeches given by members on the other side of the House, whether about this or other legislation, one gets the impression that once someone enters our jail system, that person is never going to return to our communities. There is a very good chance that many of those individuals will not return.

However, we must have a system that will work for Canadians by keeping our communities safe, by ensuring that we protect our victims, and ensuring that there is offender accountability.

It is just wrong for the Conservatives to give the impression that this government is looking at ways of minimizing the consequences for serious crimes.

● (1700)

Under this legislation, opposition members say that we would hybridize too many crimes. As a result, they are trying to give the false impression that there would be less serious impacts for those offenders when it came to the weight of the law and incarceration, fines or whatever it might be.

Government Orders

It is important to recognize that we have summary convictions and indictable offences. However, within this proposed legislation, there would be a third component, that being hybridized. We are saying that here is a list of crimes for which the Crown would have some discretion to help determine whether an offence would be an indictable offence.

During second reading, I had the opportunity to listen in on some of the debate. I recall one intervention that bears repeating, because I think most people who are following the debate could relate to the differences. This is what we mean by discretion. At second reading, I recall a Conservative member, and Hansard will reflect this, saying that “kidnapping is kidnapping” and is a serious crime, end of story. It is indictable, so lock up the person and put him or her away for many years.

There is no doubt that kidnapping is a very serious crime. Canadians recognize it as a serious crime. We as a government recognize it as a serious crime. The Conservatives ask why we would hybridize that particular crime. Let me give members a tangible example. I think the constituents I serve would understand why it is important that this be one of those hybridized crimes.

When we think of kidnapping, the first thing that comes to mind is an individual at a school playground identifying a potential victim, putting the victim into a van and disappearing and taking all sorts of horrific actions or maybe kidnapping an individual for the sex trade. There are all sorts of horror stories about kidnapping. I, for one, want those individuals locked up. However, there is a “but”.

For example, divorces occur every day, and some of those divorces are very emotional and involve young children. At times, with a divorce, there are all sorts of issues a child will often have to deal with. There might be a situation where a child has a bad week or a bad day and decides not to go home to the parent who has 100% custody but goes to the non-custodial parent. The other parent then says that the child has disappeared and has been kidnapped. One parent did not have the right to have custody of that child at that time, but the child went to that parent's home, perhaps in tears, or whatever the circumstances were. The point is, the child should not have been at that parent's house, and as a direct result, there is now a kidnapping charge.

● (1705)

I would like to think there is a big difference between that situation and the first situation I described. If members believe that what I just said is accurate and takes place in real life, they should acknowledge that there is a need to support the idea that for certain crimes, for certain actions, we need to incorporate hybridized crimes.

I have a great deal of confidence in our Crowns and the ability of our judicial system to make good decisions. What we are saying is that if a kidnapping like the first example came before the judicial system, I would suggest that the Crown would say that it was an indictable offence and the individual would have to go through a process where, ultimately, there could be years of incarceration, versus another case where it could be classified as a summary conviction. We have seen a number of those crimes that are now eligible, and I suspect that arguments could be made for each and every one.

When we looked at the legislation, one of the major concerns raised by the Conservative Party was the issue of hybridization. Hopefully they now have a better understanding. They raised the issue at second reading and then brought it to the committee stage.

I am actually quite pleased that we are at third reading today, in the sense that it has been a long process to get to this point. The Minister of Justice has demonstrated very clearly that this has been a project of consultation, working with a wide variety of stakeholders, from the beginning right up to the standing committee. Maybe I should expand on that point for a moment.

Our justice system is a joint responsibility. We do not have sole responsibility for judicial matters in Canada. We have shared responsibilities with the provinces. That means that the minister, with the assistance of the parliamentary secretary, and others, no doubt, canvassed and worked with the different provinces and territories to establish priorities that needed to be changed. Those changes, those priorities, are fairly well reflected in this legislation. The minister even went beyond that, in terms of consultations with indigenous people and other stakeholders, to formulate Bill C-75 so that it was ready for first reading, followed by second reading and committee.

● (1710)

That is where I interjected. My interjection was to comment that even when we, in opposition, brought it to committee, a number of changes were introduced by members after listening to the committee presentations. The Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights amended Bill C-75 at committee to, for example, remove the provisions regarding routine police evidence, which had laudable intentions but had some undesirable and unintended consequences, particularly for unrepresented accused. It removed the terrorism and advocating genocide offences from the list of those being reclassified. That is the amendment I thought of when I was talking about hybridized offences.

The Conservatives presented that issue in the form of an amendment, and we accepted it, which was completely foreign when Stephen Harper was prime minister. The Conservative Party never ever accepted an opposition motion. Not only—

Mr. Glen Motz: That is because you did not have any good ones. Those were horrible.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, we had plenty of amendments, and they went absolutely nowhere with Stephen Harper. Under this government, there have been many amendments, even from the official opposition. This is yet another example of an amendment actually being accepted. Therefore, I believe that the Conservatives accept the principle of what is being suggested when we talk about hybridized crimes and the importance of that. It is a major aspect of the legislation.

Government Orders

The other aspect is preliminary trials. It is interesting to hear the Conservatives and NDP saying the same thing about preliminary trials. What caught me was what the critic for the Conservative Party said today. He said it was not really going to reduce waiting times. I do not believe that. The member opposite said he could quote X or Y, who are somewhat suspicious of it reducing waiting times. I do not believe it. Maybe the member across the way will have to do a little more convincing.

Preliminary hearings consume a great deal of court time. I am not a lawyer, but I used to be the justice critic in the province of Manitoba, and I can recall many of the frustrations of provincial and other Crowns in dealing with preliminary trials. I can remember a discussion I had with a judge on the issue. It was fairly well received by a good number of people who recognized that it would reduce delays.

The NDP and Conservatives said they were highly suspicious that delays would be reduced. The Conservatives were a little more affirmative in saying that they would not be reduced. They said it would only be 3% of cases going before the courts, so what good was it? Three per cent is thousands and thousands of hours. That would make a real difference.

Preliminary trials might have been needed years ago, but this emphasizes why it was so important for this government to do what it made a commitment to do, which was overhaul and improve the system. To give the impression that minimizing the number of preliminary trials will not reduce court delays is just wrong. I believe it is wrong, based on what limited experience, and I underline the word "limited", I have on this issue. When I look at that number, 3% is a significant number of court cases, not to mention thousands of hours. I believe it would make a difference.

The Conservatives should be supporting this legislation because this is the type of legislation Canadians want. It would keep our communities safer. It would ensure that there was more justice for victims. It would ensure—

• (1715)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Unfortunately, the time is up. I am sure the member will be able to add more during questions and comments.

The hon. member for Edmonton West.

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am a big fan of departmental plans. These are the plans that every single department has to publish at the same time the estimates come out. These plans are signed off by the minister. The plans provide the departmental priorities for the year. They lay out the goals and the priorities.

My colleague across said that the number one priority of the government is keeping communities safe. I would like him to comment on the fact that in the public safety departmental plan, which has been signed off by the Minister of Public Safety, there is something called the "crime severity index". Under the current government, it is increasing compared to the previous government.

There is another line there that shows the percentage of Canadians who think that crime in their neighbourhood has decreased. My colleague mentioned the priority is keeping communities safe, when

the government's own plan calls for a 33% decrease in the number of Canadians who feel their community is safe.

My colleague's second comment was that another priority is protecting victims. In the departmental plans for both public safety and justice, victims are not mentioned once.

My question for my colleague across the way is this. Was he misinforming the House when he said that was a Liberal priority or were the ministers of justice and public safety misinforming the House when they tabled their departmental plans? Which is it?

• (1720)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I talked about a comprehensive approach to deal with the issue of justice. For example, members will find that there is some legislation we have brought in that enshrines victims rights. They will find legislation we have brought in that will ensure mental health services are being provided in our institutions. At the end of the day, the priority areas are keeping our communities safe, ensuring protection for victims, and from my own personal perspective preventing victims in the first place, and ensuring there is a sense of accountability for offenders. To me, those are very much high priorities that we on this side of the House believe in. If we look at not only this piece of legislation but all the different actions the government has taken to date, we will find that we are going to have safer communities.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member was talking a lot about the hybridizations contained in Bill C-75. I was wondering if he is willing to look at that from a different perspective.

One of the concerns we had in particular is regarding the problems we have with access to legal aid right across Canada. The member would be aware of this if he is knowledgeable of the work of the Standing Committee on Justice with respect to access to justice. It is very much a patchwork quilt, because different provinces have different abilities to fund their systems. Often we have cases where paralegals and students of law are coming in to help represent clients who are being charged with offences that could result in a sentence of six months or less. The hybridization of some offences in Bill C-75 is going to bring the maximum penalties to some of these summary offences to two years less a day. One of the consequences of that is that in many provinces, paralegals and students in law school will be unable to represent these clients. Therefore, we are going to have a lot more backlog.

I am wondering if the member can comment on that and why the government was not aware of that particular consequence.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I would not jump to the conclusion, as the member has just done, by saying that the provinces were not aware because we have to remember that this is legislation that has been in play for a couple of years now. The parliamentary secretary and the minister actually met with the different departments and stakeholders, including our provinces. When I made reference to the fact of being a justice critic, it was the provincial justice critic in Manitoba.

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The member is right in terms of the stress level that is on legal aid services, which are in high demand. In Manitoba there is a need for additional dollars. I like to think that, when we talked about the consequences of this legislation passing and what might be taking place shortly thereafter, there were all sorts of considerations that were given.

I would like to think the issue of future demand and potential increase for legal aid will be monitored over the years ahead. That is the nice thing about having interprovincial discussions between the different ministries and incorporating the national minister, because then we are able to do it in a collective fashion to ensure that there is good representation.

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, with respect to comments just made by the member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, we specifically understood that concern and that is why the amendment was made to 802.1, to allow provincial regulatory bodies and law societies to permit agents to appear for summary convictions of up to two years less a day.

With respect to the member for Edmonton West and what we are doing for victims, we are increasing the penalties for summary conviction offences to two years less a day, up from six months. We are also increasing the penalties for intimate partner violence because we take that seriously on this side of the House.

I want to thank the member on this side of the House for his comments and reference something he raised extensively with respect to preliminary inquiries. That was highlighted in the Supreme Court Jordan decision. It was raised at the consultations by the minister across the country, including the province of Manitoba, where various attorneys general indicated a need to reduce the backlogs by eliminating preliminary inquiries.

In respect of preliminary inquiries in sexual violence trials, does the member appreciate that there is a concern about re-traumatizing the victims, making them go through a preliminary inquiry where they would relive the experience and subsequently reliving it again a second time at a subsequent trial? Is that an important aspect of why we have moved forward to remove preliminary inquiries—

• (1725)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am going to get the parliamentary secretary to answer the question within one minute please.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, my friend brings up an excellent issue. This is something that I should have made reference to. Think of a sexual assault victim going to a preliminary and reliving the incident. Under this legislation, this will be minimized in a very serious and tangible way. That is very good. I would think that all members would see the strength of that one argument in itself.

Listening to the member, whether he speaks on the bill or he poses the question, gives a vote of confidence in terms of how understanding the parliamentary secretary is on this issue.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, the parliamentary secretary provided an example in his opening of a case involving kidnapping, which is one of the charges that is being hybridized. In French we would call it *un exemple farfelu*. If I had a

good Yiddish proverb I would say it too, but it is the most ridiculous example of all he gave to us. He is basically saying the prosecutor should make the decision. He does not trust a judge to hear the facts of the case and say, in this situation the charges do not apply, that justice would not be done for the child or for the parents involved.

It is an example of how the government tries to defend the indefensible in the bill, hybridizing a whole series of offences that should rightfully be heard by a judge. Why is it that the Liberal government does not trust the judges to rule on the cases?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I have confidence in the Crowns. The example I gave is a good reason why the member should be supporting the bill. That latter example is a good reason why the individual should not have to go before a judge. Having confidence in our judges and judicial system, absolutely, but I also have confidence in our Crowns.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to let the member know that he will not be able to have his full 20 minutes, and I will need to interrupt him at some point.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Victoria.

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Madam Speaker, when I made my speech on Bill C-75 at second reading, I mentioned that we were eager to work with the government to improve the bill. I am disappointed to report not enough was done to enable us to support this legislation. The government's stated goal was to reduce court delays in accordance with the Supreme Court's decision in Jordan and to continue with trial fairness imperatives. I am afraid the bill comes up short on both counts.

This was a 302-page bill so I will not be able to address in my short time the questions I wanted to. However, I would like to speak on four themes very briefly. First, the failure to address mandatory minimum penalties; second, the hybridization issues we have heard about; third, restrictions on preliminary inquiries; and fourth, the patchwork approach to agent representation. These are among the many issues we heard testimony on at the justice committee.

We heard testimony that the measures proposed would, in fact, make matters worse in many cases. I will elaborate. Most of the action in criminal justice in Canada takes place in the provincial courts, and hybridizing offences and pushing more cases onto to those courts is hardly a solution that is going to make things better.

However, I commend the government for a number of things. I commend it for deleting the routine police evidence provision that was agreed to be problematic at the committee. I am pleased we, at the committee, persuaded the government to change that odious provision. I am also pleased to have moved, along with my colleague, the hon. member for Edmonton Centre, a provision that would repeal the bawdy house provisions and vagrancy sections of the Criminal Code that have been used so often to criminalize consensual sexual activities, particularly among the LGBTQ2 community.

Government Orders

However, there were hundreds of amendments brought to the committee and a number of them were not accepted. For example, the New Democratic Party brought 17 amendments to committee designed to help vulnerable people impacted by our justice system. None of them were accepted by the government.

Every day there are real people who are self-represented. They cannot afford lawyers and there is not enough legal aid in this world to represent them. Who are these people? They are primarily indigenous, poor and marginalized. It is our submission that this bill simply does not do enough to address their realities.

Many of the stakeholders we consulted have told us that the key reforms in Bill C-75 are not evidenced-based at all. The stated objective of this bill is to respond to the Jordan judgment, with its mandatory time limits, yet there is considerable doubt the changes proposed would speed up the criminal justice system. Arguably, they would have the opposite effect.

The Liberals claim that this is somehow bold criminal justice reform, yet the elephant in the room is that they failed entirely to address former prime minister Harper's regime of mandatory minimum sentences, despite their political promises and public commitments to do so. Defence lawyers and legal academics agree the reversal of this practice would have been a huge step to unclogging the delays in the system, yet the Liberals failed utterly to even address the topic at all. We believe we need to deal with the root causes of the delays, things like addiction and poverty issues, which are really the root of the crime we are dealing with.

Let me start with mandatory minimums. This is one thing that would have increased compliance with Jordan and alleviated court burden from multiple charter challenges, and it is unfathomable why the Liberals ducked this issue. So many people came to our committee and talked about it. I do not have time to list them all but they included, from Barreau du Québec, Dr. Marie-Eve Sylvestre, who is a professor at the University of Ottawa, and Jonathan Rudin of Aboriginal Legal Services. I could go on and on. All of these people have spoken out about the failure to address mandatory minimums.

There are so many quotes I do not have time to address, but Jonathan Rudin, who is the program director for Aboriginal Legal Services reminded us that even the justice minister herself acknowledged the issues with mandatory minimum sentencing, saying, "This government knows that mandatory minimum sentences do not work." She spoke eloquently on this issue on September 29, 2017, almost a year ago.

• (1730)

The justice minister said:

There is absolutely no doubt that MMPs have a disproportionate effect on Indigenous people, as well as other vulnerable populations. The data are clear. The increased use of MMPs over the past decade has contributed to the over-representation in our prison system of Indigenous people, racialized communities and female offenders. Judges are well-equipped to assess the offender before them and ensure that the punishment fits the crime.

There is nothing, absolutely nothing, in this bill to address that issue.

I am pleased that Senator Kim Pate has introduced Bill S-251, sponsored by my colleague, the member for Saskatoon West, which provides for judicial discretion to depart from the mandatory sentence when it would be just to do so. Then the opportunities for plea bargaining when judges have the discretion that they used to have, as all the experts have said, would go a great deal of distance to solve the issue of delays.

I do not have time to do much with the issue of hybridization. I think there has been enough said about that, and in the interests of time I will skip that.

I will say that Emilie Taman, one of the witnesses, a prominent lawyer in Ottawa, said this:

Indeed, of the 136 indictable offences that are to be reclassified as hybrid by virtue of Bill C-75, 95 are offences punishable by five or ten years. Consequently, this Bill now gives the Crown, rather than the accused, control over whether trial by jury is on the table for these 95 offences. This is problematic because the Crown's exercise of discretion is done without transparency and is only reviewable on the very high standard of abuse of process.

In other words, we are giving the Crown counsel of the land the ability to make up their minds about which way to go in the privacy of their offices. Contrast that with judicial discretion, where in open court judges decide whether the penalty fits the crime. How different. How far we have come and how far away we are from justice. The potential for bias is real.

I believe that time will not allow me to do much more, but I am so enticed by what the hon. parliamentary secretary said about preliminary inquiries that, in the interest of time, I want to address that issue head-on.

The government appears to believe that restricting preliminaries will save court time and protect vulnerable witnesses. The Canadian Bar Association, the Criminal Lawyers' Association, the Canadian Council of Criminal Defence Lawyers, and the Alberta Crown Attorneys' Association are among the witnesses that utterly disagree with the parliamentary secretary.

We heard considerable testimony about preliminaries actually reducing court delay. We heard extensive, compelling testimony that preliminary inquiries are a necessary tool to preserve trial fairness.

The Criminal Lawyers' Association of Ontario said:

Eliminating preliminary inquiries for all cases other than those for which a maximum period of imprisonment of life is available will not further the interests of justice or assist with the orderly and efficient administration of criminal justice. The Committee should recommend that these changes not be made.

I had a dozen quotes to give on this, but I think my favourite witness was Professor Lisa Silver of the University of Calgary's faculty of law. She said that we have to protect people from having a trial where none is necessary and that the "preliminary inquiry, at its core, exists as the legislative 'shield' between the accused and the Crown."

She gave an example, a story which members may well remember, that of Susan Nelles, a nurse at the cardiac ward at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto, who was accused of murdering children. During the preliminary inquiry, they found a complete lack of evidence. The result was the charges were dropped. The result, in Professor Silver's view, was that preliminary inquiries are a vital step in ensuring due process and fair trials.

Business of the House

The other issue I want to talk about involves restricting agent representation. Upping the penalty for summary offences to two years less a day is going to have an adverse effect for agent representation across our country. I am talking about law students, paralegals and other agents that currently represent a large “gap population”, as they are called, in our country. There are many individuals who simply do not qualify for legal aid and are too poor to afford a lawyer.

• (1735)

The government has decided it is up to the provinces and territories to regulate what type of agent can represent what crime. This is not co-operative federalism; this is creating a patchwork effect to justice across Canada. Access to appropriate counsel should not depend on where people live, but now it will. We have student legal aid services, people such as Lisa Cirillo, Suzanne Johnson and Doug Ferguson, who asked the government to reverse the measure that would limit agent representation, and yet nothing appears to have been done on that point.

Let me be clear. An unrepresented accused will absolutely increase court delay and deprive that person of his or her right to a proper trial. It often forces the Crown and judges into an uncomfortable position where they must occasionally advise, assist and support the self-represented accused when this is contrary to their official role in the process.

We proposed a number of changes to increase jury representativeness. They were rejected. Professor Kent Roach talked about the shameful situation of juries, such as the failure to have any indigenous jurors on the Gerald Stanley case, and suggested, as did the Criminal Lawyers' Association that we have the ability to look at the jury and the judge given the discretion to decide whether it was representative or indeed embarrassing. That was rejected by my colleagues.

I am sorry I do not have time to say much more, but I will say this. There is a real opportunity lost. We do not do comprehensive criminal justice reform very often in our country. The Liberals brought in a 302-page bill. Some of the key issues I have addressed will only exacerbate the problem before us, making less justice and further delays. There are some things in this bill we like, but on balance we have to say, sadly, we cannot support it.

• (1740)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It being 5:40 p.m., pursuant to order made on Tuesday, November 20, 2018, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of the bill now before the House.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

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

Some hon. members: Yea.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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

And five or more members having risen:

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Pursuant to order made on Tuesday, November 27, the recorded division stands deferred until Monday, December 3, at the ordinary hour of daily adjournment.

* * *

[*English*]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there has been some discussion among the parties, and if you seek it, I think you will find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, during the debate on the motion to concur in the 18th Report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, and during the debate pursuant to Standing Order 52, no quorum calls, dilatory motions or requests for unanimous consent shall be received by the Chair; and

That, at the conclusion of the debate on the motion to concur in the 18th Report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, the question be deemed put and a recorded division deemed requested and deferred to Wednesday, December 5, 2018, immediately before the time provided for Private Members' Business.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Does the hon. parliamentary secretary have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I suspect if you were to canvass the House, you would find consent to call it 5:55 p.m., so we could commence Private Members' Business.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It being 5:55 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

*Private Members' Business***PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS***[Translation]***ABORIGINAL CULTURAL PROPERTY REPATRIATION ACT**

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-391, An Act respecting a national strategy for the repatriation of Aboriginal cultural property, as reported (with amendments) from the committee.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): There being no amendment motions at report stage, the House will now proceed, without debate, to the putting of the question on the motion to concur in the bill at report stage.

[English]

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.) moved that the bill, as amended, be concurred in at report stage.

[Translation]

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): When shall the bill be read the third time? By leave, now?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[English]

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.) moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

He said: Madam Speaker, it is an extreme pleasure for me to rise again and talk about my private member's bill, now entitled "Indigenous Human Remains and Cultural Property Repatriation Act".

I want to thank the seconder, the very distinguished member for St. John's East, who has not only helped me to ensure the bill gets through in the appropriate time, but who will also speak to it again tonight.

This private member's bill has taken me down a road I did not expect to go down when it was first adopted.

Just a few days ago, I celebrated the 30th anniversary of my first election, but I still marvel at what can happen in this place. It is an amazing place that can do amazing things.

Although I did not realize how important my private member's bill was when we first drafted it, it has turned out to be very meaningful to a lot of people, and I think it will have a positive effect.

I started it as a result of a visit I made to the Millbrook Cultural and Heritage Centre, a first nations museum in my riding. I was admiring a beautiful robe in a glass case. While doing so, the curator told me that it was not the real robe, that the real robe is in Australia. She said that it was purchased legally and legitimately by a person in the 1800s and it was taken there in 1852. Now it is residing in a

museum in Australia. When I asked if we had tried to get it back, she said that some efforts had been made, but there was no ability to get it back.

At that time, I thought perhaps we could draw up a private member's bill to ask the government to establish a structure so small first nations bands, like Millbrook band near Truro, Nova Scotia, could have somebody to turn to to get help if it wanted to get back one of its original artifacts. Therefore, we drafted Bill C-391, thinking it would be a little innocuous bill that might help first nations get their artifacts back if they became available.

When I tabled the bill, I spoke for two minutes and 37 seconds if I am not mistaken. However, I did not know the Australian ambassador heard about it somehow. She took action. We did not ask her to do this and we did not expect her to it. That was not my intention.

At that time, Her Excellency Natasha Smith took it upon herself to contact the museum in Australia to see if it could begin negotiations to get the robe back to Millbrook. I could not believe that happened. She came to see me a few weeks later and told me what steps she had taken. I will be forever in her debt for doing that.

Her Excellency Natasha Smith and Brittany Noakes worked hard on this. They made a connection with the Melbourne Museum, where the robe resides. In the end, it turned out that the young aboriginal woman from the first nation in my riding, Heather Stevens, was negotiating with a young first nations person in Melbourne, Australia. That was so meaningful. It was not Canada to Australia. It was first nation to first nation, 15,000 kilometres apart. Negotiations are under way and hopefully some day the robe will come back.

Heather Stephens, the manager and curator of the Millbrook Heritage Centre, is dealing with Genevieve Grieves, the manager of first people's department in the museum in Melbourne. To me, that is part of the magic of this whole process, that those two people have connected and are negotiating and discussing how this can all happen.

I want to thank all the people who have been involved in this, all the people who have helped and all the people in the first nations right across the country who have contributed ideas and thoughts. They really made me understand how important artifacts were to their people.

It is more than just an artifact. It is their history, it is their people, it is the spirit of their people. I do not pretend to be able to capture the entire meaning that artifacts have to first nations peoples, but I know it is so important for them to have them back. I am so pleased to be a part of a process that will help them achieve the goal of getting artifacts back to their proper homes.

I want to thank the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, especially the chair, the hon. member for Toronto—Danforth, who helped to get the bill through the committee in the proper way and in a timely fashion. Thoughtful amendments were made to the legislation that improved and strengthened it.

Private Members' Business

•(1745)

Also, through this process, those of us who really do not have a lot to do with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples have a better understanding of it. This bill complies with that declaration and I think it will be an important part of Canada's process to move ahead on the United Nations declaration.

The other thing that has amazed me is that we have had responses from all over the world on this. It is just a private member's bill. I had no idea where it was going to go. However, it was pointed out to me that it was written up in the Netherlands. The article was all in Dutch, but I know it is right because my name was spelled right. That was the only way I could tell. It includes a picture of the artifact from Millbrook. There was also an article written in China. It was the same thing, my name was spelled right again, and the picture of the artifact and Millbrook was in it.

We have been contacted by the commonwealth museum in Britain about the importance of the bill and how it might be used as a model down the road in other countries. There are so many countries that want their artifacts back. I noticed last week, I think, that France decided it would repatriate some incredible artifacts back to countries in Africa.

We are part of a worldwide effort to repatriate artifacts to indigenous peoples. I am certainly pleased and proud to be a part of it. I hope my bill does go through. I think we have support from all the parties, and I appreciate that very much.

I so much appreciate the support from my caucus and my House leader, who helped ensure we got this in, in a timely fashion. I will work with members if there are amendments, or they want changes or need interpretations. I appreciate it going through report stage the way it has. I am now pleased to have it at third reading.

I want to thank everybody who has been involved with this. It has been an incredible journey. It has taught me a lot. It has taught me a lot about indigenous peoples and the values they have, which I have come to really appreciate more than I did in the past. However, it is all through talking with indigenous peoples and museums about indigenous artifacts.

One indigenous lady said that this was not just a robe in Australia, that this robe represented the spirit of all the indigenous peoples who made it, all the people who handled it and all the people who cared for it until it changed hands and went into European hands and then to Australia, where it has been ever since. I will never forget that conversation. It was certainly meaningful and meant a lot to me.

Again, I thank everyone who has supported it and has helped get it to where it is.

•(1750)

Mr. Nick Whalen (St. John's East, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member not only for his recent remarks, but for seeing an opportunity to bring this bill forward to the House. It can have a positive impact on the lives, the memories and the cultural heritage of the indigenous groups in his riding. I think it will have a similar fate in my province.

Does the member have plans with respect to how he will to procedurally get this bill, if it is passed in this chamber, through the next stages? Also, what is the importance of having this heard tonight rather than in the winter so we can get the bill passed?

Mr. Bill Casey: Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member because he helped us move this forward. I have beseeched our House leader, who has been very co-operative and helpful. I know she will be really helpful going forward and help us get this through. It is important that we get it through in time for it to go through the Senate, through the process and be there for the whole world to see.

One of the amazing things are the articles that have been written around the world about this private member's bill. I am so proud of that. However, I did not realize when we started how meaningful this issue was to indigenous people. If we can help, it will not only help in Canada but it will help in many other areas.

The secretary-general of the Commonwealth Association of Museums contacted us to asked if it could be used as a model for legislation in other countries. It represents 52 countries, so perhaps it will go many places and benefit many indigenous peoples.

•(1755)

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, we were really happy earlier this year when the member and the Liberal Party voted in favour of Bill C-262, which was brought forward by the member for Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou. It essentially seeks to ensure that all of Canada's laws are in harmony with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Of course, a big part of that is returning cultural property.

Does the member have any thoughts to share with the House on how his private member's bill can work with Bill C-262 and really advance the cause toward reconciliation?

Mr. Bill Casey: Madam Speaker, the thing I have learned through this process is that repatriation of artifacts is reconciliation. That is reconciliation in its most tangible, meaningful form. It is reconciliation for young indigenous people who can see what their ancestors did, the talents and abilities they had, the ways they made these artifacts. It is reconciliation for seniors who remember some of these artifacts and the people who made them. It is the ultimate step in reconciliation in a very tangible way, and I am proud to be part of that.

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Bill C-391. I thank the hon. member for bringing his private member's bill to the House for us to consider.

I have a keen interest in the subject matter of the bill. I have great respect for the history, and I greatly enjoyed learning more about it, as we studied it through the committee.

The bill is well-intentioned, and I will be supporting it. However, I believe there were some issues that could have been addressed that would have made the bill even better.

Private Members' Business

I have great respect for the important role artifacts play in fostering appreciation for history. They are a tangible and irreplaceable link to our past. It is one thing to read about history in a book, but it is another to see the historical objects created by another person living in a different era. Historical objects bring history to life. They provide a window into how things were and how people lived. They remind us that the historical figures we read about really existed in flesh and blood.

If we want future generations to truly understand how their present is linked to our country's past, we need to ensure these objects are not lost. They are not just an invaluable means through which to remember the past; they are the way we can learn to live how they lived. They are also a key to understanding the present. I strongly believe that their protection and preservation should be a priority of any government.

The bill seeks to establish a framework through which aboriginal peoples can reacquire these invaluable links to their proud histories. It would implement a mechanism through which any first nation, Inuit or Métis community could acquire or reacquire aboriginal cultural property to which they would have a strong attachment. It would also implement a means through which they could reacquire human remains. This was an important part of the study that we found was missing to begin with and the significance it had to aboriginal people. It would encourage owners, custodians or trustees of aboriginal cultural property to return such property to aboriginal peoples and support them in the process. This is a laudable goal.

In my riding of Bow River, we have Blackfoot Crossing Historical Park. I was very happy that its representative, Clement Doore, was able to join us at committee and offer valuable testimony. Blackfoot Crossing maintains a collection of many incredible historical objects. It provides a great educational service to its community. It also provides an economic benefit by attracting visitors and promoting tourism in the region. I was fortunate enough to visit and receive a guided tour last year. I was greatly impressed by the wealth of history and knowledge on display. I believe it is an example of a success story that deserves to be emulated more broadly in our country.

Despite being well-intentioned, I strongly believe that parts of the legislation should have been clarified and could have been improved. The government members rejected our amendment that would have ensured that the public interest would be considered in the repatriation strategy. The intent was to ensure that artifacts would be available to Canadians in a way that would enhance knowledge and appreciation of aboriginal culture. Including this language explicitly in the bill would have strengthened it considerably. Access to history is always in the public interest. As I noted, we cannot comprehend the present without understanding the past.

I again point to Blackfoot Crossing in my riding as a great success in this regard. It is located on a historic site of great significance to the Blackfoot confederacy, where thousands gathered for the signing of Treaty No. 7. It is available to the general public, and I can assure anyone interested in visiting that it offers a fantastic educational experience.

The bill should have also included language noting how important it was that the strategy adequately preserve and protect the quality

and integrity of aboriginal property. The heritage committee heard about the challenges the museum industry faced in attracting staff. For a variety of reasons, there are not enough professional curatorial staff in Canada.

• (1800)

Many artifacts are fragile and require a good deal of expertise to preserve. Operating costs related to the preservation of historical objects can also be a real challenge for smaller museums. We heard in committee that the Haida museum, for example, had some difficulties due to its remote location. This bill should have been amended to reflect this reality.

I was lucky to have been able to visit the Haida nation and see some of its historical treasures. It is isolated and far removed from most of the Canadian population, but it is significant and most people should be able to see it and travel there. However, it is remote.

We need some manner of safeguard in place to ensure that these tangible links to history are not lost to future generations. We need to help with the cost to preserve and maintain these aboriginal artifacts. It was a mistake not to include this explicitly in the bill.

We also failed to ensure the legislation did not have unintended consequences for aboriginal artists and creators. I own several pieces of tremendous artwork produced by Siksika artists who live in my riding. This industry yields great economic benefits in many indigenous communities and helps foster appreciation for their cultures. It should not be jeopardized in any way.

The bill must not dampen enthusiasm for the incredible work produced by aboriginal artists by suggesting one's purchase might someday be repatriated. That would be a very unfortunate, unintended consequence. Again, the Liberals rejected our amendment to the legislation that would have guarded against any such unintended consequences. I am not sure why they rejected it.

I was very disappointed to learn that the Canadian Museums Association was not consulted during the drafting of the bill. Perhaps some of these issues could have been highlighted at an earlier stage in the process had consultation taken place. We did eventually receive a written brief from the CMA in committee. We attempted to include some of its counsel in the bill through amendments, but again the government rejected them.

The CMA has done great work and has a great working relationship with first nations. Its input was valuable and should not have been disregarded in this way.

We want to continue to ensure that Canadians understand and appreciate the first peoples of Canada, while respecting property and the great significance of these historical objects to aboriginal peoples.

As I noted, I will be supporting the legislation, but I remain deeply disappointed that amendments were rejected that could have made it much stronger and better.

Private Members' Business

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise and join in the debate on Bill C-391, brought in by the hon. member for Cumberland—Colchester. I appreciate the initiative and the thought behind the bill. It is an issue that needs to be talked about and brought into force with some measure of the law.

I am very honoured to come from a region of the country that has a very deep and rich first nations heritage, which is still ongoing, as do many parts of Canada. It is a vast land. When we are talking about first nations, Métis and Inuit, their cultures are as diverse as any we would find around the world. We cannot speak about them just as one set of peoples. They have a lot of diversity and a lot of different cultural practices. When I look at the Cowichan Valley and the Cowichan people, who are the largest first nation band in British Columbia, I am very honoured to have some long-standing relationships with many members, including the chief.

I look at some of the well-known archaeological sites. They abound in the Cowichan Valley and in many of the islands that form the southern Gulf Islands between Vancouver Island and the Mainland.

One in particular is the Ye'yumnuts village near Duncan, which is about to become a living indigenous history lesson. It is a 2.4 hectare meadow, which, in collaboration with Cowichan tribes, will be used as an open air classroom. They have found a lot of different tools. The site is more than 2,000 years old and it is estimated that the Cowichan people lived there for about 600 years and then used the area as a burial ground for another 600 years. They have found tools that originate from the Fraser Valley and even jade tools that come from the Fraser Canyon and sharp cutting rocks that originate from as far away as Oregon, which speaks to the flourishing trade routes that existed among all the different nations in the Pacific Northwest.

We can go out near Salt Spring Island to Grace Islet. We had some controversy there about three to four years ago when someone was trying to build a house on the island, even though there was knowledge that there were at least 15 different individual burial sites marked by cairns there. It was only through intervention by the Government of B.C. that the construction on that island was stopped. It is now under the protection of the Nature Conservancy, which is working with local first nations to preserve the area and to bring it back to its natural state.

I look at Galiano Island, specifically the campground at Montague Harbour, that is sitting on an old midden heap, where for thousands of years all of the clamshells were deposited. We are talking about hundreds of years of clamshells being deposited in one area and all of the various tools that were used to harvest them.

I have a friend who is an archaeologist by profession. I remember one year, when we were camping at Montague Harbour, being able to walk down the beach. Pretty much every couple of minutes, we was pointing out different stone tools. Once we got an eye for them, we could see them everywhere. They were pieces of rock that had been hit upon with different instruments to make them into different cutting surfaces, and they are everywhere.

We derive a lot of education from museums around the world. We would not know about some of the long lost civilizations such as the

Sumerians, ancient Babylonia and the ancient pharaohs in Egypt if it were not for museums. They serve a purpose. The main difference, when we are talking about first nations cultural pieces and tools, is that they are not gone. They are still with us. In fact, I attended the elders gathering, which the Cowichan hosted in British Columbia this year, and the main theme was “We are still here”.

• (1805)

We know that most indigenous ethnology collections found in Canadian and foreign museums in universities today were taken by missionaries, government agents, amateur and professional collectors and anthropologists and that that was done without the informed or prior consent of the people. It was theft, and in many cases the stealing of these tools and ceremonial devices was a way to crush their culture, to try to take away their traditions and try to subsume those nations into the white person's culture, as we have tried to do so many times in this country. That is the main difference.

I am really happy that the member has brought forward this bill. If I could offer some constructive criticism, I would point out that when we look at the language in the bill, we still see words like “encourage”, “support” and “provide”. We could have used more forceful language to bring this bill into harmony with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

That said, it is good to see that the minister will have to report to Parliament because of clause 4. It remains to be seen how well the government provide funding as a result of legislation, but I certainly hope, if this bill does make it to royal assent and becomes one of the statutes of Canada, the government would see fit to take this issue with the seriousness it deserves.

I mentioned the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. It is important to highlight that because the member for Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou has spent a large part of his life working on this particular issue. Everyone in the House can take great pride in Bill C-262, which seeks to bring the laws of Canada into harmony with the United Nations declaration. The fact that government members and a majority of members in the House voted for the bill and sent it off to the other place represents a very historic moment. If Parliament, both the House of Commons and the Senate, and later the Crown represented by the Governor General, assent to this particular piece of legislation, a key article of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, article 12, reads as follows:

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to manifest, practise, develop and teach their spiritual and religious traditions, customs and ceremonies; the right to maintain, protect, and have access in privacy to their religious and cultural sites; the right to the use and control of their ceremonial objects; and the right to the repatriation of their human remains.

2. States shall seek to enable the access and/or repatriation of ceremonial objects and human remains in their possession through fair, transparent and effective mechanisms developed in conjunction with indigenous peoples concerned.

Bill C-262 was certainly the very important first step. If we agree to that bill as a whole, then we would be agreeing to article 12 as well. Bill C-391 would establish the framework for exactly how this is to be done.

Private Members' Business

There is always room for improvement in legislation, but I will commend the member for Cumberland—Colchester for his private member's bill reaching third reading stage. That is a rare feat. I appreciate the thought behind the bill and I will be voting to send it to the other place. I hope the hon. senators will give it their due consideration.

• (1810)

[Translation]

Mr. Nick Whalen (St. John's East, Lib.): Madam Speaker, thank you.

• (1815)

[English]

I will only speak very briefly. I really want to rise in support of Bill C-391, an act respecting a national strategy for the repatriation of indigenous cultural property, mainly to explain why I handed my spot to the member for Cumberland—Colchester so this could pass quickly through this place and go to the next place before the next election.

For those who follow the Order Paper closely, they may have noticed that my motion, Motion No. 196, was meant to be heard tonight. It is important to people in my community and deals with cultural diversity in the online world. However, I do understand that to get things through this place and on to the other place takes some time, especially when we come up against an election.

The reason it is so important to people in my riding is that Beothuk remains are still held by the National Museum of Scotland. Newfoundland and Labrador have made attempts to have those remains repatriated. The Government of Canada had to step in to fulfill an obligation under European and Scottish law to make a national request for the return of those remains. That was done less than a year ago, and we would so love to have the additional support of the House and Senate to allow the Beothuk remains to be returned and to reside, most likely, at The Rooms, which is a museum in my riding of St. John's—East.

I would be very interested to hear the comments of any other members in this place.

[Translation]

That includes the member for Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, if he wishes to take the floor. If he agrees to speak for just a few minutes, we might be able to get this bill to the other place before the Christmas break.

Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me to speak to this bill on the repatriation of indigenous cultural property. I had the opportunity to sit on the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage with my colleagues. We wanted to better understand the bill and improve it.

[English]

That is why this evening I would like to rise to speak to Bill C-391, an act respecting a national strategy for the repatriation of indigenous human remains and cultural property.

The Conservative Party had amendments for this bill. We tabled five amendments that we felt would have improved the bill. We were assured at committee by the member for Cumberland—Colchester, the sponsor of this bill, that the bill would not interfere with private property rights. As long as the Liberals are true to their word on that, we plan to support this bill even though, unfortunately, at committee the Liberals demonstrated that they were being closed-minded. For example, they rejected the suggestions of the Canadian Museum of History before even reading them.

We felt that the amendments we brought forward at committee were substantive and would have significantly improved and better defined the scope of the bill. While we do not believe this is a perfect bill, what I gathered from the testimony we heard from experts and, importantly, aboriginal Canadians, leads me to believe that this is desired by our indigenous people. Indeed, the repatriation of indigenous human remains and cultural property is one of the many steps we must take toward reconciliation, as mentioned earlier today in the House.

[Translation]

Before going any further, I want to note that the repatriation of indigenous cultural property is part of a broader movement. I would like to point out to the House that France has committed to a similar process for the restitution of African heritage. French historian Bénédicte Savoy and Senegalese writer Felwine Sarr have studied the conditions under which works held in French museums could eventually be repatriated to Africa.

Obviously, this has to be done in an orderly fashion, and that is why, when we were debating the bill in order to improve it, we had concerns. Unfortunately, those concerns were not taken into consideration by the Liberal government. We believe that these improvements would have helped clarify the intent of the bill's sponsor. As I mentioned earlier, the intent is not to interfere with private property rights, which are a fundamental right.

• (1820)

[English]

Before going to the positive reasons why I support this bill, it is important to consider the concerns and debate around this bill. Even with regard to something we ultimately support, it is important to consider all sides. On one hand, I am pleased that the sponsor of the bill verbally reassured the House that the intent of the bill is not to tamper with private property, or to force anyone to give us legally acquired artifacts.

During the first round of debate on this bill, the member for Cumberland—Colchester said:

Madam Speaker, we have done wide-ranging consultations. Our focus is on having a system that can help a small community like Millbrook First Nation in my riding deal with the issues of transportation, restoration, storage, display, and so on. Right now there is no process. Communities are on their own if they identify an artifact. They have done that but they have no help and there is no place to turn to.

Certainly, I am open to anything that will make the bill better, to deal with these issues that we have both brought up, but the intent is not to force anybody to give up legally acquired artifacts.

Private Members' Business

We can see that the intent of the bill's author is clear. Unfortunately, we do not find this clarification in the bill, because the amendment we were willing to support were rejected by the Liberals.

While the bill does not mention the protection of private property, I have been assured that the bill ultimately will not make any changes to private property rights in Canada.

Some stakeholders did signal their concern about these rights, and the Liberal government was not very open toward the amendments proposed by stakeholders, such as museums. Members know the key role that they played in this process and in what is happening in France. On this topic, while I do not believe that the bill infringes on private property in any way, I hope that once it comes into effect, there will be none of the unintended consequences that we see all too often, and that we can continue to keep private property, one of the most sacred rights in a democracy, in mind.

There was also some concerns regarding the scope and jurisdiction of the bill.

[*Translation*]

A representative from the Canadian Museum of History told the committee that he and his colleagues wondered whether the bill is supposed to apply to national requests, international requests or possibly both.

There are two questions here, namely whether the property in question is public or private property, and whether it is located in Canada or outside Canada. We would have liked to clarify these elements in the bill, based on the recommendation of museum experts. Unfortunately, once again, the Liberals ignored these important clarifications and rejected our amendments.

The wording in the bill before us today, which will eventually be examined by the other chamber, whose members sometimes examine bills for flaws, does not clearly specify whether the bill applies to national or international requests or, as I mentioned, whether it applies to property held in public or private institutions. We had some suggestions regarding these options, but the government did not consider them.

The experts from the Canadian Museum of History said that they had proposed some options for these two cases, along with their observations. They hoped that the observations would be helpful to the committee members, but once again, the Liberals did not even consider these recommendations. In fact, they did not even read them. In my opinion, when we are discussing a piece of legislation, it is important to listen to the witnesses and, above all, to consider the undesirable effects of bills.

We recognize that over centuries, museums, collectors and churches have taken objects during ceremonies. However, this needs to be done in an orderly fashion, and unfortunately, that is not the case. This is what we heard from a member of the indigenous community of northern Alberta:

Working together collectively to have these items repatriated is an empowering mechanism that will be a vital component to build the journey toward reconciliation so that our future generations can have the dignity and pride that our ancestors and grandparents had taken away from them.

This shows the importance of all the collections that are held in museums but are not necessarily accessible.

Preserving culture is important. We support the spirit of the bill, but unfortunately, since the Liberals rejected the amendments, the bill remains vague, which means we are not sending the Senate a polished gem, but merely an intention that needs to be clarified. That said, given that I agree with the principle, I will be supporting this bill.

● (1825)

[*English*]

Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise tonight in the House of Commons and contribute my voice to the debate on Bill C-391, an act respecting a national strategy for the repatriation of aboriginal cultural property.

I will begin by thanking the sponsor of the bill, the hon. member for Cumberland—Colchester. In his comments this evening, he noted that he recently celebrated 30 years since he was first elected as a parliamentarian in this place. Currently, he is a member of the government party, and he has been a member of the governing party a few different times throughout the years. Some of those governing parties went by different names over the years, including the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada from 1988 to 1993, and then its legacy party, the Conservative Party of Canada, for a time as well. I believe he also sat as an independent, which makes it a quadfecta in terms of sitting as a member of various parties within this place. I want to thank him for bringing forward this piece of legislation and for bringing it to third reading here tonight.

I also want to thank some of the previous speakers, particularly the member for Bow River. He is also a member of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. I thought his comments were particularly insightful. He brought about some of the concerns he had with the legislation. While he supports the bill, he still expressed the concerns he has and some of the unintended consequences that often come to be with this type of bill. His thoughtful commentary and the constructive criticism of his concerns on the bill were worthwhile, and I thank the member for bringing those forward in this debate.

When we talk about the preservation of artifacts and human remains, my mind is drawn to many of the great cultural institutions in our ridings and across the country that have, at their core, the effort of preserving and enhancing the memories that we have of our history. In my riding of Perth—Wellington, I am always delighted to attend events at the two significant museums in my ridings, those being the Stratford Perth Museum located just outside of Stratford, Ontario, officially in Perth south, as well as the Wellington County Museum, which is officially just outside of my riding but nonetheless covers the Wellington portion of my riding.

Private Members' Business

Both of those institutions have made a distinct and concerted effort over the past number of years to ensure the preservation of the indigenous history that has spanned our country. In some cases, it has touched on the local geographic area that is now known as Perth and Wellington counties as well as the communities within them. They appropriately preserve and are respectful of the important indigenous cultures that have been in Canada over many millennia. That history is enhanced and preserved, not just for our generation, but for the generations that come after ours as well.

The bill has at its heart a few measures that would be included in a potential strategy. The bill calls for the implementation of a strategy to preserve these artifacts and provide that they could be repatriated to the appropriate location within Canada, within the appropriate first nations, Inuit or Métis community.

What the hon. member for Cumberland—Colchester came across when he was in his riding, an indigenous artifact that had found itself in Australia, and the connections that were made to try to return that artifact to its rightful home in the indigenous community, is a great example. The measures contained in the bill, and there are five, would help to facilitate the production of such a national strategy.

The first measure would implement a mechanism by which any first nation, Inuit or Métis community or organization may acquire or reacquire aboriginal cultural property to which it has a strong attachment. I would suggest there is some ambiguity in this measure, particularly in the phraseology of “strong attachment”, which could be open to interpretation. I would suggest that as the strategy is developed and as the departmental and governmental officials undertake the construction of this national strategy, they bear this in mind and ensure there are strong indicators for the strong attachment that an indigenous community or organization may have to a particular artifact so there is not too much of a grey zone when analyzing these measures.

● (1830)

The second measure would encourage owners, custodians or trustees of aboriginal cultural property to return such property to aboriginal peoples and to support them in the process. I think this is a worthwhile measure and a worthwhile conversation as well. One of the things that we as non-indigenous Canadians often find is that we may not necessarily understand the significance of a particular artifact or the significance of a particular piece of aboriginal or indigenous history. Having this measure included within the strategy would spark that conversation, that discussion and dialogue on the significance of a particular artifact that ought to be at least considered to be returned to a more appropriate venue such as an indigenous community, a first nations, Métis or Inuit community.

The third measure would support the recognition that preservation of aboriginal cultural property and access to that property for educational and ceremonial purposes as principles of equal importance. Talking about the educational and the ceremonial purposes is extremely important because we are still learning. Unfortunately, we have had terrible examples in our history, such as the Indian residential schools. It is indeed a dark mark on our history, but having the ability to learn from those mistakes, learn from where we as a country have not treated aboriginal people with the care and respect they deserve, and the absolute tragedy of that aspect of our

history is one that we as Canadians cannot forget. The focus on the recognition of preservation in the light of educational and ceremonial purposes is very important as we debate the bill and as the national strategy is eventually created.

The fourth measure is to encourage the consideration of traditional ways of knowing rather than relying on strict documentary evidence in relation to the repatriation of aboriginal cultural property. This goes to some of the traditional cultural ways in which indigenous communities operate. There may not be written evidence of the ownership of a particular artifact. Nonetheless, there is traditional knowledge within indigenous communities that an artifact or a piece of history does have that connection. I would hope that the national strategy, when it is developed down the road, would be able to take into account that traditional way of knowing as is referenced in the bill.

The fifth aspect is to provide a forum for the resolution of conflicting claims that is respectful of aboriginal traditional processes and forms of ownership and where claimants are self-represented. This is important because there will be disagreements among individuals and perhaps among indigenous communities themselves as to whether or not there are significant connections. Having a forum to help to adjudicate, but also help to resolve in a non-confrontational way would be exceptionally important in terms of the development of this national strategy. There would be some concern, in my view, about whether or not that particular aspect would require a royal recommendation, but that would be an aspect for down the road after the national strategy is created and is developed.

At committee, as referenced by the member for Bow River, amendments were suggested by the official opposition. Unfortunately, those were not accepted. Those recommendations and amendments would have improved the bill, but we as the official opposition will nonetheless be supportive of the bill at third reading and sending it to the other place for further debate. The Senate is its own independent body and senators may wish to consider the amendments that were proposed by our official opposition at committee stage. That is their right and their prerogative as an equal legislative body to do so.

I will conclude with an important quotation from the former shadow minister for Canadian Heritage, the Hon. Peter Van Loan, who stated:

The aboriginal communities of Canada are truly our first peoples. As such, aboriginal culture is important to all Canadians for its role in informing us who we are, what our roots are, and how that has contributed to making Canada the extraordinary country we are today.

● (1835)

I recognize that my time is at an end. Once again, I want to thank the member for Cumberland—Colchester for bringing forward Bill C-391 and for the opportunity to participate in this important debate.

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to speak on this important private member's bill. Like my colleagues who have also spoken to it today, and other colleagues from the Liberals, I am not sure if the NDP has spoken on this, we will be supporting this bill.

This bill, Bill C-391, the aboriginal cultural property repatriation act, introduced by our colleague from Cumberland—Colchester just recently, talks about aboriginal culture being repatriated to museums and other proper owners here in Canada.

In what I call my past life, before I joined this wonderful place, I used to be in the hotel business. One of my activities was as a supporter and a member of the board of directors of the Alberta Aviation Museum. Therefore, of course I appreciate the member bringing forward an important bill that would strengthen our ties to our past through the repatriation of some aboriginal artwork or artifacts and also give Canadians better access to enjoy the artwork.

The Alberta Aviation Museum is located in part of downtown Edmonton in the very last surviving dual hangar left over from the British Commonwealth training program. I bring that up because they were scattered across Canada, from Victoria all the way out to Newfoundland. There is a new-found interest among first nations in aviation, to the point where there is a school in Ontario called the Tyendinaga Aerodrome. It is the First Peoples' Aviation Technology. There is almost a rush to join the First Peoples' Aviation Technology to learn to fly. What is interesting about this is that the aerodrome is based at one of the very last surviving single hangars left over from the air training program. I thought I would tie them together. It is interesting to see the first nations getting into the high-demand aviation industry.

We were fortunate at the aviation museum in Alberta to have a wonderful collection. We had an F-86 Canadair Sabre. What is interesting about that Sabre is it was the first plane in Canada to break the sound barrier. We also had a Mosquito, which was interesting. The reason I tie it into the repatriation is because Canada does not allow Canadian-owned or Canadian-built planes to be sold out of the country.

Unfortunately, I am down to my last minute. Therefore, I will skip the story of the Mosquito unfortunately and talk about why we support this bill. It would “implement a mechanism by which any First Nation, Inuit or Métis community or organization may acquire or reacquire” aboriginal cultural property that has a strong attachment. This is part of the recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission brought about by the previous Conservative government and also supported in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as well, in articles 11 and 12. There are a lot of great things about this bill.

I apologize to my colleague for not being able speak for the full 10 minutes on it. I think I am out of time. However, I want to thank him for bringing it forward. There is a lot of good that would come from this bill. I look forward to it passing at committee, passing in this House, and all the wonderful things that the bill would do.

• (1840)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Edmonton West will have six minutes remaining in his time when the House next gets back to debate on the question that is before the House.

The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has expired and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

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ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

The House resumed from November 7 consideration of the motion.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Edmonton Strathcona.

Let me begin by acknowledging that the House formally acknowledged the genocide against the Yazidis in October of 2016. The Yazidis are an ethnic group of over 700,000 people, mostly in northern Iraq, who were targeted and persecuted by ISIS for their beliefs and practices, displacing more than 200,000 people from their homes, both in Iraq and to other places around the region.

I want to acknowledge that one of the reasons we know of the horrors of the treatment of the Yazidi people was the work of the 2018 Nobel prize winner, Nadia Murad. Nadia Murad used her own ordeal as a survivor of sexual slavery as, what she called, her best weapon to make the world aware of the plight of Yazidi women and children. The Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to her, appropriately, on the 10th anniversary of UN Security Council resolution 1820, which condemned the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war and stipulated that rape and other forms of sexual violence constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity and may even constitute acts of genocide.

Nadia Murad's tireless advocacy, along with that of former Conservative leader, Rona Ambrose, the MP for Calgary Nose Hill, the MP for Vancouver East and others in the House, did finally move Canada to act in October of 2016, to announce that we would resettle the most vulnerable and take in more than 1,000 Yazidis, who now reside in Canada. Though slow to act and slow to deliver on our promise, we did do the right thing when it came to the most vulnerable of the Yazidis.

The report we are dealing with today deals with pretty much what the title says: “Road to Recovery: Resettlement Issues of Yazidi Women and Children in Canada”.

Before addressing the report directly, I want to stop for a moment and address some of the most popular and stubborn misconceptions about refugees. The first of those is that refugees are somehow a burden to Canada. I will acknowledge that government-sponsored refugees in their first year require and receive government assistance, and no, it is not more than Canadian seniors receive in government assistance. However, an even larger group of refugees in their first year are privately sponsored refugees, and they are just that, privately sponsored.

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Rather than being a burden on Canada, ordinary Canadians come together to support those refugee individuals and families in their first year. I want to cite an example from my riding, the Gorge Tillicum Refugee Sponsorship Group. This is a group of a dozen plus families and individuals who simply call themselves friends and neighbours. They have set themselves a goal of raising \$91,000, which will be required to sponsor a Somali refugee family of eight who have been stuck in a refugee camp in Kenya for 28 years as a result of civil war in Somalia. This family from Somalia cannot be identified for security reasons, but they do have two adult children who came to Canada as refugees and now reside in Victoria. With private sponsorship and with two family members already in Victoria, this family has an enormously high chance of success in resettlement and reintegration in Canada. What they have now in the refugee camp in Kenya is no prospect. They will not be a burden to Canada.

In fact, when we look at refugees who come to Canada and compare their economic performance with the rest of Canadians, looking at immigration and tax records, studies have found that after 25 years, refugees have incomes more than 12% higher than other Canadians. Why is that the case? Why would refugees be more successful than other Canadians? One of those things is that we have effective settlement programs, which give them the assistance they need to integrate in Canada. Often, it is the case that those who are able to escape violence and persecution at home and access the Canadian refugee system are those who already have skills and resources. The poorest of the poor are often trapped in those civil wars and in those cases of violent persecution and are not able to access refugee systems abroad.

The most important thing about the refugees I have known, and I have been a friend of refugees in my community for the past 40 years, is the drive to succeed so they can help their family, because not all family members get to Canada at the same time.

● (1845)

Therefore, most refugee families spend a lot of what they achieve in Canada supporting their families back home.

The second myth I want to address is the concern about “hundreds of thousands of refugees” streaming into Canada. I received correspondence in my office just this week referring to hundreds of thousands of refugees and being concerned about the burden that I just talked about. The number of refugees arriving in Canada is somewhere between 40,000 and 50,000 or about 12% of total newcomers to Canada in any given year. Therefore, those who talk about hundreds of thousands of refugees are confusing refugees and other immigrants to Canada, those who choose to immigrate to Canada. When we talk about the effort we are making for Yazidis, only 1,000 Yazidis came to Canada through the refugee system, so we can certainly afford to offer government assistance, as we are doing for most of those Yazidi refugees.

The third myth is that somehow refugees skip the queue, displacing skilled immigrants and family reunification programs in our immigration system. These are completely separate programs. Refugees do not displace those who are waiting to have their applications for family reunification or economic immigration adjudicated. The delays for those people are not from refugees

getting ahead of them. The delays are caused by the underfunding of our immigration system. It began with cuts by the Conservatives in 2012 and I am sad to say that adequate funding to deal with immigration has never been restored by the Liberals in their three years in power.

The fourth myth is that making a refugee claim in Canada is sometimes illegal. Under both Canadian and international law, that is never the case. Even those crossing the border irregularly from the United States—and the accurate term is “irregular” rather than “illegal” crossings—are not making an illegal claim here. I will admit that there is a chance that the underfunding of our refugee system, which causes delays in adjudication of those claims, could seem to be a draw for irregular crossers of our border, but it is important to remember that of those irregular border crossers whose claims have been heard, nearly 60% have been found to be legitimate refugees, meaning that if they had stayed in the United States, they faced being sent back to certain persecution and, in many cases, certain death back in their home countries.

Coming back to the report and its recommendations, which I am happy to support tonight, Yazidi refugees, we have to remember, were selected on a criteria of being the most vulnerable and that means that making their success at resettlement in Canada is perhaps more challenging than that of refugees in general. That is what this report of the immigration committee looked at.

When Canada was bringing Yazidis to Canada, the cases were prioritized on the basis of the following: first, women and girls at risk; second, accompanied children and dependants; third, LGBTI individuals, single women, single parents, the elderly, and persons with disabilities and medical needs; and finally, cases with family in Canada.

This report comes with 12 recommendations. I know my time is short tonight, but let me see how far I can get with these. Recommendation one, increasing our refugee targets, is obviously something that I support. As I mentioned earlier, they are a small portion of our total immigration system. Recommendation two asks Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada to work to facilitate private sponsorships. That is why I talked about the example in my riding. I believe that Canadians are prepared to step up, sponsor refugees and help them resettle in Canada. It is a very important recommendation that we encourage Canadians to do.

Recommendation eight is to improve mental health supports for all refugees. Refugees who escaped the Yazidi genocide include many women and children who were survivors of sexual violence. This gives them mental health challenges and needs that are very specific. I believe once again the recommendation about improving those supports will get a response from Canadians. I am going to give another example from my riding.

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•(1850)

There is a group of trauma-trained counsellors in greater Victoria who came together about four years ago to offer volunteer services to refugees who had been subject to sexual violence and to children who had witnessed horrific violence. They have now come together and formed a society, and even they admit its name is a mouthful, the Vancouver Island Counselling Centre for Immigrants and Refugees. I want to salute them for the work they are doing.

In conclusion, I am happy to rise to support this report and all the work that is being done, not just by the government but by private citizens in Canada, to help support the Yazidi women and children who have been resettled in Canada.

Mr. Matt DeCoursey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know it was not my colleague's intention to do so, but just to clarify for those paying attention, we are talking about two totally different things when we talk about those people who come to Canada as asylum seekers and are subject to adjudication through the Immigration and Refugee Board and those people who are resettled through our partnership with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other organizations. That is how we undertook the Yazidi and survivors of Daesh resettlement. Our government was successful in resettling 1,400 survivors of Daesh, an overwhelming majority of whom were Yazidi women and girls, in Canada.

While they have many challenges, including significant mental health challenges, we know that in the communities where they are being resettled and are settling, they are generally doing well, because they have access to the mental health supports needed. That is largely because they are beneficiaries of the interim federal health program that was so callously cut by the previous government, which our immigration minister reinstated in 2016. That is an important note to make. Under our government, not only have we seen these vulnerable persons resettled but they are receiving the supports they need, and we will continue to walk with them.

I would hope that the hon. member would acknowledge that a lot of work has been done to ensure that when we resettle refugees through these streams, we provide them with the proper wraparound support services in the communities where they come to live in Canada.

•(1855)

Mr. Randall Garrison: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. parliamentary secretary for pointing out something I did not intend to do, which was confuse those who are resettled with refugees. However, I still think those two are a category as opposed to economic migrants and family reunification cases.

His comments I will receive with a grain of salt. That is what this report is about. This report is about ensuring that those who are resettled and those, in particular, who suffered from sexual violence get the services they need so that their resettlement can be successful. There is no doubt, as I said, that the government has made a good start on this. However, many of these recommendations point to additional things that need to be done and additional services that need to be provided.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I was just looking through the list of

recommendations. Recommendation 7 comes under the title “Ensuring Proximity to Services and Housing which is Affordable”. I wonder if my colleague, and neighbour, could look at the example of his own riding of Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, and the greater Victoria area generally, and the experiences of refugees in his area, underlining what kind of crisis we are facing with housing right now and how important it is that we address that crisis with the importance it deserves right here and now.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Mr. Speaker, one of the points I did not have time to get to this evening, but certainly one of the biggest challenges for all refugees, is affordable housing, whether they are refugee claimants or resettled.

One of the strong points of what the government has done is that it has identified some centres for relocation for Yazidis so that services that are appropriate can be grouped together. One of the challenges is that some of those centres, like Toronto, are some of the most expensive housing markets in the country. Therefore, there is more work that needs to be done to make sure that there is access to affordable housing.

Again, it raises the spectre that when there is a housing shortage, those who need housing will point to each other as the problem, and those who are waiting for housing will say they are being displaced by another group. That is why it is so important that the government, with its wonderful housing strategy that promises billions of dollars over hundreds of years, actually gets down to the short term and starts delivering non-market housing for those who need it most in our society.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, at the outset, I would like to thank the members of both of the committees, in 2016 and 2018, which did incredible work in reviewing what needed to be done to help the Yazidis. Then again, this year did we go far enough, and what additional work needs to be done? I hope to concentrate on the work of those two committees.

To reiterate, in August 2014, four years ago, Daesh launched attacks on the Yazidi people in Sinjar, in northern Iraq, removing and murdering the men, forcing the women and girls into sexual slavery, and forcing the young boys into child soldier roles with Daesh fighting groups. This was a targeted group, in particular, as I recall, for religious persecution purposes. They were intent on essentially creating genocide.

To the credit of this place, some years back it clearly recognized that this was a genocide of the Yazidi people. As my colleague and others have mentioned, in 2016, the House of Commons passed a motion brought forward by a Conservative member to provide asylum to women and girls considered the most vulnerable victims of these attacks.

I think it is important for us to know what that motion said, because there was recognition way back then of the significance of the problems being faced by this particular group of people. That motion said:

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That the House (a) recognize that ISIS is committing genocide against the Yazidi people; (b) acknowledge that many Yazidi women and girls are still being held captive by ISIS as sexual slaves; (c) recognize that the government has neglected to provide this House with an appropriate plan and the corresponding action required to respond to this crisis; (d) support recommendations found in the...report issued by United Nations Commission of Inquiry on Syria entitled, "They came to destroy: ISIS Crimes Against the Yazidis"; and, (e) call on the government to (i) take immediate action upon all the recommendations found in section 210, 212, and 213 of the said report, (ii) use its full authority to provide asylum to Yazidi women and girls within 30 days.

Following the passage in this place of that motion, the member for Vancouver East brought forward a motion to the immigration committee. That motion said:

Pursuant to Standing 108(2) and in light of the House of Commons unanimously voting in favour of the motion for the Canadian government to use its full authority to provide asylum to Yazidi women and girls who are escaping genocide within 120 days, the Committee undertake a study....

I will not go into the details of the study, but the committee then set about looking at all the details of what these women and children were facing and what actions Canada could possibly take. Passing that motion, with the committee agreeing to review, eventually spurred the government to actually host Yazidi women and children. I think it is important to recognize that there were Yazidi women in Canada who worked with the members in this place, and that is what really spurred action. It was a very emotional reaction.

In response to the emotion of the crisis Yazidi women and children were facing, Parliament responded. The government then moved to host and eventually bring some Yazidi women and children to Canada. My understanding is that a thousand Yazidi have since resettled in Canada, and half of those are children.

In October 2017, the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration requested an update from the government on what was happening with the Yazidi in Canada and how well they were resettling here and what the situation was overseas for the Yazidi who had not yet come. The committee was well briefed by the government, settlement agencies, refugee sponsors and newly arrived Yazidi women and children.

As a result of that review, the committee as a whole made a good number of recommendations. I think it is important to recognize that, yes, good action was taken to support Yazidi women and children, but the committee, all parties on the committee, made some very strong recommendations to the government to go further. Most of that went to giving greater support for two things. First was to ensure that we provide fulsome support for the resettlement of the Yazidi families in Canada, and second was to take action to enable more Yazidis to seek refuge in Canada.

●(1900)

One of the recommendations was to increase Canada's refugee settlement targets generally. Within that, we would also give greater support to the Yazidi families.

Another recommendation was to work with stakeholders to facilitate private sponsorship. As my colleague mentioned tonight, there are many in my riding as well who desperately want the government to let them step forward and sponsor more refugees. Most want to support more Syrian families. However, there certainly are families that have stepped forward and said they are willing to also help Yazidi women and children. The call from the committee

was to facilitate more private sponsorship beyond the sponsorship agreement holder allocations from the government.

Third was to work with multilateral partners to help internally displaced Yazidis return to their region, should they choose and if it is deemed safe for them to go back. Normally speaking, refugees come from an area of strife. That is where they would like to return, but obviously, we do not want to help them return if we do not think they can return safely.

Other recommendations included offering greater information and support to new arrivals, offering greater support to settlement services and ensuring access to affordable housing and services. Two of my colleagues spoke to that earlier. We have a crisis with the cost of housing, particularly in British Columbia and Toronto. If a lot of the Yazidis are moving there, we have double the crisis. We have to figure out a way to put these families in places that are affordable and safe.

The committee also recommended providing mental health supports, providing professional interpretation services and language training to Yazidi families, and supporting family reunification for survivors by extending indefinitely the one-year window of opportunity.

My colleague, the member for Vancouver East, who is a member of the committee, went a little further at committee and added supplemental recommendations. Those recommendations included that Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada lift the cap on privately sponsored refugees. That has been a bone of contention for those trying to support bringing in Yazidi families. We need to be letting families who want to step forward support them.

The second recommendation was that Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada expand the definition of "family", under the family reunification program and the one-year window of opportunity sponsorship program for refugee claimants, to include siblings, cousins, uncles, aunts, nieces and nephews. I have faced this in my own riding. There is a wonderful Congolese man who has settled in Canada, and he had nieces stranded in one of the refugee camps out of the Congo. However, he was having trouble sponsoring those children, because they were not his own children. When we look at the situation in a place of war and strife and genocide, we need to be rethinking the category of persons we should let people sponsor. The third recommendation was that Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada engage in a follow-up measure to resettle 5,000 Yazidi refugees in Canada.

Other recommendations included increased humanitarian aid levels targeted toward populations of internally displaced people; that the government work with the provinces and territories to ensure that interpretation is available to those with language barriers in accessing public services; and that the government provide greater funding through resettlement services to provide conversational English-French programs to ensure that vulnerable refugees, especially women, do not experience isolation, language training for children, and child care services.

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•(1905)

Mr. Matt DeCoursey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened to my colleague enumerate the recommendations the committee provided in its report. We should be clear that the government generally supports the recommendations, because they concern things we are already doing and working on to ensure the proper resettlement, settlement, and integration of survivors of Daesh.

Over 1,400 of them have resettled in Canada as part of this effort and the majority of them are Yazidi women and girls. The majority of that group were actually internally displaced persons, as we responded in one way to the supplemental recommendation made by my NDP colleague from Vancouver East.

I just want to remind the NDP that Canada is now the global leader in refugee resettlement in the world. We are on track to resettle more refugees in Canada than any other country in the world. We have almost quadrupled our privately sponsored refugee spaces to respond to the generosity and desire of Canadians to play a part. We have more than doubled the number of spaces that were available prior to 2015. We have increased the budgets for settlement and integration organizations commensurate with the number of refugees we are bringing to Canada.

Canada is leading the conversations on the compacts on safe and orderly and regular migration and the compacts for refugees, because we know that Canada cannot alone deal with the pressing global challenges facing many vulnerable refugees and other migrants around the world.

We need to work through international co-operation, diplomacy and by sharing our world-leading resettlement efforts to ensure that we can continue to play a leadership role when it comes to vulnerable refugees and migrants globally.

Ms. Linda Duncan: I am not sure if that was a question, Mr. Speaker.

I fully believe that the member is very committed, but I can only look to the committee, which included a majority of Liberal members. It was a unanimous report. I find it hard to believe that since that report was tabled, all of the requests contained in it have been met.

We have been generous to refugees, but there are millions of refugees around the world. We accepted 35,000. That does not mean that we cannot do more.

I understand there are more Yazidi women and children that could be rescued. If there are families that are willing to sponsor them, I do not understand why the government would want to stand in the way of that. It would not cost the public treasury. It simply means that the government would have to lift the cap and let Canadians be generous, which they enjoy being.

•(1910)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have had the opportunity to talk about the Yazidis and the horrific situations there have been. We have seen tangible, strong support from the government on this particular issue. In many ways,

Canada is leading the world in terms of our acceptance of refugees per capita and by percentage.

I used to be the immigration critic for my party a number of years back. There is a great deal of demand for Canada to look at taking in additional refugees.

I am wondering if the member would apply the same principle she just finished espousing to allow individuals to come here because they already have family members here. Is that something she believes should be universally applied in response to many other horrific situations involving refugees, or is it just Yazidis the member is referring to?

We have to get a sense of where the New Democratic Party is coming from on the issue of refugees. What percentage of the overall immigration numbers do those members believe refugees should make up, or should it be a undefined number? Should we accept whatever number we can get in?

Ms. Linda Duncan: Mr. Speaker, in my speech I was simply speaking to the committee's report, of which the Liberals were the majority.

The committee heard testimony from people like Omar Khoudeida, an activist in the Yazidi community in London. He was of the opinion that special measures for additional resettlement of Yazidi women and children to Canada were necessary given how many are still in refugee camps.

The case that is being made by many, which we are supporting, is in the case of genocide. Surely, there has to be some kind of special consideration. If we made that special consideration in the case of the 1,500, why all of a sudden are we saying we have done our bit?

We have been hearing at the foreign affairs committee about the Congo. Women are being raped and murdered and children taken away as child soldiers. There may be special circumstances in which there are Canadians here who are willing to sponsor extended family. Maybe we should be reconsidering that in some circumstances.

Mr. Matt DeCoursey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for the opportunity to speak about our government's ongoing efforts to resettle Yazidi women and children in Canada.

Let me be clear that the government concurs with the committee's report. Indeed, the committee's findings will help inform what we have learned already through the Yazidi resettlement initiative. The report will also help guide our programs going forward.

As members know, Canada is committed to helping vulnerable and marginalized populations around the world. Our refugee protection program was designed to save lives, offer protection to displaced and persecuted persons, and to respond to international crises by resettling those in need.

As members may recall, in October 2016, the House of Commons voted unanimously that the Government of Canada provide protection for Yazidi women and girls who are escaping genocide. Since Canada does not offer protection on the basis of religion or ethnicity, but rather on vulnerability, the government's response to this motion focused not only on Yazidi people at risk but also and more broadly on survivors of Daesh.

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However, because the Yazidi community suffered a particularly high level of violence at the hands of Daesh, Yazidis figured prominently among the cases referred to us by the United Nations Refugee Agency for resettlement.

The Government of Canada committed to resettling 1,200 survivors of Daesh, including vulnerable Yazidi women and children, as government assisted refugees by the end of 2017. Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada worked closely with the United Nations Refugee Agency, the International Organization for Migration, resettlement assistance program service provider organizations, and other partners to meet this commitment.

With the help and advice of German, Iraqi, and Kurdish authorities, as well as Yazidi leaders, the government determined that the focus of these efforts should be on helping the most vulnerable individuals, rather than on large-scale resettlement. The government also facilitated the private sponsorship of individuals who fall within this vulnerable group, meaning that more Yazidi women and girls, as well as other survivors of Daesh, could arrive in Canada as privately sponsored refugees.

Canada has now welcomed more than 1,400 survivors of Daesh, including 1,310 government-assisted refugees and 94 who were privately sponsored.

As highlighted in the committee's report, the resettlement of this vulnerable population has not been without challenges. That said, I am pleased to report to the House that Yazidi families in Canada are generally integrating well and are showing increased independence in their daily lives.

One of the ways we are facilitating the arrival of this population is to promote connections between service providers and Yazidi leaders and associations to help newly arrived families connect with the broader community. Some are also starting to leverage faith-based community organizations to build further connections within the community.

Among other instances of community building, there is a strong indication that families are feeling empowered and have a clear willingness to engage with the broader community. This is positive news and a good sign that these families will soon be fully integrated into Canadian society.

One of the committee's recommendations is to help foster precisely this type of community building within the Yazidi community. The government is pleased that the committee's thoughts are in line with what we are already doing. More specifically, the committee recommends that we offer newly arrived Yazidi women and children information about existing Yazidi communities in Canada to help build a supportive Canadian network of Yazidi people.

In addition to our efforts to build bridges between service providers and the Yazidi community, the government is exploring the best means of providing information directly to newly arrived Yazidi refugees regarding Yazidi communities in Canada, both before and after their arrival.

As with all government-assisted refugees, Yazidis are resettled in areas where they will be most likely to integrate into the community and have the support they need.

● (1915)

The core cities selected for the resettlement of survivors of Daesh were Toronto, London, Winnipeg and Calgary. These core cities were chosen after comprehensive consultations with various stakeholders and agencies, and the criteria were based on various aspects of the resettlement process. Among these criteria are adequate medical and psychosocial supports, the availability of interpreters, and adequate community capacity to support high needs clients.

The government took great care in choosing these locations to help ensure the best possible resettlement outcomes for this population. While the government supports all efforts to improve access to services by Yazidi women, we do not concur with the committee's recommendation to directly assist Yazidi women in relocating them to areas that are in close proximity to services. That is because Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada plays a limited role in offering housing supports as part of the integration of newcomers.

Through the refugee assistance program, the department offers temporary accommodation to government assisted refugees and the service providers who assist newly arrived refugees in finding permanent housing. Service providers work with refugees to find affordable housing that is in proximity to essential services and to other Yazidi community members. In addition to the settlement assistance program, Yazidi women and children are also eligible beneficiaries under the interim federal health program. Under this program they receive basic coverage for services that include mental health services provided by physicians or services provided by mental health hospitals. They also receive supplemental coverage, including mental health services provided by allied health professionals such as psychotherapists or counsellors.

We also know that the services funded by the interim federal health program are not the only way for Yazidi women and children to receive the support they need. Specialized refugee clinics or even family physicians often play a key role in providing mental health services in response to the traumas this population has faced. Furthermore, all newcomers can access mental health supports through the settlement sector.

The government will continue to work with these health professionals and community organizations in these centres to ensure that the coverage provided through the interim federal health program translates into the services that Yazidis need.

The committee recommends that the government work with relevant partners to invest in improving mental health supports for all refugees in Canada and that we improve access to mental health support for Yazidi women and children in their mother tongue. The government fully supports this recommendation.

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In terms of its settlement programming, IRCC also partners with organizations such as the Canadian Mental Health Association and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health to help settlement, social service and health care providers identify the mental health needs of refugees and equip them with the training and resources. IRCC will continue to build on our partnerships with these organizations as well as other levels of government to support the mental health and well-being of refugees.

On a similar note, the government also supports the report's recommendation that IRCC anticipate linguistic capacity needs in its resettlement initiatives and expand the provision of professional interpretation for newcomers.

The support services offered by service provider organizations funded by IRCC include child care, transportation assistance, crisis counselling, provisions for persons with disabilities, and translation and interpretation services.

Translation services are available to all newcomers who may need them at any point in the settlement process. Of course, this includes Yazidi newcomers. The government also supports the report's recommendation that IRCC work with other levels of government and professional associations working in interpretation and translation to ensure that professional interpretation is provided to newcomers in Canada. To that end, IRCC has increased its engagement with provinces and territories at both multilateral and bilateral levels.

- (1920)

The government also agrees with the report's recommendation that IRCC continue to support language training for all permanent residents, including refugees. Indeed, IRCC spends about 36% of annual federal settlement funding on language training and an additional 3% of the envelope on language assessment for all eligible clients, including refugees.

Speaking more broadly, the government supports the report's recommendation to increase Canada's refugee resettlement targets. Canada has committed to resettling 27,000 refugees in 2018 and that number will increase to over 31,000 in 2020. With this commitment, our country will be the largest resettlement country in the world. The 2018 immigration levels plan also committed the government to growing overall refugee settlement levels by 17% and, as I said, that takes us to over 31,000 refugees in 2020. In budget 2018, the government committed to resettling an additional 1,000 vulnerable women and girls from conflict zones around the world.

On top of Canada's domestic resettlement initiatives, our country also works with our international partners through the global refugee sponsorship initiative. We already have uptake from at least five countries that are now engaging in resettling refugees in their home countries using the privately sponsored model pioneered in Canada. This initiative is helping those countries set up their own community-sponsored refugee programs modelled on our system. This will help boost resettlement capacity all over the world.

The Government of Canada partially supports the committee's recommendation that Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada work with stakeholders to facilitate the private sponsorship of Yazidi women and children and deem these applications over and above the

sponsorship agreement holders allocations until 2020. While the government will continue to work with sponsors to facilitate the private sponsorship of survivors of Daesh who are outside their country of nationality, it must ensure that it can manage the number of applications it receives each year in order to process them in a timely manner.

Because demand from sponsors to submit new applications has long outpaced available spaces in the levels plan, we have experienced long wait times and backlogs, which create barriers for Canada to offer timely protection. The current sponsorship agreement holders allocations were selected to support the government's commitments, balancing the interests of Canadians to sponsor with the additional space our levels plan has provided in order to reduce application inventories and processing times.

The Government of Canada certainly supports the report's recommendation that it help internally displaced Yazidi persons return to northern Iraq by working toward creating a favourable environment for that return. Indeed, in 2016, the Government of Canada announced a three-year comprehensive strategy providing humanitarian, developmental, stabilization and security assistance in Iraq. Canada is providing \$179.5 million in humanitarian assistance in Iraq to meet the needs of the most vulnerable. Canada is assisting in creating a favourable environment for returns through its stabilization programming in liberated areas. Canada is at the forefront of international diplomacy efforts to bring Daesh to account for crimes against vulnerable groups in Iraq and Syria.

The Government of Canada also supports the report's recommendation that IRCC continue to support settlement service providers assisting Yazidi women and children in developing shared capacity and best practices. It also supports the report's recommendation to work with relevant stakeholders and experts on the development of a best practices guide or series for the settlement sector on the resettlement and integration of vulnerable groups.

In response to the report's recommendation that IRCC support family reunification for survivors of Daesh by considering an indefinite extension to the one-year window of opportunity for them to include immediate family members, the government is partially in support. More specifically, the government will not extend the one-year window provision indefinitely, but it will develop eligibility criteria and implement a temporary extension of this provision for immediate family members of survivors of Daesh.

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• (1925)

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank you and all members for the opportunity to address this important issue in the House this evening and remind Canadians of this government's clear commitment through our immigration levels plan to help grow our economy, to provide opportunities for more family reunification, and specifically on the issue we are here to talk about this evening, continue to be a global leader in providing safe refuge and resettlement opportunity for the world's most vulnerable.

Let me remind everyone in this House that it was this government that reinstated the interim federal health program that Yazidi women and girls are now accessing today to ensure that they have the mental health supports they need. Let me remind this House that it was under this government that 1,400 survivors of Daesh, the majority of whom were Yazidi women and girls, have been resettled into Canada. Let me remind this House and anyone watching that this government is doubling the spaces available for refugee resettlement in Canada and quadrupling the number of spaces provided to private citizens who are taking a leadership role in helping vulnerable persons, refugees around the world, come to Canada, resettle and make a life for themselves and their families.

We know we have more work to do to ensure proper settlement and immigration of all vulnerable persons when they come to Canada, and that particularly includes Yazidi women and girls, on which the conversation is focused this evening. We will continue to be there, working with our provincial and territorial counterparts, working with the great service provider organizations that I have the pleasure of working with in my home community of Fredericton, and the great service provider organizations that I know are providing particular services to Yazidi women and girls and children in places like Calgary, which I had the chance to visit back in October.

We will continue to play a leadership role when it comes to the global trends where we are seeing more people migrating around the world than ever since World War II, and the refugees that we are seeing being hosted in some of the least developed countries around the world. We will work with them to do our part as a global leader in resettlement and also co-operate internationally with other countries to develop their capacity and ability to provide long-term, sustainable solutions for some of the world's most vulnerable.

• (1930)

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I do not think anyone in this place doubts the parliamentary secretary's sincerity. I think this is a subject where all parliamentarians in this place can come together.

In the report, I would draw the member's attention to recommendation seven which, at the end, recommends that the government "work with provincial and municipal governments as well as service provider organizations to ensure resettled Yazidi women and children have improved access to housing which is affordable."

Before the parliamentary secretary starts talking about the national housing strategy, I want to provide some context and contrast. Yes, the national housing strategy is celebrated as a \$40-billion investment over a 10-year period, but a large chunk of that is, in

fact, coming from provincial governments and service provider organizations. Furthermore, the lion's share of it is not going to start flowing until 2020.

I discovered an interesting thing a few weeks ago when I substituted on the government operations committee. We found out that the money for the Kinder Morgan purchase of \$4.5 billion was outside of the main budgetary process. The money was actually obtained from Export Development Canada and transferred to Trans Mountain Corporation.

Would the hon. member not agree that another Crown corporation, perhaps the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, also deserves a \$4.5-billion loan to start building the housing right here and now to address the crisis that we not only have for Yazidi refugees but for many Canadians across the country who may not be able to afford to wait until 2020 or 2021? Will he not agree that maybe a \$4.5-billion transfer to CMHC would be a smart idea, if the government is able to afford it for a pipeline?

Mr. Matt DeCoursey: Mr. Speaker, I would recommend that my colleague stick around later this evening if he wants to talk about the transport of oil. We will be having an engaging conversation about that in a bit.

I know my colleague who sits in front of me in the House of Commons would be able to talk at length about the investments that are already being made through this government's housing strategy in communities right across the country, including in communities where Yazidi women and girls have been resettled.

On the specifics of how the federal government and the immigration department play a role in providing support to resettled refugees through the government refugee assistance program, we provide the support to settlement agencies and support to government-assisted refugees for immediate and interim housing. Those resettlement agencies have a significant role to play in helping to find long-term housing for those refugees once they are able to resettle in the community.

There is certainly an ongoing conversation that must be had by the federal government, provincial and territorial governments, and community organizations as well as everyday citizens who all have a role to play to ensure resettlement, settlement and integration of Yazidi women and girls, all refugees and all newcomers to Canada to make sure that everybody has the opportunity to be safe and well and contribute to Canada.

Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians were rightly horrified by the situation of the Yazidis. All Canadians can be very proud of what Canada has done to give safe haven to so many Yazidi women and girls. In addition to providing a safe haven, there is the work that my hon. colleague, the parliamentary secretary, spoke about on family reunification and resettlement and that we have restored health care for refugees and provided the services that they need.

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My hon. colleague also mentioned a program to settle women and girls from other conflict areas. There are many parts of the world where women and girls are in terrible situations. I wonder if my hon. colleague could elaborate on that particular program.

● (1935)

Mr. Matt DeCoursey: Mr. Speaker, my colleague from the Ottawa area is certainly a leading voice in this Parliament when it comes to human rights matters, domestically and internationally. I know she is actively engaged in conversations about how Canada can provide opportunities for safety and security for those fleeing war, persecution, and all kinds of other horrors.

Our effort to resettle an additional 1,000 vulnerable women and girls came through a commitment made in budget 2018, which is in line with the work that Canada is leading on globally to help develop a compact for safe, orderly and regular migration and a compact on refugees. We ensured that language and an understanding were inserted into those compacts so that we could build capacity around the world to better understand the situations facing vulnerable women and girls, many of whom are fleeing gang violence and gender-based violence in all areas of the world. We know there are situations in Latin America as well as in the Middle East and other regions, such as the Rohingya refugees situation.

We are going to do our best to ensure that we can provide safe refuge to the most vulnerable. We know we have a particular responsibility when it comes to helping ourselves and the world to better understand the particular vulnerabilities and challenges faced by women and girls in refugee situations. We will do our part as the global leader in resettlement to make sure that women and girls who find themselves in horrific situations are able to come here and build a life in Canada for themselves.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the parliamentary secretary a question that has come up in my meetings with some Yazidi people in Winnipeg, particularly. It is the situation of private sponsorship, where people have not been able to come up with occupations for a few of the folks who are there. There is a requirement for some support in the area of food for some of the people who are living in that area right now.

I wonder if perhaps the parliamentary secretary was aware of that. Perhaps we could talk offline or he could answer the question directly now for me. Is there something that would help resettle more of these folks in a manner that we would be accustomed to here in Canada?

Mr. Matt DeCoursey: Mr. Speaker, I am always willing to talk offline with my hon. colleague from Brandon—Souris. There is always more that we can do to help those who are coming to Canada. We will always endeavour to do so. That is why we are playing a global leadership role on the issues of refugee protection and safe refuge, as well as on the global trends of migration.

I will remind my hon. colleague that Canada is now the global leader in resettlement, and that we have almost quadrupled our privately sponsored spaces in Canada. That includes spaces for Yazidi women and girls, and all vulnerable persons from around the world.

I know my hon. colleague does not do this often, but some of his colleagues on the Conservative benches call for us to do more for

vulnerable women and girls, while at the same time they slander Canada's leadership in helping to develop and sign a global compact that will help us take a leadership role in ensuring that the most vulnerable women and girls around the world can be resettled in Canada or find safe refuge in other areas around the world.

I am happy to talk with him offline around his genuine request. However, I would also ask him to go back into the back lobby and ask his Conservative colleagues to clearly state where they stand. Do they want Canada to play a leadership role when it comes to refugee protection, or do they want us to walk away from the table and have no say in how the global community deals with growing trends of migration globally or refugees who we see more of than at any other point since World War II?

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskij (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the parliamentary secretary for his very informative speech. We know that all refugees have come from horrific circumstances, but Yazidi women and girls have survived the sexual slavery of Daesh, which is a particularly difficult journey that they have made. When they arrive in Canada, I understand that we have customized approaches and specialized services that we provide.

I was wondering if the parliamentary secretary would like to speak to that.

● (1940)

Mr. Matt DeCoursey: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague who is playing an important role in this global conversation about how we better support vulnerable women and girls globally through his leadership on the women, peace and security file, a file that really envelopes both global diplomacy, international co-operation through development and humanitarian assistance, and Canada's world-leading refugee resettlement program.

On the specific question he asked about the particular services that we provide for Yazidis who are here in Canada, I have to remind people in this place that it was the government that reinstated the interim federal health program that, for Yazidi women and girls, is ensuring that they are beneficiaries of particularized mental health supports through allied health professionals, psychosocial experts, counselling, mental health hospitals and a whole range of services that would not have been available to them prior to our election to government.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, before I begin my remarks I would like to personally thank my friend and colleague the member for Calgary Nose Hill for her dedication to immigration as the shadow cabinet minister for citizenship and immigration. Through her tireless efforts, she has put the plight of Yazidi people front and centre. She has taken the Liberal government to task and has held it accountable. Just this past summer in Manitoba we met with Yazidi refugees. It was a very moving experience to hear first-hand the torture, pain and agony inflicted upon them by the terrorist death cult ISIS. They reminded us that there is still much work to do.

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Before I speak about the report, it is important to understand how we got here. The Yazidis are a Kurdish religious minority who live in Iraq, Syria, the Caucasus region and some parts of Turkey and Iran. Their religion is a branch of Zoroastrianism and has adopted some practices from Islam and Christianity.

In August of 2014, ISIS launched an attack across the Sinjar region in northern Iraq. The area is primarily inhabited by the Yazidi people, a long-established ethnic and religious minority group condemned by ISIS because of their beliefs. The atrocities reported from the region included the removal and murder of Yazidi men, the sexual slavery of Yazidi women and girls and the incorporation of Yazidi boys into ISIS fighting groups. It is estimated that around 10,000 Yazidis were either killed or captured in August of 2014 alone, out of which 3,100 were murdered by gunshots, beheaded or burned alive.

Under the previous Conservative government, we took real action to fight ISIS by conducting Operation Impact, allowing for our CF-18 fighter jets to bomb ISIS. In 2016, our Conservative opposition moved a motion to hold summer meetings of the immigration committee to study immigration measures for the protection of the world's most vulnerable. The study included a heavy focus on Yazidi genocide survivors and the need for Canada to respond. In October of 2016, my colleague from Calgary Nose Hill put forward a motion to resettle Yazidi genocide survivors in Canada, and that was passed in the House.

In this debate, I want to highlight some specific areas that the Government of Canada must improve to ensure that Yazidi survivors can succeed and flourish in Canada. The committee report we are debating today was born out of a study by the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration that was looking at how well Canada was integrating the small number of Yazidis who were resettled in Canada.

The resettling of Yazidi women and children in Canada is the first step to rebuilding their lives. However, a number of critical support services, such as better access to mental health support and interpretation services, are needed in order to fully integrate. The road to recovery for survivors of genocide also includes reuniting them with family members who were left behind.

The report provides a number of recommendations based on the issues heard during the course of the study. Among these, the committee highlighted the importance of facilitating the private sponsorship of Yazidi women and children, developing a best practices guide on resettlement and integration of vulnerable groups, as well as anticipating linguistic capacity needs in order to provide professional interpretation to newcomers in their mother language.

However, the committee noted that resettlement issues are not the only solution to the violent displacement endured by the Yazidi people. Stabilizing the Sinjar region and creating a favourable environment for those wishing to return is also part of rebuilding the lives of Yazidis. The report found that there appears to be a patchwork of services for Yazidis across the country, and non-governmental agencies are expected to draft their own specialized programs.

The committee report also found that there is a lack of psychological and mental health resources to help remove the stigma of sexual assault and mental health treatment. There is a lack of translation services specifically for Yazidis. As a result, immigration societies are now calling on the government to bring over not only spouses and dependent children of refugees, but also extended family members.

• (1945)

At this time I would like to go over some specific areas of the report and what our Conservative caucus is calling for, six in particular.

First, family reunification of Yazidis is imperative to their integration and justice. There are many survivors of the Yazidi genocide and newly rescued sex slaves who are only now able to leave the Islamic state and it is necessary to recognize the exceptional nature of their situation. We have continuously heard of Yazidi refugees who have been resettled to Canada, yet are still facing troubles reuniting with their family members who have been found alive. The government must prioritize this for survivors instead of using resources to reach out to known terrorists seeking to come to Canada.

Many already have family in Canada now and others are unable to return home to northern Iraq due to the instability of the region with no local durable solutions. They should be prioritized in Canada's refugee resettlement along with the prolonged ability for Yazidis to sponsor family to Canada. Family reunification is a key area of concern for all refugees resettled in Canada, but we heard that Yazidi families have unique issues when trying to sponsor family.

For example, family members are often undeclared on documentation given to IRCC because they were presumed dead or disappeared. Under current regulations, those family members cannot be included under the one-year window program even if they are located within the first year in Canada.

COSTI stated, "...it is not unusual for missing family members to be located after the One Year Window provision has passed, leaving few avenues for resettlement other than submitting a Humanitarian and Compassionate claim, which not only costs money to apply but also requires a lawyer to complete the application."

Last, for extended family members still living in their home country such as Iraq and Syria, there exists no mechanism to resettle refugees who are internally displaced other than family-class sponsorship, which has inherent barriers for refugees.

UNHCR and the refugee sponsorship training program have confirmed that without official refugee documents, it is not possible to recommend Yazidi extended family members for resettlement in Canada. Needless to say, the stress of being disconnected from family overseas, especially when those family members continue to be in precarious situations, contributes to poorer health and settlement outcomes and makes it much more difficult for refugee newcomers to focus on the task of integrating into Canadian society. This challenge in terms of reunification of Yazidi families should be addressed immediately by the government.

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Second, Canada must support the return of refugees to their ancestral territory in northern Iraq. More than a year after the defeat of ISIS in Iraq, 1.9 million Iraqis remain displaced internally, including Yazidis, Christians, Muslim minority groups and members of other ethnic and religious minority groups.

Many of them have suffered human rights violations that the United Nations has found amount to acts of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. With the Dohuk-Sinjar road completely closed for almost one year, this has prevented Yazidis desiring to return home from the camps to rebuild their lives in Sinjar.

There have also been other measures implemented to prevent Yazidis from transporting materials needed for the reconstruction of their homes and farms, measures that exacerbated emigration from the country and seriously endanger the future survival of minorities within Iraq.

Given that Yazidis are being prevented from returning to their ancestral territory, Canada should be advocating for the establishment of a body to regularly report to the public on the progress that has been made and the obstacles that have been encountered with the return of ethnic and religious minorities to their places of origin in northern Iraq.

• (1950)

Third, Canada must support Nadia Murad's international criminal court case. Yazidis and other ISIS victims want justice in a court of law and they deserve nothing less. We cannot stand idly by and allow impunity for genocide and other crimes ISIS is committing in Iraq and around the world. The International Criminal Court has no jurisdiction in Iraq, but the Security Council can override that and refer the conflict in Iraq to the court. Canada should be using its position in the world to advocate for Nadia Murad's court case to go through.

Fourth, "never again" means bringing justice to the perpetrators of genocide. To borrow a phrase from the parliamentary secretary in his speech tonight, "Let me remind this House" that Yazidis who have suffered genocide at the hands of ISIS deserve true justice. It is not enough to recognize genocide for what it is. Action to protect and serve justice is essential. "Never again" means taking action to prevent and stop genocide.

Canadians deserve a government that will not hesitate to take a principled stand against those who commit the worst crimes against humanity. To truly say "never again" and mean it, means seeking justice for survivors. Survivors of ISIS and its atrocities should know the perpetrators are being prosecuted the full extent of the law, not simply reintegrated into Canadian society.

Fifth, a Conservative government would take strong action to bring ISIS terrorists to justice. We would acknowledge the vast majority of Canadians understand that if an individual travels abroad and commits genocidal or terrorist acts, he or she should face the consequences of the laws of foreign countries as well as international law. A Conservative government would clearly uphold this principle. We would focus first on bringing the perpetrators of genocide and terrorist acts to justice.

We would strive to keep Canadians safe from those who would be suspected of committing acts of terrorism or genocide abroad but

have returned to Canada, by ensuring security agencies would be adequately resourced to provide high levels of monitoring and surveillance of their activities in Canada. We would encourage greater use of tools to place conditions on those suspected of terrorist or genocidal activities, such as peace bonds, which can include conditions such as wearing an electronic monitoring device, returning to and remaining at their place of residence at specified times and controlling social media use. The Liberals are making it harder for security officials to monitor suspected terrorists by changing the rules around peace bonds.

We would examine ways as well to reform the criminal justice system to ensure courts would have access to evidence gathered against suspected terrorists. We know the process to bring perpetrators of atrocity crimes to justice is slow, fails victims and prevents them from returning home. A Conservative government would ensure Canada would lead global initiatives to reform and strengthen them.

We would support initiatives which would take concrete action to bring justice and treatment to women whose bodies, through rape, have been used as a weapon of war. We would recognize that ISIS committed atrocity crimes against many different ethnic and religious minority groups, including the Yazidi, Iraqi Christians, Coptic Christians and minority Shia Muslim groups.

We would provide support for the investigators and prosecutors of ISIS terrorists, mandated through UN Security Council resolution 2379, to support domestic efforts to hold ISIS accountable for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.

Finally, we would take action to uphold the unanimous decision of Parliament to comply with a Conservative motion to bring justice to the victims of the Yazidi genocide.

Sixth, the Liberals have failed to keep their commitment to Yazidis. When the Liberal government voted unanimously to support Yazidi genocide survivors, we expected the Liberals to make good on this commitment and provide the necessary services to ensure their successful integration into Canada's social and economic fabric. Unfortunately, last year we learned that despite only resettling a small number of genocide survivors, only five Yazidi women received government provided mental health services. To add insult to injury, the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship cut the amount of money set aside to provide this support.

• (1955)

The initiative to help resettle Yazidis was borne out of a realization that Yazidis could not make it onto UNHCR refugee lists. On top of failing to provide the necessary mental health services, the Liberal government has made no structural changes to Canada's refugee selection process to prevent a similar situation from happening in the future.

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Yazidis have faced many injustices, except this time it is at the hands of the Liberal government. The Conservative Party calls on the Liberals to immediately fulfill the spirit of the motion they supported last year. Yazidis should have access to mental health services, language training, integration supports, connections to the existing community in Canada and that our refugee system be re-evaluated to prevent future tragedy.

I want to highlight Nadia Murad, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 2018. Nadia was abducted and forced into slavery in 2014. After fleeing her brutal captors, she courageously shared her story and became a relentless advocate for the Yazidi women and girls still suffering in ISIS captivity. Named a UN goodwill ambassador at the age of 23, Nadia has travelled the world raising awareness of ISIS's horrifying crimes, calling for justice and action to help Yazidis displaced and brutalized by the inhumane actions of this terrorist group.

Nadia has brought her campaign to Canada several times and the Conservatives have been proud to stand with her in demanding action from the Canadian government. With her support and that of the Yazidi community in Canada, the Conservatives have succeeded in pressuring the government to recognize the Yazidi genocide and resettle some survivors in Canada.

It is my hope and desire for the government to take our recommendations seriously. I urge it to enact them immediately.

Mr. Matt DeCoursey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have three questions for my hon. colleague across the way.

I will preface the first one by saying that the global community really became aware of the horrors that the Yazidi people underwent after the 2014 Sinjar genocide. Did the member for Calgary Nose Hill demand her government take action to bring vulnerable Yazidi women to Canada at that time?

Second, why did every single Conservative stand in the House in a recorded standing vote and vote against important resettlement dollars for Yazidi women and girls in Canada?

Third, if the Conservatives are truly genuine about their commitment to resettling vulnerable women and girls across Canada, why are they joining the People's Party of Canada in condemning the leadership role that Canada is playing on two global compacts that deal with these very issues?

• (2000)

Mr. Larry Maguire: Mr. Speaker, as I pointed out in my speech, the whole atrocity started in 2014. The government is very aware of the fact that it has not adopted some of the processes that were needed in the recommendations to move forward. It has acted on some. However, I know my colleague is responsible for these Yazidi women being brought to Canada. The Liberals make the case that they brought them in.

When Conservatives brought this before the House, only five or six women from the Yazidi population had entered Canada until my colleague from Calgary Nose Hill brought this to the attention of the committee and it accepted to discuss this whole process. The Yazidi people in Canada know that it was my colleague from Calgary Nose Hill who is responsible for them being in Canada today. We forced

the government to fulfill the needs of 1,250 Yazidi persons, who were being persecuted, to come to Canada in the first place.

I need not take any lessons from my colleague about a leadership role, because the Liberals need to take a leadership role in some of these activities. They need to look at who is being persecuted around the world. They need to continue to look at how they can be prioritized in bringing them to Canada.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there were many issues raised with respect to the issue of the Yazidis community and their resettlement. One of the issues that I consistently hear from the Yazidis community members, as well as refugees as a whole, is that they would like to see additional family members be allowed to come to Canada. To that end, they asked the government to lift the private sponsorship cap on refugees to allow for more refugees to come to Canada. They also asked the government to expand the definition of the “nuclear family” to include aunts, uncles and so on, many of whom could not join their loved ones in a safe place in Canada.

Would the member support those kinds of recommendations that came from the witnesses at committee? Is that something on which he would call on the Liberal government to act?

Mr. Larry Maguire: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Vancouver East for the work she has done on the immigration and citizenship committee as well.

We heard from witnesses who wanted to see the cap raised on the private sponsorship of refugees. That was one of the things we were looking at the government to take the lead on to ensure we adopted some of these opportunities. We heard that very clearly, and I have been made very aware of this. As we continue to develop our policy from our side of the House with respect to this process, that it is one of the things at which we would certainly look.

The definition of the “nuclear family” is also something we need to take into consideration. Many times we heard in testimony, particularly from some of the Yazidi women who were before our committee, that they needed to have more than just immediate family members come to Canada. In many cases, all of the men in those populations have been killed by the ISIS terrorist group. That leaves the women and daughters, many of whom have gone through horrendous atrocities as well in their personal lives, before they were fortunate enough to be among the 1,200 who were able to come to Canada.

Therefore, I am certainly aware that in many cases none of these women, girls, young ladies and children have any male relatives left. In one case, a person who came to testify only had an uncle who was still alive as far as that person knew. That is why we are so readily looking at ensuring there is an opportunity to identify those who are outside the window of the one-year program and allowing them to come to Canada if they are found to be a survivor. Many of them, even their own relatives, have been thought to be killed during the atrocities that took place before these people were accepted to come to Canada as refugees.

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• (2005)

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member was describing some of the fallacies and shortcomings of the government's response initially. As we all remember, the member for Calgary Nose Hill moved a motion in the House to ensure Yazidis would be able to come to Canada. I have met a lot Kurdish Canadians, Canadians of Kurdish heritage, who have come to Canada over the past 10, 20, 30 years. They were shocked at the treatment people were receiving in the region and to learn that the Government of Canada was dragging its feet with respect to helping those most in need.

The member talked a bit about the religious minorities in northern Iraq, Syrian Christians, Chaldeans, Yazidis and the Yarsanis from Iran. Could he talk a little more about what Canada should be doing to help not only these religious minorities, but also the ethnic minority groups in northern Iraq and eastern Syria that still desperately need help, the most needy of the need? Could he also talk about some of the other Government of Canada's shortfalls with respect to helping the neediest of the needy?

Mr. Larry Maguire: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the work he has done on these areas as well. I mentioned a few of them earlier in the presentation. Among them of course are resettlement and the opportunities to free up northern Iraq so that many of these people can go back to their own regions, and the actions that Canada took forcefully in those areas to try to help defeat the ISIS regime in the first place.

Having said that, we know that there are 1,250 Yazidi women and girls who have come to Canada and that when they get here, they are sometimes still very traumatized.

They may not have the best handle yet on the English language to be able to understand what is being asked of them. One of the areas that we strongly need help in is translation, which I mentioned in my speech. We need much more translation in the Kurdish language for them to be able to understand what kind of help they are receiving here in Canada.

We need housing in those areas as well. In the case of some of my friends in Winnipeg, we need some realignment of some funds that were being directed to other areas. Those funds could be used to help with daily food supplies in this particular area. There are not many, but there are some smaller groups who do need help in that regard as well. I do not want to exaggerate it, but there is a need in that area.

I also want to say that besides the translation services and housing, we need to make sure that that these people have an opportunity to reunify with some of their family members, as we just pointed out in the previous question.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the member would support advocating that the government provide ongoing mental health support for the Yazidi victims, and particularly those who have suffered the kinds of traumas that he mentioned in his speech.

Mr. Larry Maguire: The answer is yes, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate my colleague from Vancouver East raising this question again, because it is also one of the things that my colleague from Calgary raised, and I did not mention how Canada could help. This area of mental health very much needs to be addressed in the whole issue of reconciliation here, and citizenship in Canada as well.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to enter the debate on this concurrence motion regarding the 18th report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration tabled in the House of Commons.

What are we talking about? We are talking about a group of victims, people who have faced genocide, who are seeking assistance and safety from the international community. This call for action has been ongoing for some time. Finally, in this House, in this very chamber, every single member unanimously recognized that genocide of the Yazidi community was taking place. From there, a study was undertaken by the House of Commons.

Witnesses who came to committee expressed their point of view and called urgently on the government to take action, particularly to help resettle the women and girls who have faced sexual violence and to allow them to come to a safe place.

This took some time, I must admit. Through that discussion, the government made a commitment that it would settle 1,200 Yazidi women and girl survivors in Canada. That was meant to be a special measure. Ultimately, the government did no such thing. It did not take that special measure. In fact, what it did was to identify Yazidis within the existing numbers of refugees it was accepting under its Syrian refugee initiative, and then double-counted them as Yazidi survivors who had come to Canada.

I cannot tell the House how dismayed I was. It is not a numbers game per se, except when it matters and people's lives are at stake. That is what we were talking about. Every single member in this chamber acknowledged that there was a genocide under way and that we needed to act urgently.

The government did not do what I had hoped and thought it was committed to doing, which was to bring in and resettle as a special measure 1,200 Yazidi women and girls. It did no such thing. I was so dismayed and disappointed with that outcome.

That said, Yazidi women and girls, under the Syrian refugee initiative, came to Canada, and some of them were resettled here. I want to share with the House that not very long ago, back in October, I held a press conference in the press gallery here in the House of Commons. With me were a number of women, one of whom was a survivor. In fact, she was one of the first women who was resettled here under that initiative.

Her name was Adiba. She was a Yazidi woman who was in ISIS captivity, and who was sold roughly six times over the course of the year by different male captors. She arrived in Canada in 2016. She was still dealing with the psychological damage of sexual violence. Her experiences were a prime example of how Yazidi women have struggled in Canada due to a whole variety of persecutions and misunderstandings.

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Several months after arriving, Adiba had a breakdown at her home. She was taken to MacKenzie hospital in Ontario. The support network, the community members with her at the time, remember rushing to the hospital after calls for help. When her support network arrived, they were horrified to find Adiba being restrained on a bed, surrounded by male security guards. They had tied Adiba's hands and feet to the bed. Each hand was tied, each leg was tied, and there were men all around her. That was exactly what ISIS used to do to her, before they raped her. Imagine the trauma she had to re-experience in that situation.

● (2010)

Adiba was one of the victims. The Islamic State in Iraq and Syria had persecuted Yazidis and minority religious sects mostly in northern Iraq. Adiba was 27 at the time. She fled her home in Sinjar District in northern Iraq after the Islamic State militants massacred Yazidi villages and captured women as sex slaves. She also advised us that some of her family members were among the estimated 10,000 Yazidis killed in the genocide. Her parents and her brother are still living in a camp in Iraqi Kurdistan. She is not using her last name out of fear for their safety.

She was living in a refugee camp when she learned that the Canadian government would sponsor Yazidi women to move to Canada. As one of the first of the groups to arrive, she spent her first few nights scared and alone in a hotel in Toronto, until a non-profit organization came forward to offer her help. She was dropped off at the Radisson Hotel not far from here, and stayed in the lobby hungry and thirsty, but with no language she could understand or use in order to obtain some water. That is what her direct experience was. That is what she advised us of during the press conference right here in Ottawa.

I ask, how is this possible? When we raised this issue and studied it, we learned from our German counterparts who gave us advice from how they had helped resettle Yazidi victims. But still, when we resettled the Yazidi women and victims here, this happened. How is it even possible, I have to wonder? Yet, it did happen.

Therefore, the question was raised, what is the government doing, now that it knows about the lack of psychological and mental health support for the victims? What is it doing for these women who have experienced this extreme trauma to get them the support they need? The government promised that additional resources would be targeted for this group, yet it did not materialize. At the end, the government says that there is the interim federal health program, and so just go to that. However, there are no psychologists with the language capacity to provide that help. Some of these women do not even know where to seek it. Where is the on-the-ground support for the women, the survivors, who came here and that Canada agreed to resettle? It was nowhere to be found.

We learned at committee that there were some Yazidi families who were relocated in a part of Canada where they were supposed to have a network of support, where there would be other Yazidi members to support them, only to learn that there were none. It did not happen. They literally just got dropped off in the middle of nowhere, from their perspective, because they are not familiar with Canada at all. They were just left there to fend for themselves. How is it possible for that to have happened? I was so dismayed to learn of that.

The government says that it will do everything it can. Now, to the Liberals' credit, in the levels plan, they have now put forward a special measure to resettle Yazidi men and women. I am glad to see that. We advocated long and hard for the government to do that, and it did appear in this levels plan.

Having said that, there were several other recommendations that witnesses at the committee put forward for the government to consider, which were vital for them, for their mental health and well-being and survival as a community. Yet, no action has been taken.

What are some of those basic recommendations they were calling for?

More than anything else, they wanted to be reunited with their family members, with their loved ones, like we all do. We all want our loved ones around us. We want to know that they are safe and to be in the warmth of their arms. For people who have gone through genocide, I cannot imagine how much they would want that. Witnesses came forward and said that they wanted the government to allow their nuclear family members to be able to come to Canada as refugees as well.

● (2015)

In western society, we define our family members differently. Our spouse, children and parents tend to be those whom we define as within our nuclear family. However, for many communities, mine included, our definition of family is much larger. We consider our aunts, uncles and cousins to be immediate family. For example, I live with my sister and her children, her one son and one daughter. My nephew and niece are like my children. They are like my children's siblings. They are like their brothers and sisters. We define ourselves as a clan. We literally are just one giant clan in one house.

That is how many of the refugees define their families too. The Yazidi women who were able to be resettled here in Canada have left loved ones behind, uncles, aunts, cousins and others, but there is no path forward for them to come to Canada. Why is that? Witnesses came forward and asked us to please understand the broader definition of a nuclear family and to allow that definition for genocide survivors. That recommendation was rejected by the Liberal members at committee. I asked them why they would reject something as basic as helping families come together so they can bring their loved ones here.

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Another committee recommendation was rejected by the Liberal members, and I do not understand why they would do that either. Some of the Yazidis who have survived this horrific genocide were able to come to Canada, but unbeknownst to them, they have a surviving member of their family back at the camp or somewhere. Someone told them they have a surviving family member, yet because of our rules, our immigration policies, unless they make an application within one year of their arrival here in Canada, which is known as the one-year window of opportunity program, under that stream, they will miss the chance to bring those other family members here. They are part of their nuclear family. It could be a son or a daughter, but unless they make that application within one year, they will have missed their opportunity to bring them here. How is that even logical?

These individuals do not even know they have a surviving family member. They thought the family member had been killed, only to discover later, past the deadline, that the family member was still alive but they would have a tough time bringing the person here. They have to go through a whole process of appealing to the minister for intervention. All kinds of things have to take place.

In fact, I assisted one family in such a situation. The woman did not know that her son, her little boy, had survived the situation. She found out through social media. A picture of him showed up and someone told her. She almost collapsed at the sight of him. A whole movement happened to help bring her son here. We had to go through a special application process to get the minister to provide an intervention and so on. After much to do, it happened, and he was brought here.

Why would we not just make it simpler for everyone and just allow for those individuals to be reunited, recognize right from the outset and extend the one-year window of opportunity restriction in terms of timeline, to allow for all of those family members to bring their loved ones here.

Those are basic questions. I wonder why we are even here debating it. As human beings, as people who are connected, as a compassionate country of people who want to see humanitarian action taken, why do we not do these things?

The Liberal members at committee rejected those recommendations. I wrote a supplementary report and brought it forward. It is not like the government members do not know about it. It is not like the minister does not know about it. The parliamentary secretary gloats and claims how swell the Liberals have been on this file. They should take some action and make a difference. They should adopt those recommendations and make that change. They have it within their power to do that right now, right here in this chamber. I challenge them to step up and undertake that effort, because it will make a difference in the lives of people in a very significant way.

• (2020)

It will also save resources which could be spent elsewhere within the immigration file. We could put those resources toward ensuring that an asylum claimant, for example, who is fleeing the Trump administration which rejects women who are facing domestic violence, rejects people who are faced with gang violence and are trying to seek refuge, rejects people from the LGBTQ2I community

who the Trump administration seems to think are born with the sexual identity to which their gender has been identified.

Why are we making people jump through hoops for no good reason? We can reinvest those resources in other places to make a difference. Those are the kinds of things that we as parliamentarians can do. Those are the kinds of things that I dream of being in government to be able to do, to remove barriers, cut the red tape and make a difference in the lives of people. That is the privilege we have.

I have been elected for 25 years now. I was taught something by a former lieutenant governor in British Columbia, the late Dr. David Lam. He said that it is not the title that brings you honour, but it is what you do with the title that you honour it. All of us have the opportunity to make a difference.

When we are talking about genocide, today in the House of Commons I tried to get unanimous consent to move a motion to call on every single member of the House to recognize December 13 as the Nanjing massacre commemorative day. Eighty-one years ago, some 300,000 people were killed. Some 200,000 women from Japanese-occupied territories in Asia were brought into sexual slavery. We have lessons to learn from history and to commemorate it would mean that we learned those lessons and we could apply them today.

It would mean that for the Yazidi women who are faced with sexual slavery, with sexual violence, we collectively can act on that and do something about it. The UN currently recognizes some 19 countries see sexual violence as a tactic of war. What is wrong with that picture? Why did I not receive unanimous consent? From what I understand, it was a Liberal member who rejected it to begin with. Why would that happen? When we work across partisan lines on issues like this to commemorate a situation of such magnitude, of crimes against humanity, of such atrocities, we have the power to unite our voice and strength to make a difference in the global context to try to save lives, to bring peace forward as the middle power country that we are. We worked so hard to earn a reputation as a peace-loving people so that we can assert ourselves in the international community to drive a difference.

Unanimous consent was denied. I hope that is not the end of it and that we can come back and apply those lessons from history to today's context. Whether it be the Yazidi community or Myanmar, people who are faced with those kinds of situations, with sexual violence being used as a military tactic, let us take action. Let us not just talk about it. Let us not just debate it. Let us make those policy changes and make it happen.

We can help resettle, provide aid, and we can assert ourselves in the international arena to broker change, to bring allies in other countries on board to make that difference. I think we have the power to do that. That is why I am so honoured to be a parliamentarian with all the members in the House. Let us work together to make that difference, shall we?

• (2025)

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskij (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague across the aisle for the passion and dedication she brings to these issues and to this file.

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She spoke of the differences in cultural understanding of what a nuclear family is. That is a very important topic for discussion and hopefully it will be a topic that will continue to be looked at.

However, I would like to zero in on something a little more particular to the Yazidi file. The Yazidis, as was mentioned, are survivors of a genocide. In and of its nature, that means those survivors are the few. Their immediate family members most likely did not survive. They may have more distant family members who also are among those few who survived, and that is why it is such a precious thing for them when they do see a family member, perhaps in a video of a refugee camp.

Was there any discussion in the committee, and does the member think that perhaps in the future there should be a discussion, around that very particular issue of the survivors of genocide and the refugees who are survivors of genocide, that perhaps we should have a broader approach when it comes to family reunification?

• (2030)

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Mr. Speaker, the member is the former chair of the committee, and I also appreciate his work because he earnestly tried to make a difference at that committee. He actually reminded the committee members at one point that we may never make it back to that table again and so for the moment, the here and now, it was our chance to make that difference and to speak up and speak out and not just toe the party line. That was his advice and I very much appreciated that.

That said, to his specific question about the nuclear family and, more important, the definition of how some communities define it differently, for genocide survivors there is no question that those family members, however they are related, are precious to them. In fact, at the committee there was fulsome discussion about that. Witness after witness recommended that change to the committee, yet we do not see that action from the government. That is what I am dismayed about.

It is not like we do not know what needs to be done, but the government has failed to act on it. Right now, the Liberals could make that difference by making that change. Literally with the stroke of a pen, they could make that change and allow for those family members to come to Canada under family reunification.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, all I can say is that the people of Vancouver East are very lucky to have my colleague as their representative. That is precisely the kind of passion we need to see in this place. We need the realization that it is indeed a privilege for us to take our seats in this place to represent our various constituencies, but also to realize that collectively we have the power to shape laws, determine policies and determine the kind of spending the government gets to do, and my colleague has identified some key areas.

I am just looking at recommendation seven, which asks the government to work with provincial and municipal governments and service provider organizations to ensure that resettled Yazidi women and children have improved access to housing that is affordable.

I have heard mention of Toronto as being one of the places where Yazidi women have been going and we all know about the housing market there. Of course, my colleague comes from one of the hottest

housing markets in all of Canada. I wonder if she can provide some context with respect to the Government of Canada's national housing strategy and whether we could be doing more, not only for refugees but indeed for so many Canadians who are suffering through housing affordability issues and a lot of insecurity.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his kind words and for his ongoing work in his own community as well.

He raised a very important issue. Housing affordability is a major challenge across the country, I would say. The federal Liberal government back in 1993 cancelled a national affordable housing program. As a result of that, this country lost more than half a million units of affordable housing that would otherwise have been built. Imagine what our communities would look like today if we had those units.

After all these years, the Liberals say that we have a national affordable housing program. The only problem with that is that 90% of that money will not flow until after the next election. I come from the non-profit sector, and to build a housing project, even if we had the money today, it would take four or five years to get that project completed. That is the reality we face.

For the Yazidi families, for the refugee families, for Canadians who are desperate for affordable housing, how can we possibly allow for a program where the Liberals say, "Just wait a minute and after the next election, we'll get going on this," as though somehow that would address the affordable housing crisis? Come on, let us get on with it.

• (2035)

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague on the left for the passion that she has in her presentation. We see it in the committee that we work on together, at each committee meeting.

The member mentioned a number of things earlier, and housing is certainly one of them. I know she mentioned the various means by which refugees can be brought into Canada and settled here, as well. There are a lot of government refugees coming into Canada, and there are also those on the private side.

I wonder if the member could just expand. I know she has personal experience on the private side of bringing refugees into her region and other parts of Canada. I know she has spoken with them. Could the member elaborate on the importance of that program either continuing or expanding?

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Mr. Speaker, one of the things that I am so proud of is the fact that Canadians are overwhelmingly generous, compassionate to the point that, literally, when they see somebody in need of help, they would take their shirts off their backs to assist.

We saw that with the Syrian refugee initiative. In fact, even today, there are more Canadians who are waiting to sponsor a family here in Canada. The only thing that is stopping them, that is not allowing them to do this expeditiously, is the government quota.

At the committee level, witness after witness of all political stripes, Conservative, Liberal and NDP witnesses, all came to committee and called on the government to lift the quota, to allow for people to sponsor families to come to Canada. They want to do it, their hearts want to do it, and they have the financial resources to do it. The communities are 100% behind Canada in doing that.

The only piece missing in action that needs to do something around that is the government. The government needs to lift the quota on the privately sponsored refugee stream.

Mr. Matt DeCoursey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will remind my colleague opposite that the government has quadrupled the spaces for privately sponsored refugees, and we have more than doubled the total number of refugees that Canada will admit into our country in 2018. We will continue to increase that number with our multi-year immigration levels plan.

Canada will admit more refugees than any other country in the world in 2018, and that includes an additional 1,000 vulnerable women and girls. The record of the government is one of absolute leadership on the global stage when it comes to providing safe haven and refuge for some of the most vulnerable people in the world.

My question rather concerns housing. The government is proud of its housing strategy and of the affordable units that it is already building across the country. My question for my NDP colleague is, how did New Democrats plan to build any houses when they pledged to balance the budget at all costs in the 2015 election?

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Mr. Speaker, let me say this to the member who likes to say how well his government is doing. The government has done some stuff. I am not denying that. What I am saying is the government can do more on this file. Just to put it in context, let us add up all of the streams for asylum seekers and refugees, all the government's contributions to the global crisis, where there are some 70 million people in crisis at the moment.

For the government's knowledge, if we add up all of the streams, to the 70 million people in crisis who are displaced right now globally, Canada's contribution is only 0.1%. It is not that much. We can afford to do more.

On the question around housing, let me just say this. If we actually misled Canadians and went into double the deficit, which the Liberals are doing, then we would be able to commit that much more to housing as well. With that being said, that is not the real issue.

The government is now—

• (2040)

The Deputy Speaker: The time has expired for that particular round. We will now go to resuming debate.

Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Pursuant to an order made earlier today, the question is deemed put and a recorded division is deemed requested and deferred until Wednesday, December 5, immediately before the time provided for Private Members' Business.

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EMERGENCY DEBATE

[Translation]

CANADA'S OIL AND GAS SECTOR

The Deputy Speaker: The House will now proceed to the consideration of a motion to adjourn the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter requiring urgent consideration, namely Canada's oil and gas sector.

[English]

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC) moved:

That this House do now adjourn.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for St. Albert—Edmonton.

Canada's energy sector is in crisis. It is a national emergency that impacts all of Canada and disproportionately hurts Alberta and Albertans. The oil and gas sector has already lost more than 100,000 jobs and over \$100 billion since 2015 under the Liberals. That is eight times the GDP of, and more jobs than, the entire aerospace sector and five times the GDP of, and almost as many jobs as, the entire auto sector. That would rightfully be an emergency with full attention and action from any other federal government, but the response to the devastation in Alberta, in oil and gas, and on oil and gas workers and families has been a combination of empty platitudes with hostile attacks and legislation and policy that have only made things so much worse.

The ongoing and widening price differential for Canadian oil threatens to add tens of thousands more new job losses throughout 2019. Major producers with decades of history in Alberta are cancelling expansions and curtailing production, and are at risk of going bankrupt.

As recently as 2014, nine out of 10 new full-time jobs created in Canada were created in Alberta and more than 120,000 Albertans alone are out of work today. The most that the Prime Minister and the Liberals have offered is a five-and-a-half-week extension of EI benefits two years ago, which did not initially include Edmonton Bruderheim and the industrial heartland, and a “hang in there” ever since.

However, Albertans do not want EI. They just want to work and continue to be able to make their outsized contributions in the best interests of all of Canada. ATB Financial predicts that this crisis could cause a recession in Canada. The Bank of Canada already predicts no new energy investment in Canada after 2019, which will mean less money for pensions, health care, schools, social services and all governments across the country.

Over the past decade, Western Canadian Select has sold for an average of \$17 U.S. less per barrel than West Texas Intermediate. This month, the differential hit a record of around \$50 U.S., close to where it remains today. That is wreaking havoc on the industry and, by extension, on the entire Canadian economy. Every day, \$50 million to \$100 million is lost in Canada because of this differential.

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Under the Liberals, more energy investment in Canada has declined than at any other time period in more than 70 years. Capital investment in Canada is collapsing while it soars in the U.S. Energy demand and development is increasing all around the world.

At least eight major companies have sold most of their Canadian business to invest in the United States. Canadian homegrown service, supply, technology and drilling companies are going with them. Business bankruptcies in Alberta are up 27.8% between August 2017 and August 2018. Real estate vacancies and property values are dropping. It is damaging all sectors.

Even the Prime Minister in Calgary last Thursday had the gall to say, “This is very much a crisis”. However, it has been three years of a crisis for Alberta. The Prime Minister's messages to Canadians and the world and policies caused it and only make it worse. What is unconscionable is it is a direct result of federal government policies and it is within the Prime Minister and the federal government's power to fix.

The Liberals cancelled the northern gateway pipeline, which would have exported Canadian oil to Asia-Pacific. The Liberal intervention, delays and double standards imposed on the energy east pipeline proposal were designed to make its proponent abandon it, which they warned a month before that they did; yet it would have secured Canadian energy independence and exports to Europe. They have disadvantaged Canada precisely because of the decision-making of the Prime Minister, especially with regard to the U.S., which continues to not only be Canada's number one energy customer, but also Canada's number one energy competitor right now, poised to supply 80% of the world's growing oil demand in the next three years.

The Trans Mountain expansion remains stalled indefinitely because of the Liberals' failure, with no start date yet in sight for construction. The Liberals chose the longest and most complicated option, delaying it still indefinitely, even while they gave Canadian tax dollars to Kinder Morgan, which is selling out of Canada and building pipelines in the U.S., even while they give Canadian tax dollars to the Asian infrastructure bank to build pipelines in China, and even while they fund anti-energy activists and Canadian pipeline protestors with Canadian tax dollars.

• (2045)

That lack of pipeline capacity and the landlocking of Canadian oil is a direct result of federal government policies that have stopped those new export oil pipelines and have directly caused the price discount.

The Liberals are layering on red tape and added costs at the very worst time, destroying confidence in Canada for investment. The Liberals' job-killing carbon tax is already costing Canadian jobs and driving Canadian companies into the United States. Imagine this. Canada is the only one of the world's top 10 oil-producing countries to impose a carbon tax on itself, but Canada is the most responsible energy producer in the world, and has been for decades. It makes no sense for the Prime Minister to make it even more difficult for Canadian oil and gas workers to do their work, which they do better than any other energy industry on the planet.

The Liberals cancelled the oil and gas exploration drilling tax credit during a historic collapse in Canadian drilling and energy job losses. The PM directed a B.C. north coast crude oil tanker ban, which is actually a ban on pipelines and on the oil sands, within 27 days of forming government, with no consultation or science or evidence to support it. The Liberals imposed a moratorium on northern oil and gas exploration, giving the territories less than two hours' notice before the announcement.

Their new methane regulations could destroy heavy oil development and end refining in Canada by adding tens of billions of dollars to an industry already in crisis, not because industry does not want to meet the standards but because of technology and timeline challenges to do it within the framework the Liberals are demanding.

The Liberals' “no more pipelines” Bill C-69 would create a new regulatory and assessment process with actually no concrete timelines and with vague conditions for review. It would open more foreign intervention in Canadian resource reviews and give new powers to federal cabinet ministers to politically interfere in the project development process. Certainty for proponents under their new legislation will only be determined through regulations out until 2021, continuing the uncertainty they created at the start of 2016.

Bill C-86 would provide cabinet with the authority to unilaterally shut down the shipping of natural resources by water anywhere in Canada, including offshore oil and gas in Atlantic Canada and the north.

Bill C-69 would dramatically increase red tap on project development by adding a multi-month review under the Navigation Protection Act for any water on a project site that could float any kind of watercraft, including a ditch. That would hinder mining, oil and gas and agriculture.

Bill C-88 would provide cabinet with the unilateral power to shut down oil and gas development in the far north. It would take back delegated authority powers from the Northwest Territories.

The Liberals proposed fuel standards will be the first of their kind in the world, equating to a carbon tax of \$228 per tonne of fuel, to apply to industrial facilities.

This should be a concern for every Canadian, because energy is the number one private sector investor in Canada, and it is Canada's second biggest export. Canada is home to the third-largest reserves in the world, and it is the fourth-biggest exporter of energy on the planet, with a track record of responsible energy development literally second to none.

This emergency in the Canadian energy sector and the catastrophic job losses in Alberta are rippling through all sectors across all provinces. It is a national emergency.

Let me tell the House what Nancy Southern, the CEO of ATCO, says as she considers moving assets from ATCO, one of the oldest and largest privately started businesses in Alberta. She says, “How heartbreaking it is to see our wonderful resource-laden province so constrained by regulatory policy and politics of various dispositions.”

Gwyn Morgan, the founder of Encana, the largest Canadian-based energy company, which started in Alberta, said it plainly. He said what the more than 2,000 Albertans in Calgary said to the Prime Minister when he was there last week:

The past few years have been a nightmare for the Canadian industry, where every light at the end of the tunnel has turned out to be a train driven by the Prime Minister barreling at us from the opposite direction.

No wonder Albertans do not believe a single word the Prime Minister or the Liberals say. This is a national emergency, and the Liberals should be absolutely ashamed of themselves for putting our country in this position. I probably share this view with my colleagues.

I look forward to Albertans delivering their verdict in 2019 on exactly what they think of the Liberals' record.

• (2050)

Hon. Kent Hehr (Calgary Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's genuine concern for Albertan workers and their families. It is a sentiment I feel on this side of the House. However, we have to look further and deeper into this.

In 2006, we had a Harper government come to power saying that everything was going to be great and Canada was going to be an energy superpower, yet the Conservatives did not build one inch of pipeline to new markets. Also, if I look at the Conservatives' regulatory changes in 2012, which they said would allow us to move forward on energy projects, they clearly and in no uncertain terms did not work. Hence, we are here in this position today. It is why the northern gateway stalled, as well the Trans Mountain pipeline. Their process did not work.

Let us be clear. Our government is moving forward. Will the changes we are making in terms of moving forward the right way on the Trans Mountain pipeline, as well as having one project, one review going forward, not lead to more success than the failure of the decade under the Harper government?

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Mr. Speaker, I would be surprised if that is what the member's constituents are actually saying to him.

Here is the contrast between the former prime minister and the current Prime Minister. The former prime minister did say that Canada can and should be an energy superpower, and under his government, four pipelines were approved and constructed, including increasing access to the Asia-Pacific through the Anchor Loop on the existing Trans Mountain pipeline and to the Gulf Coast through the construction of Keystone.

However, what the current Prime Minister has said over and over is that he wants to phase out Canada's oil sands. In the spring, in Paris, he said that he regrets that Canada cannot get off oil tomorrow.

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As well, the northern gateway pipeline was not stalled indefinitely by some mysterious or external factors. The Prime Minister made the deliberate decision to veto that pipeline, the only stand-alone option for export to the Asia-Pacific, which had been approved under the Conservative government.

This Prime Minister had the option to extend the consultations with indigenous communities, 31 of which already supported that pipeline, with \$2-billion of equity partnerships at stake, which is all gone because of this Prime Minister's decision to cancel that northern gateway pipeline.

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my friend must know that I would be very surprised if Gwyn Morgan had given a negative assessment of the impact of pipelines.

On this side of the House, we believe that environmental assessments are a key part of any pipeline project. I do not believe my friend is a skeptic on the issue of climate change and the fact that it is actually human made. What kind of environmental assessment process does she believe would be fair, would give the true impact of a pipeline project on climate and would be consistent with the desire of this House to have an evidence-based process to move forward with a project while respecting our commitments on climate change?

• (2055)

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Mr. Speaker, we should always start this conversation about environmental stewardship in Canadian energy development based on this premise, which is the fact that for decades, Canada has been second to none in terms of environmental reviews, scientific and independent evidence-based decision-making, consultation with indigenous communities, including the incorporation of traditional knowledge, best practices and having the skill set and the world-class expertise to make independent, evidence-based decisions that also take into account the economic and environmental impacts of energy development.

Canada has a long track record of maintaining the highest standards in the world, to the point that Canada has been a model for energy-producing countries around the world. That is not just us saying that. That is experts around the world, including in two major benchmarking analyses of major oil and gas producing countries around the world. WorleyParsons came to that conclusion prior to both the last provincial and federal elections.

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I agree with my colleague that Canadians expect and demand the highest standards and regulations. As Conservatives, that was the track record of energy review and approval. However, the travesty of the Liberals' "no more pipelines" bill, Bill C-69, is a total lack of clarity around timelines, conditions and what measures proponents would need to meet. The bill is rife with political intervention and political decision-making.

While my colleague and I probably put forward different amendments on that particular legislation—

The Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate, the hon. member for St. Albert—Edmonton.

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to participate in the emergency debate on the jobs and economic crisis in my home province of Alberta, where so many people right across the province, and in my riding of St. Albert—Edmonton, are out of work or have seen their hours reduced. Many have given up hope altogether.

The Prime Minister says that he feels Albertans' frustration and anxiety. He is right that Albertans are frustrated and anxious. After all, since the Prime Minister came to office, more than 100,000 Albertans have lost their jobs. They are out of work. Tens of thousands more Albertans have seen their hours reduced and their wages reduced. Unemployment has skyrocketed in Alberta since this government came to office. The office vacancy rate in the city of Calgary, which as recently as four years ago was booming, is a staggering 28%.

As my colleague for Lakeland noted, \$100 billion of investment in the energy sector has dried up. It is gone. To put that number in perspective, \$100 billion is nearly five times the GDP of the auto sector and eight times more than the GDP of Canada's aerospace sector. While \$100 billion is extremely concerning, the fact is that it is only going to get worse.

In 2016-17, seven international energy companies sold off virtually all their western Canadian assets, a sale that equalled more than \$37 billion. That is \$37 billion taken out of western Canada. However, now not only are international companies fleeing but we are seeing Canadian companies move their assets, repositioning and refocusing, primarily to the United States, including Encana, which has 1,000 people working at its downtown Calgary head office, Baytex, and Crescent Point, just to name a few.

Yes, Albertans are frustrated. Yes, they are anxious. The Prime Minister is right to feel their frustration and their anxiety. However, if the Prime Minister wants to know the source of their frustration and anxiety, I would suggest that he look in the mirror, because he is the source of the frustration and anxiety of Albertans. It is because of his failed policies, his failure to champion Canada's energy sector and his failed leadership.

The Prime Minister talks a good game, he talks about how sympathetic he is, how much he cares and how he governs from the heart out, but the people I represent in St. Albert—Edmonton have had it up to here with the Prime Minister's words. They do not need the Prime Minister's best wishes. What they need is action. They need a plan. They need a plan to get Alberta back to work.

● (2100)

Actions speak louder than words. My colleague from Lakeland went into some detail about the actions of the Prime Minister and the fact that they, instead of helping get Albertans back to work, have contributed to Albertans being laid off.

Let us look at the failed Prime Minister's actions. The failed Prime Minister thought it was a good idea to impose a tanker ban off the northwest coast of British Columbia without any meaningful environmental or scientific assessment. The consequence of that policy choice of the Prime Minister was the cancellation of the northern gateway pipeline, a pipeline that would have got our energy to tidewater and to the Asia-Pacific market so that we would no longer be dependent on essentially a single customer, the United States, and the enormous discount that we pay as a consequence. That project would have gotten thousands of people to work and resulted in billions of dollars of investment in Canada. It is gone, it has been cancelled, all because of the failed policies of the failed Prime Minister.

Then the Prime Minister, in his infinite wisdom, decided that he was going to change the rules midway through with respect to upstream and downstream emissions. Do members know what the consequence was of that policy choice of the Prime Minister? It was the cancellation of the energy east pipeline, another pipeline to tidewater, one that would have helped Canada become less dependent on the United States, created thousands of jobs, and have resulted in billions of dollars of investment here in Canada. However, that pipeline has been cancelled and is gone, all because of the failed policies of this failed Prime Minister.

Then the failed Prime Minister decided he was going to change the rules, create a lot of regulatory uncertainty and then bring in Bill C-69, just to be sure that another pipeline would never be built. Kinder Morgan said that it had had enough and was pulling out. The Prime Minister told it not to worry, that the government would pay it \$4.5 billion so it could invest in the United States and that the government would take over the construction of the pipeline. Do members know how that has worked out? It has resulted in not one inch of pipeline being constructed. Again, more failed policies from a failed Prime Minister who, time and again, has failed to deliver.

Albertans have had enough. Canadians have had enough. My constituents and the people in Alberta who are out of work, who are in despair this evening as we speak, deserve better than the failed policies and failed leadership of the failed Prime Minister.

● (2105)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Steven MacKinnon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement and Accessibility, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague's speech.

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[English]

I have spent a lot of time in Alberta. As a Quebec MP, my constituents and I are aware of the extraordinary economic and other contributions made by Albertans to our country. We recognize that and are grateful for it. However, we know that, following the financial crisis of 2008, world oil prices plummeted. It was a precipitous drop that affected Alberta greatly and in an unfortunate way.

However, I detect a discordant note in my colleague's speech. The Albertans whom I know do not hang this on political decisions. They know that this government has made maximum efforts to get oil to new markets and to achieve innovation in the oil sector. I wonder if my colleague would perhaps like to tone down the rhetoric a bit and understand that market forces indeed weigh on this issue as much as anything.

Mr. Michael Cooper: Madam Speaker, the parliamentary secretary is entirely wrong. It is about the political choices the government has made that have contributed to \$100 billion of investment going south of the border. That is eight times the contribution to GDP of the aerospace sector and nearly five times more than that of the auto sector. It has gone south of the border, where they are cutting taxes and rolling back regulations at the same time this government is increasing taxes, increasing regulations and kicking Albertans and our energy sector when we are down.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. It is always interesting to hear his rhetoric.

It seems that all we need, according to the Conservatives, is a pipeline and the world would be a better place, and yet, the government has failed to build a pipeline because it has done exactly the same thing as the Conservatives did. They tried to rush a process that should not, and could not, be rushed. The northern gateway pipeline was quashed, not by this government, but by the courts, for rushing the process and not doing adequate consultation. On the Trans Mountain process, the Liberals did a little extra, but it was not enough. It was bad. That was quashed. TransCanada pulled out of the energy east project because it had Keystone XL, which itself was just quashed by an American judge for rushing the process. Can he not see that if we really want to have a pipeline, we need to do things right from the start?

• (2110)

Mr. Michael Cooper: Madam Speaker, I would respectfully say that if the government wants to do things right, it should stop doing what it is doing and go back to the drawing board.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member for Calgary Centre said earlier that the northern gateway pipeline was paused. My information is different, and perhaps the member could respond to that.

Second, being from British Columbia, we have seen the Prime Minister come out and hold town halls in Nanaimo. Never have I seen a prime minister say that something is in the national interest, but instead of actually going to that area, like Burnaby, where they need to explain why the Trans Mountain pipeline is in the national interest, he is anywhere but.

If the Prime Minister is really serious about this project, should he not be getting out to the places concerned and championing Albertan and Canadian know-how in our oil and gas sector?

Mr. Michael Cooper: Madam Speaker, I could not agree more with my colleague from the Okanagan. Instead, what we have is a Prime Minister who says one thing in one part of Canada and another in another part. He expresses his sympathy to Albertans without a plan. However, Albertans are not fooled by the Prime Minister. They can see exactly how his failed policies have contributed to the mess we are in today.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Before I resume the debate, I know there were some questions about where people are seated. I just want to say that during an emergency debate, members can sit in seats other than their own.

Resuming debate, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources.

Mr. Paul Lefebvre (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would begin by saying that all members share the sense of urgency about the current situation facing Albertans. When Alberta is hurting, Canada is hurting. As the Prime Minister has said, this is a crisis and not just for Albertans, not just for western Canada, but for all Canadians.

Being the member for Sudbury, I understand the natural resources sector and the highs and lows and the ebbs and tides that we see. We feel it. We have lived it many times in Sudbury. We have had the hardship of losing jobs. The economy bounces back and now we have highs and lows, but at the same time we have invested in our people, as Alberta is investing in Albertans. We see light at the end of the dark tunnel that they are in right now. That is something I share with the people from Alberta, the highs and lows of the natural resources sector.

We know that the energy sector is one of the key engines driving our economy. Our focus is on ensuring that every barrel of Alberta oil gets its full value. That is why our government has made this national issue an urgent priority. We know that when the Conservatives took office in 2006, 99% of our oil exports went to the United States. Flash forward to 2015, and 99% of our oil exports still went to the United States. The Conservatives had 10 years to expand our global markets. They failed for 10 years. We will ensure that we move forward on expanding our global markets and building pipeline capacity in the right way.

This debate gives me a chance to set the record straight on some of the things we have heard tonight and to talk about how our government has been supporting the energy sector as part of our efforts to build a better Canada, a Canada that works for everyone.

Those efforts began three years ago this month, when our government was sworn in with a clear mandate to do things differently and to do different things. In short, we have been working to build a Canada where the opportunities for each of us are as big and real, and seemingly as endless, as the land itself.

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We set out to strengthen the middle class, to build the infrastructure for a modern economy and to invest in a more prosperous, inclusive and sustainable Canada. As a result, the national economy is strong and growing. With 3% growth, Canada had the best economic performance of any G7 country last year, and it is expected to remain among the fastest growing economies this year and next.

Over the last three years, Canada has created more than 550,000 new full-time jobs, pushing the national unemployment rate to a 40-year low. We all know there is still more work to be done. We see that right now in Alberta and in our energy sector. Our government has made this issue and the issue of market access in general an urgent priority. The Line 3 pipeline approved by our government is set to come online in 2019, adding 370,000 barrels per day. That is a major boost in our pipeline capacity. We also remain committed to the Keystone XL pipeline.

Our fall economic statement last week featured tax changes, incentives, and investments to promote business confidence and enhanced competitiveness. They include new measures that will allow businesses to immediately write off the full cost of machinery and equipment used in manufacturing and processing, as well as certain clean energy equipment. We are also introducing the accelerated investment incentive to allow businesses to write off a larger share of the cost of newly acquired assets in the year they are purchased.

As well, we are investing an additional \$800 million over five years to support greater innovation throughout the economy, including \$100 million to support the forestry sector and another \$50 million in new venture capital to support clean technology firms. We are looking to accelerate investments in trade transportation corridors leading to Asia and Europe.

At the same time, we are modernizing our regulators to make it easier for companies to comply. Let us be clear: Regulations do serve an important purpose. They act as the rule book that governs how businesses must operate, and they play an essential role in protecting the health and safety of Canadians, and in safeguarding our natural environment.

We recognize that over time, regulations can grow outdated and that the burden can add up, all of which can affect Canada's standing as an attractive place to invest and do business. That is why we will encourage regulators to take into account efficiency and economic considerations, and why we are establishing an external advisory committee to look at Canada's regulatory competitiveness.

• (2115)

We believe Canadians can take on the world and win. Look at the LNG Canada's decision to proceed with its \$40 billion project on the west coast of British Columbia. This project, the single largest private sector investment in Canadian history, will create 10,000 jobs at the height of construction. It will also generate billions of dollars in new revenue for governments to spend on the things that matter most to Canadians. It will open new global markets for Canada's natural gas, displacing other fuels that emit higher levels of greenhouse gas emissions, all while creating the cleanest large scale facility of its kind in the world, proving yet again that the economy and the environment can go hand in hand.

All of this reflects what we call Canada's natural advantage. It is not just that we have an abundance of the resources the world will need for the clean growth economy, it is the expertise and the experience we have in developing them sustainably and competitively. That is a real edge. Our government is seeking to expand that advantage by concluding a series of new trade agreements with our North American partners, the European Union and the 11 other members of the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

The new NAFTA is a case in point. It will enhance our competitiveness and inspire greater investor confidence in our energy sector. For example, it removes the proportionality clause which means we have restored our sovereignty with Canada's energy resources. Administrative changes in a new NAFTA will save the oil patch more than \$60 million a year in fees and costs. There is also a side agreement on energy between Canada and the U.S. It includes a recognition of the importance of integrated energy markets, independent energy regulators, access to energy infrastructure and open trade and investment. All of this will add to our natural advantage. All of this will support a strong and dynamic energy sector.

Unfortunately, as we have heard tonight, our advantage in the energy sector is not without its challenges and its setbacks. A Federal Court of Appeal decision on the Trans Mountain expansion project has given us a moment to take stock to ensure that we are moving forward the right way on energy projects and we have developed a comprehensive response to the court's ruling: first, by instructing the National Energy Board to reconsider the effects of marine shipping related to the coast; second, by relaunching phase three consultations with indigenous groups affected by the project; and third, by appointing former Supreme Court Justice Frank Iacobucci to oversee consultations with indigenous peoples so they are meaningful and comply with the direction given by the Federal Court of Appeal.

We are also facing the worst of all perfect storms with the historic price differential for Canadian oil, a discount caused by the temporary drop in demand from refineries in the U.S. Midwest, as they undergo seasonal maintenance, combined with increasing production from the oil sands, which is welcome, and insufficient pipeline capacity for export.

This impacts companies differently, which is why we see oil patch executives divided on the right course of action. That is why we are in active discussions with stakeholders and provinces to look at all short-term options to ensure we get this right. What is certain, however, is that better market access is the long-term solution.

We are seized with that, ensuring it moves forward the right way. The Conservatives agree that there is a real need to build a pipeline to new, non-U.S. markets, but they are actively opposing legislation that would allow good projects to be reviewed in a clearer, shorter time frame.

Bill C-69 would ensure that project assessments would be done right the first time. It would remove the power of government to stop the clock on a project without reason. It would eliminate wasteful duplication that requires proponents to go through the same reviews at the federal and provincial level. It would ensure important information is shared with all Canadians, because they have the right to know the facts about important projects. All of these changes are good for businesses, good for jobs and good for the energy industry.

While the previous government failed to get the job done, we are taking decisive action and seeing results. We secured the largest private sector investment in Canadian history through the \$40 billion LNG Canada project. We are helping producers build up refining capacity right here in Canada. We know that means more value for every barrel. We announced major tax incentives in the fall economic statement for refiners and upgraders. We are moving forward in the right way, through meaningful consultations, on the Trans Mountain expansion project. We have a good trade deal for our energy sector and workers in our oil patch with the new NAFTA.

● (2120)

Over the next 10 years, there are half a trillion dollars in proposed private sector investments in the natural resources sector. In Alberta alone, that includes 102 energy projects, representing \$178 billion in new investments. These projects do not just mean development of our energy resources; they mean tens of thousands of jobs for Albertans.

Despite these reasons for optimism, we know this is a hard time and that cannot be understated. That is why, on this side of the House, we are working with Canadians to ensure we all get through this deeply difficult time. For a very long time, Alberta and Albertans have driven the Canadian economy.

Last week, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Natural Resources convened leaders in industry in Calgary to listen to their concerns and chart a way forward. In the short term, to deal with the immediate oil price differential issue, we launched a non-partisan working group of government experts from Canada, Alberta and Saskatchewan, including finance, rail and energy experts. This group has been analyzing options, including the oil-by-rail proposal that we have recently received from the Alberta government to relieve the pain being felt by so many.

I want to make it very clear that we stand with Alberta's energy sector. We have its back. This is our top priority, and we will deliver.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, I like standing ovations for a speech I can only say must have been written by the same people giving advice to the government on its Phoenix pay system, which it totally botched.

Often we will hear the Liberals saying that the previous government did not get it done, except it got the Alberta Clipper done, it got the Anchor Loop done, the basic Keystone pipeline done and the line 9 reversal done. That does not even include all the

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natural gas pipelines. In fact, the Liberals will say that the Conservatives may have gotten done some pipelines, but we did not get them to some type of water port. In fact, Alberta Clipper did just that, all the way to Cushing and then to Freeport in Texas.

Why is the government financing pipeline construction through the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank in Asia, using taxpayer dollars to finance three of them? Why are people in the suburbs of Beijing getting Canadian taxpayer dollars to finance pipelines there instead of building pipelines in Canada?

● (2125)

Mr. Paul Lefebvre: Madam Speaker, we are focused right now on our energy sector. It is in a difficult situation, and we know the reason for that is because we do not have access to new markets. We need to expand our energy sector to new markets and that is what Canadians expect. They know that continuing to flow our oil only to the United States is not a good business decision for anybody.

That is why we are focused on getting it right. The Conservatives failed because they disregarded the courts. They also think that engaging with indigenous communities is a suggestion and not a constitutional obligation. We know we have to get this right and we are working hard and ensuring we move forward in the right way.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I cannot believe what I am hearing from the Liberal side. Everybody in Canada remembers the major aspect of the Liberals' platform, that they would immediately restore the project environmental review process and the environmental laws that were eviscerated by the Harper government.

What year are we in of the Liberal government? The third year. The Liberals' one bill, Bill C-69, is still in the Senate. All those projects that have gone before them, which they have been approving, have been approved under Harper's eviscerated environmental laws and review process.

Perhaps the member can guess why so many Canadians have been opposed to major energy projects. Is it because they have lost confidence in the federal review process?

Mr. Paul Lefebvre: Madam Speaker, getting regulatory processes right is something the Canadian population expects and deserves. We are focused on to getting that right. Bill C-69 would provide one project, one review and ensure that if it were contested in court, it would withstand the court challenge.

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What was going on was that any major project going forward was being reviewed in court and was failing. We need to ensure that does not happen. I think all members of the House would agree that we need to ensure that as private businesses put their feet forward, wanting to invest in Canada, and go through the regulatory process, that it is clear, defined and they know the rules from day one. The old process did not do that. Bill C-69 would achieve that.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Mona Fortier (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for helping us understand where the government is investing and what it is working on.

Does my colleague think we can look at this situation through the lens of lessons learned in other sectors? For example, in his hometown of Sudbury, economic cycles have caused ups and downs in the mining sector. I wonder if some of the lessons learned there could apply to what is going on in the energy sector now.

Mr. Paul Lefebvre: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her great question.

The mining sector back home in Sudbury has indeed had its ups and downs. There are some very clear lessons to be learned from that. Fifty years ago, Sudbury was known as the most polluted city in Canada. There were no more trees. The fish had disappeared from two-thirds of our lakes.

Thanks to innovation, government intervention, and co-operation between the industry and the community, our industry is doing very well today. It is healthy. Three new mines will be opened in the next five years, and \$5 billion will be invested.

That being said, Alberta's energy sector is alive, but it has fallen on hard times. The mining sector in Sudbury has had its ups and downs, and there are lessons to be learned in every sector. Right now, the Alberta oil sector is innovating, and it needs to keep doing that. We will see a major change in the oil sector. It is on the right track, but we recognize that hard times do happen.

[*English*]

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, being from British Columbia, I have many relatives in Alberta. My family is originally from Alberta, so I feel very much for the people of Alberta. Every time I am there, there is a real feeling that the government has not done enough.

We see the Prime Minister embracing Premier John Horgan. The LNG project was just announced, and I am happy to see that. However, can the parliamentary secretary not put himself in the shoes of Albertans who also want to see jobs and to do things well with what they are good at in their oil and gas sector?

We saw the cancellation of the northern gateway. We even hear the member for Calgary Centre saying that the northern gateway project is just on pause. We see the cancellation by the NEB, with the assistance of the government, of the west-east pipeline.

Does the parliamentary secretary not understand that people are upset with this double standard, that somehow the Prime Minister stands by some provinces doing well and not by others? Does he not see the problem with that?

● (2130)

Mr. Paul Lefebvre: Madam Speaker, I totally understand where the member is coming from and the challenges that Albertans see in that. However, we are working really hard to ensure we move on the Trans Mountain expansion project in the right way. Actually, the minister is in B.C. right now, consulting with first nations. He has over 26 meetings over the next week. He is there right now, ensuring we move forward in the right way.

The Conservatives are proposing we use their failed approaches. However, we will not follow their lead at all. We need to move forward in the right way. The minister is there right now getting the job done.

We will see this through. We are ensuring we are doing this in the right way.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. It is my understanding that we are not supposed to point out the fact that a member is not in the House. I believe the parliamentary secretary was doing just that.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member is saying that is not what he indicated. I certainly did not hear him mention anything, so I will take him at his word.

We have time for a brief question. The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands

Mr. Steven MacKinnon: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Does that mean we should not point out the amount of people here for the emergency debate for which the Conservatives asked?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): As long as there is quorum, there is not a problem.

The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, and a brief answer please.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, the debate on oil prices in the country and the alleged crisis leaves out the fact that major oil companies in Alberta are receiving a premium because they refine and upgrade their product. Husky Oil, Imperial Oil—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind members that somebody has the floor. I would ask that they respect that. I have a hard time hearing what is being said, and the parliamentary secretary should know that as well.

The hon. member will continue with her question.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, it was hard to be heard.

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This debate is taking place on false premises, as though all of Alberta's oil sector is suffering. Those who only produce raw bitumen and want to export it as raw bitumen are having difficulties. Those who invested in upgraders and refineries, like Imperial Oil, Husky Energy and Suncor, are receiving large profits. Husky reports a 48% increase in profits. Imperial Oil's CEO Richard Kruger said, "Looking ahead, in the current challenging upstream price environment, we are uniquely positioned to benefit from widening light crude differentials." In other words, bitumen is a solid product of low value. Those companies that invested in upgraders in refineries, as was recommended by Peter Lougheed at the beginning of the development of the oil sands, are reaping large premiums.

This is not an issue about pipelines. It is an issue about public policy: good policy versus bad policy.

Mr. Paul Lefebvre: Madam Speaker, it is true. Individuals from the oil sands sector have visited Ottawa and told us that at the end of the day, we should not get involved in this situation. We should not pick winners and losers in the sense that we should not try to shut down the supply right now and we should let the market decide how that will run forward. Some people tell me not to get involved and some people say we need to do something.

In Alberta, the companies are divided on how to move forward. That is why we have struck a committee to make sure we hear all voices and ask them how to move forward together in the right way.

• (2135)

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am proud to be sharing my time with my wonderful colleague from Edmonton Strathcona.

I am happy to rise tonight to speak in this emergency debate on Canada's energy sector.

As the member for Lakeland pointed out in her intervention seeking this debate, Alberta suffered significant job losses when world oil prices collapsed four years ago, going from over \$100 a barrel in mid-2014, to less than \$30 a barrel in early 2016. Until recently, prices were steadily rebounding and world oil prices had recovered to over \$70 a barrel by the spring of 2018, only six months ago.

Some Canadian oil exports are sold at a discount to the world price because they are in the form of bitumen, which is more expensive to refine, and which only certain refineries are designed to handle. That discount is usually around \$17 or so, but it varies as certain situations affect the ability of Canadian producers to get their product to refineries. Recently, with temporary closures of refineries in the United States for maintenance that differential has increased dramatically as bitumen supplies build up in Alberta waiting for export. Today, the price of Western Canada Select is about \$50 less than that of West Texas Intermediate.

I want to mention here, as my colleague from Saanich—Gulf Islands just pointed out, that a high percentage of Canadian production of oil is not subject to this differential at all or it is not subject to the variability because the largest producers in Canada, such as Suncor, Husky and Imperial Oil, have their own refining and upgrading facilities, producing synthetic crude that sells more or less at world price. I spoke to a Suncor representative in my office just

last week. She reported that her company was doing just fine and getting a very fair price for their product.

Some estimates put the proportion of the Canadian production exposed to this differential at as little as 10%. In other words, the majority of our production is being sold at or near world price. However, the proportion exposed to this huge price differential is growing as new Canadian production comes on line and that increased production is competing for a constrained refinery in pipeline space.

There is a pipeline expansion project under way right now, Line 3, which would take Alberta oil to Wisconsin. I had the pipeline industry representatives in my office a couple of weeks ago and they confirmed that Line 3 would be fully functional by next fall and would fix that differential price problem.

The Conservatives of course are blaming the Liberals for all the other pipelines that have not been built. We heard about them tonight: northern gateway, energy east, Trans Mountain. At the same time, the Liberals are blaming the Conservatives. Well, as I have said before in this place, they are both right.

Why did these other pipelines not get built? They did not get built because the Conservatives rushed the process through. They gutted environmental protections at the direction of oil producers. My colleague from Edmonton Strathcona used a better word, "eviscerate", but gutted means the same thing. They gutted the environmental impact assessment process, the Fisheries Act and the Navigable Waters Protection Act.

Then they doubled down and called all persons concerned about the environment enemies of the state or foreign-funded radicals. I still hear that rhetoric here in this place. That made a whole generation of Canadians sit up and take notice and take sides. The debate has now become completely polarized.

In the last election, both the Liberals and the NDP ran on a platform to fix the NEB assessment process and repeal the damaging changes done to those environmental protections. Unfortunately, the Liberals were elected and immediately went back on that election promise.

The northern gateway pipeline approvals were quashed by the courts because of the flawed consultation process and the Liberals wisely chose not to try to fix that deeply compromised project. Instead, they concocted a quick fix of a ministerial panel that toured the route of the Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain pipeline, a tour done on very short notice to communities.

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Bureaucrats were sent out to consult with indigenous governments but, as we found out later, only took notes of the concerns that the communities had and made no attempt at all to accommodate those concerns. In fact, they apparently thought they had no power to change the decision of the NEB with regard to Trans Mountain. Considering that the decision to go ahead with Trans Mountain had already been made before those consultations took place, it is not surprising that the bureaucrats thought they had no power or reason to change things.

• (2140)

The Liberals went on to approve the Trans Mountain expansion and they liked it so much they bought it, or at least they bought the 65-year-old pipeline for \$4.5 billion. The expansion will cost us \$10 billion on top of that of course.

Just as the sale was finalized, in fact only minutes later, the Federal Court of Appeal quashed the approvals of the Trans Mountain pipeline for exactly the same reasons that the approvals for northern gateway were quashed.

Again, the Conservatives blamed the Liberals for not getting the project going, but to be fair to the Liberals, they were only doing exactly what the Conservatives did before them. They were rushing a process that could not and should not be rushed.

Here we are three years after the election back at square one with no pipelines built. As more and more oil sands projects are built in Alberta the volume of bitumen needing to be shipped rises. When refineries are temporarily shut down for maintenance or when pipelines are turned off to fix leaks, the surplus of oil in Alberta tank farms grows and the price drops.

What can be done to boost the price for the increasing volumes of Canadian bitumen? In the short term the Government of Alberta could tell the producers to cut back on production, and I hear Jason Kenny is suggesting that. The irony of such a champion of the free market pleading for direct government intervention in the market is quite stark. There are concerns I have heard that such an intervention would raise questions of meddling in international trade. Maybe the U.S. would label Canada as a non-market country.

The Alberta government is looking at buying more oil cars for trains to American refineries. That might help out in the mid-term after a few months but it would not provide immediate relief. By the time extra railcars were available, refinery capacity will likely be restored and the price discount will disappear.

As I mentioned before, the Line 3 expansion will come on line next year and solve the problem then. We could build more refineries and upgraders. That not only would produce oil that we could sell at world prices but it would reduce the amount of volume we would need in those pipelines because it takes much less volume to ship upgraded or refined oil than bitumen which has to be diluted.

The real solutions are long-term ones. For one thing, we would have to restore public confidence in the energy regulation process and the environmental impact assessment process in Canada.

Pollster Nick Nanos found that only 2% of Canadians had high confidence in those processes after years of cutbacks and gutting of

regulations. The way forward, he found, is through giving more voice to communities and indigenous peoples.

We should also step back and look at the world situation. Last June, I went to Argentina with the then minister of natural resources to the G20 energy meetings. The theme of the meetings was the grand transition to low carbon.

China's minister talked about huge investments in renewable energy infrastructure. He made bold predictions about the future of electric vehicles around the globe, vehicles that China is manufacturing in rapidly increasing numbers. He talked about shifting from coal directly to renewables, bypassing natural gas as an intermediate source of electricity. The U.K. minister talked about creating hundreds of thousands of jobs in the clean energy sector, "having your cake and eating it too", as he said. Canada's minister talked about buying an old pipeline.

If we want to create good, stable jobs in the Canadian energy sector, we can do that. We can do that through investments in the clean energy sector. A new study on the opportunities in energy efficiency, opportunities that include deep retrofits of large buildings across the country, shows that the energy efficiency economy alone is worth \$54 billion every year in Canada. That is 3% of our GDP.

If we provide the right incentives and the right investments, we could create tens of thousands of jobs in Canada, good jobs in every community of this country, and that is just in energy efficiency. We could create just as many jobs in renewable energy; jobs for electricians, welders, construction workers and more; jobs that would last without a boom and a bust; jobs that would create a clean future for our children.

Let us learn from this emergency, this crisis. Let us take the long view and take the sure path to prosperity.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is striking to me how the NDP in Alberta have tried to reposition themselves as champions of pipelines when in reality we see consistent opposition from the NDP here to the kinds of infrastructure that would actually allow us to get our resources to market.

Why do the NDP not support energy east? Are those members in favour of Saudi oil coming into Canada? Are they in favour of us buying Saudi oil instead of moving Canadian oil to the east coast?

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• (2145)

Mr. Richard Cannings: Madam Speaker, to correct the member about Saudi oil, the vast majority, or two-thirds, of the oil we import into Canada comes from the United States. Energy east was a TransCanada pipeline project. TransCanada abandoned it not because of any concerns about how it might proceed, but because the company had just received an okay from President Trump to go ahead with the Keystone XL project. It only had enough contracts to fill one pipeline. Therefore, it would be a waste of its good private enterprise money to go ahead with two pipelines, so it cancelled energy east.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I am thankful to my hon. colleague from South Okanagan—West Kootenay for being in the House and giving a sensible speech.

I would like to pursue the matter of the market for our products. Why do we persist in thinking the only market for Canadian bitumen is to ship it to other countries? It is baffling, because we import 700,000 barrels of oil a day to eastern Canada.

To correct my hon. colleague on the Conservative benches, if energy east had been built, it would not have taken diluted bitumen to be processed in refineries in Atlantic Canada, because there are no refineries in Atlantic Canada that process bitumen. None of them have upgraders. Irving Oil specifically said it did not intend to build an upgrader. Irving Oil is the only refinery in this country that processes Saudi oil because it is the cheapest. As long as it remains the cheapest, that is what the Irvings will do.

I want to ask my hon. colleague if he does not think there is a market in Canada for upgrading and refining Alberta bitumen, then brand it as “Fort Mac Strong”, sell it across this country, and no one would put Saudi oil in their tank.

Mr. Richard Cannings: Madam Speaker, the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands is right. I am on the natural resources committee. We had Irving before us a year ago or so. I asked its representatives point blank that if energy east were at tidewater in New Brunswick, would it build those refineries or upgraders. They said they did not know, that it would depend on the world market situation.

Therefore, yes, I think that building refineries and upgraders in Canada would solve several problems. It would create jobs. If we want to create jobs in Alberta, that is a great way to do it. If the government wanted to spend \$4.5 billion helping the oil industry, if that is really what it wanted to do, then it might want to put government money into building an upgraded refinery. It could provide incentives for companies to do just that. It would not only allow us to sell our own oil at world prices, but also to ship it in volume in the pipelines, because it is only half the volume of the bitumen that we ship.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, given the intervention by the member from the NDP today, I am curious if he can speak to how important it is to diversify our markets so that we are not putting all of our eggs in one basket so to speak, but would have the opportunity to ensure there are other forces driving the economy in a particular region of the country, and

how important that would be to the longevity and sustainability of economies in various different parts of the country.

Mr. Richard Cannings: Madam Speaker, I would direct the member to perhaps read some of the articles in the oil industry magazines. There is one in the Alberta Oil magazine that clearly states the best market for our oil is not Asia, not China, but California. That is where we would get the best price now and for the foreseeable future. California has refineries that deal with our kind of oil. The state gets its oil from Mexico, California and Alaska. All of those producers are declining gradually, so there is refinery space. That is where we want to ship it. If we built the Trans Mountain expansion today to tidewater, that is where the bulk of that oil would go.

• (2150)

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, indeed, Alberta, our country and the planet are facing an emergency. It is called climate change. I have not noticed the members who prompted this debate mention that at all, though it is part of the struggle that Alberta has in producing a profitable product. As much as they like to malign the current premier of Alberta, she has taken great measures to address that emergency at the same time as trying to develop a resource economy in Alberta. That is something the previous Conservative government did not, so there is a lot of catching up to do.

One of the arguments given for holding the emergency debate on crisis being faced in Alberta is the widening price differential. The Conservatives would like us to believe that the failure to build pipelines to tidewater is the only reason for the decline in the financial return for Alberta bitumen. They fail to mention that the additional barriers producers face include the lengthy and costly process involved in extracting and processing bitumen. In fact, the bitumen must first be upgraded and then refined before it can be used as gasoline or jet fuel, and that accounts for a good part of the discount.

Other suppliers, such as those of fracked oil in the United States, do not face these hurdles. The obvious question then is, as my colleague asked, why are we not upgrading and refining more of the bitumen in Canada? As the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands has reminded us, companies that have invested in upgrading and refining bitumen continue to make profits.

We also have to remember that one of the greatest barriers to getting public and indigenous support for these pipelines is that in order to send the bitumen by pipeline, we have to add dilbit, a carcinogenic product that many are concerned will pose great risk to the waters along these pipelines' routes.

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To her credit, Premier Notley has helped to finance the building of a new refinery in Alberta. What could the federal government do? It could help finance refineries as a start. We have not heard anything in any of the budgets since the Liberals came to power about the possibility of helping the refining and upgrading of the product in Canada, which would help the government and Albertans gain more money for their coffers.

Another way is via the federal government's approval of exports. I often raised this question, which seems obvious to me. What would happen if the National Energy Board—one day soon, maybe, to become the Canadian energy regulator—imposed a requirement that a certain percentage of the raw product must be upgraded or refined as a condition of export approval? It has those powers. It can impose conditions. It imposes conditions on projects all the time. It is a puzzle. If the companies are not willing to step forward and make that investment, perhaps that is something the federal government could start doing through its new Canadian energy regulator. That would create jobs in Canada, as many have said tonight, and higher returns for Albertan owners of the upgraded product.

Second, the United States has been producing massive amounts from fracking. There is just not the same demand for Canadian product, and there is oversupply from many producers as well.

Then there is the question of the business case to build a pipeline and to pay to ship the product. Pipeline builders prefer to get contracts for at least 50% of the capacity for 15 to 20 years, but some potential buyers, like China, prefer shorter-term commitments. As one venture capital analyst has said: “Energy is a commodity business where cost is king”. Now that Canadians own a pipeline, it appears reasonable that some are asking to see those contracts. Certainly the people of Alberta and Canada deserve transparency, and what about the workers?

Why have recent export pipelines not been supported or approved? As my very informed colleague has said, Stephen Harper's government eviscerated the pipeline review process. I find it remarkable that every day in the House the Conservative members castigate the Liberals for not having approved the Trans Mountain pipeline when in fact they, the Conservatives, completely eviscerated it. The Conservatives got so frustrated that they could not get these projects built, there are some rumours about some potential buyers of the product asking why it takes so long to approve a pipeline.

• (2155)

Almost overnight, or over several years as a result of budget bills with very limited opportunity for consultation and discussion, the Conservatives completely eviscerated the federal review process and environmental legislation. It is really rather incredible that the Conservatives would sit here and say that they had nothing to do with that, that they could have fast-tracked all of the pipelines.

What happened when the Conservatives did that? As my colleague said, that is where the demonstrations against all pipelines came from. It was because they excluded the right of concerned communities and concerned indigenous governments to genuinely participate in the revenue.

When the gateway pipeline was turned down, former prime minister Stephen Harper turned to a consultant, Mr. Douglas Eyford.

He asked what had to be done to get these projects built. Mr. Eyford met with all of the first nations and carefully examined the issues and asked how to get the western energy projects built.

He recommended four things: sustained engagement with aboriginal communities to build effective relationships; recognition that aboriginal communities view natural resource development as linked to a broader reconciliation agenda; recognition that support would only come for natural resource development if that development were undertaken in environmentally sustainable ways; and ensuring that those projects would help to improve the socio-economic conditions of aboriginal communities. In his words, “progress requires leadership, commitment, and action by governments, Aboriginal communities, and industry”.

What did the Harper government do? As I mentioned, instead of trying to settle the land claims and having genuine consultation and accommodation, it eviscerated via two budget bills all of the environmental laws, excluding the right not only of the indigenous communities but also anyone concerned to participate effectively in the reviews.

Then, the Conservatives promised that they would impose greenhouse gas conditions on all sectors. Guess what sector they never got around to regulating? Oil and gas. This, as I mentioned, resulted in widespread opposition to every federally regulated pipeline, energy east, the northern gateway, and Trans Mountain. No pipelines were approved.

Then along came the Liberals. During the election they promised exactly what my party promised, that they would immediately undo what the Stephen Harper government did to environmental law in Canada and to the environmental review process. They promised to restore all of those environmental laws expeditiously.

As has been mentioned, three years into their term, all of those laws still exist. Equally horrifying, we learned at committee when reviewing Bill C-69 that not only will those projects go through the old, eviscerated NEB process, but any other project that is already before the review body.

Even if the Liberals finally pass their Bill C-69, all of these projects will still be reviewed by Stephen Harper's eviscerated process. Bill C-69, by the way, does not give any specific rights to participate, to table evidence and to cross examine. It is a vacuous bill, although some parts of it may be an improvement.

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If the Liberals had listened to us or had done what they promised, they could have had a pipeline or two approved by now, because they would have actually shown the necessary respect for first nations, met the proper constitutional requirements for consultation and accommodation, and looked at the impacts under the Species at Risk Act, but now they have to start at zero again.

Is rail the answer? Please, no. I know that the premier of Alberta is desperate and is looking for every possible solution. I tabled a bill in the House that would amend the federal assessment law to ensure that we review the rail shipping of bitumen, just as a pipeline has to be reviewed.

It is an absolutely reprehensible to propose the use of rail. Everyone in this place knows that it is more dangerous and risky.

And where is the federal money for a just transition?

• (2200)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I do want to remind members that I have a timer in front of me, and I can tell very well when the time is up. I also want to remind members that until we ask for questions and comments, members should be listening to what is being said so they can ask their questions.

Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciate that very gentle rebuke.

We sat here listening to rhetoric tonight for the last 10 minutes and we did not hear once about the workers. Tonight's emergency debate is about the 100,000 workers who have been laid off from this sector and we did not hear anything about the workers. We heard a rant against a former government, a rant against the current government, nothing about any workers.

I took a cab tonight to a meeting on the far side of Ottawa. I met a young man driving that cab and asked him how long he had been in Ottawa. He told me it was just a few weeks. I asked where he had come from and he told me Toronto. I asked if he had been in Toronto long. He said no, he had come from Calgary. He said that he came from Africa as an engineer to work in an oil company as an engineer. He was laid off shortly after that. He said, given what the government is doing now, he sees zero hope that there is going to be another pipeline built. Bill C-69 is going to put the screws to men like him.

My constituency depends on the energy sector. China, India, the world wants the energy we have and the government is putting roadblocks in front of them. The member who spoke has not mentioned the workers once, the people of her province. Shame on her.

Ms. Linda Duncan: Madam Speaker, the ones who have denied the workers are the former Conservatives and the current Liberals. They are the ones who have caused the pipelines not to be built. They are the ones who have not stood up to ask why corporations are not upgrading and refining this product in Canada, which would create a lot of jobs for super added value. Where were they when people were calling for jobs in refineries? They were doing absolutely nothing. Where were they and where are the Liberals today in putting the investment in for a just transition? Do they never talk to the oil field workers? Workers want to be trained in both fields, yet the government invested nothing in that just transition.

Mr. Ron McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the hon. member asks why do we not upgrade our product instead of shipping it as diluted bitumen. I suggest that if private industry could see the ROI in doing such, they would do that. I would ask if the hon. member—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. I would ask members to respect those who are standing up to ask questions. Members may not like the question or the comment, but if not, they should get up at their turn and ask for questions and comments. That applies for every single member in the House.

The hon. member for Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam.

Mr. Ron McKinnon: Madam Speaker, my question is that if private interests do not seem to see the ROI in doing such an upgrade or building such infrastructure, is the member encouraging the federal government to invest in upgrading infrastructure?

Ms. Linda Duncan: Madam Speaker, I thought I was quite clear about that. The federal government has a lot of potential power to save the industry. Liberals are taking a resource that is owned by the people of Alberta and choosing not to refine or upgrade it, which would create a lot more employment for the people of Canada. What are the Liberals going to do? Buy every pipeline, buy every upgrader, buy the bitumen mines? Liberals can use their regulatory power, assert some authority and create some jobs for value added in Canada.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I want to return to my friend's comments on the environmental assessment process. She and I have in common that we were environmental lawyers for a long time.

My recollection is that only two projects in the history of Canada were ever turned down under the old process: Fish Lake, Taseko Mines and the Digby Neck Quarry in Nova Scotia. It was actually a good process that was destroyed in 2012. The Harper Conservatives thought that the environmental assessment process slowed down projects.

I want to know if the member agrees with me that the old process worked to improve projects as an aspect of planning.

• (2205)

Ms. Linda Duncan: Madam Speaker, the hon. member is 100% right. If the Conservative government had not downgraded that process, it probably could have proceeded through a process that was generally considered to be a credible, useful process right around the world. Instead, Conservatives eviscerated the process and they caused all the downturn in the economy.

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Mr. Randy Boissonnault (Edmonton Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is critical for members of the House of Commons in November of 2018 to be holding this emergency debate on Canada's energy sector. We are in the midst of dealing with serious headwinds facing the industry, highlighted by unprecedented price differentials on western Canadian oil.

As the Prime Minister has said, it is a crisis and it is taking its toll not just in Alberta but across the country. It is weighing heavily on hard-working Canadians and their anxious families, hurting communities, costing governments, including this one and the Government of Alberta, much-needed revenues, and dashing opportunities and dreams.

Unfortunately, this situation is born out of a perfect storm: a million barrels of U.S. refining capacity shut down due to maintenance just as new projects have been coming online in the Alberta oil sands, something we want to see more of, but which has created a high supply of crude at a time when there is less capacity to refine and, without a doubt, lack of pipeline capacity for export. The result is a price differential that is causing great uncertainty, great angst and deep frustration on the heels of several difficult years of low oil prices. As the caucus chair for Alberta on the government side, I know this pain, I feel this pain. It is in my own family.

There are 50,000 engineers out of work in Calgary. There are 12 million square feet of vacant downtown office space in Calgary. That is more than all of the office space in Vancouver. It will take 15 years for the city to recover from that. That is pain that we feel as Albertans and we feel on this side of the House.

It has left many families feeling unsure about their futures, unsure how they will make ends meet, including members of my own immediate and extended family. People who I talk to at their doors wonder what their next job will look like, where it will be and what they will have to do to hold that job.

[Translation]

This is not some abstract matter that I read about in the news. This affects me personally in a profound way, as it does my colleagues on this side of the House. Communities are gripped by anxiety. It is affecting Alberta, local businesses and the entire country. We continue to feel the effects of this slowdown and the consequences of our inability to benefit fully from our resources.

[English]

Just as world prices are beginning to recover, Alberta finds itself facing an unacceptable increased discount on our oil resources. Albertans are angry and worried. We are fed up. I am fed up and so are my colleagues on this side of the House. Our message is clear tonight. The status quo cannot continue. We cannot stand idly by while oil that belongs to Canadians is being sold at bargain basement prices.

Nobody wants their commodity to be sold at 15% to 25% of its value and that is what we are experiencing right now, today, in this country because we have one market and this country was locked into one market through 10 years of failure of the Conservative government under Stephen Harper. That is why our government is working with Alberta and Saskatchewan through our working group to review options that could help relieve the pain being felt by so

many. We are seized by this issue and looking at every single possible option on the table, including solutions to get this situation resolved. However, make no mistake, our ultimate goal is to make sure that every barrel of Alberta oil receives its full value.

There is some good news on the horizon. We know that next year Line 3 pipeline, approved by our government, will add 370,000 barrels per day in capacity.

● (2210)

[Translation]

We know that the four U.S. refineries that had been closed since October have now reopened.

[English]

That will start to ease the differential. It is why our government has given such priority to this issue and to making sure that market forces prevail.

The good news is that we are not starting from scratch with these efforts; in fact, just the opposite. When our government came into office, we understood there was an issue of market access. We recognized that, after 10 years of the Harper government, nothing had changed.

When the Conservatives started in government in 2006, 99% of Canadian oil went to the United States. When they finished in government in 2015, 99% of Canadian oil was still heading to our greatest and best customer, until it was no longer our greatest and best customer. We realized we had to start getting pipelines built to tidewater. We also realized that their plan, which failed to take into account indigenous needs, failed to take into the environment and failed to consult properly, would not be a plan to follow.

Members will remember that standing in our way as Canadians was a waning public confidence in the way major resource projects were being reviewed. Canadians knew that the Conservatives brought in a new system that cut corners, shirked our responsibility to meaningfully consult with indigenous peoples and short-circuited steps required to protect the environment. Therefore, we set about rebuilding Canadians' trust in the impact assessments, improving transparency and enhancing public participation throughout the review process.

We started with extensive public consultations. We appointed two expert panels and we reviewed findings from two parliamentary studies. We listened to Canadians, we heard them and we acted. Why did we have to do this? It was because of 10 years of inaction by the Harper government. The Conservatives' approach failed through disregarding indigenous needs, they were quashed in the courts and they failed to take into account the basic protections for our environment.

The Conservatives had 10 years to expand to markets other than the United States, and they failed for 10 years. Our government will ensure that we are moving forward on expanding to global markets by building pipeline capacity in the right way. That is why the decision to invest \$4.5 billion in the Trans Mountain pipeline was the right one.

I can tell members that one of the proudest moments I have had as an Edmonton Liberal in this government was the day that this government, led by the Prime Minister, decided that making a \$4.5-billion investment was the right decision for the future of Albertans and Canadians, and a strategic and sound investment in our collective future. It was the right decision to find a cost-effective and safe way for us to get resources to international markets then and it still is today.

I will take this opportunity to take out a few myths that are very convenient and very pervasive on the Conservative side of the House and bust them.

Let us talk about the northern gateway pipeline. The Federal Court of Appeal overturned that government's approval of that Enbridge pipeline on the grounds that the Crown failed to properly consult first nations communities. It said that:

We find that Canada offered only a brief, hurried and inadequate opportunity...to exchange and discuss information and to dialogue...It would have taken [Canada] little time and little...effort to engage in meaningful dialogue...But this did not happen.

It is simply shocking, but that is how we got to being no closer to international markets after 10 years of Harper policies.

The second myth is that the decision of TransCanada to pull the energy east pipeline was something other than a business decision based on pure economics that are very simple for people to understand. How do I know this? I met the CEO of TransCanada Corporation on May 27, 2017, in this very building, upstairs in the dining room. The then minister of infrastructure and communities, the member of Parliament for Edmonton Mill Woods, was at the same dinner.

During coffee, I looked at Russ Girling and said, "Mr. Girling, what happens if the United States administration approves Keystone XL?" He looked at me and said, "Randy, if that happens I have to shutter energy east". I said, "Tell me why?" He said, "Because there isn't enough supply in Canada to properly run two pipelines". I said, "So what does that mean?" He said, "I have to make sure energy east never goes to the NEB. I have to get my shippers to remove their oil contracts with energy east and get them over to Keystone XL, because the company will not be able to cash flow energy east".

What happened within three months of that conversation? The U.S. administration approved Keystone XL.

● (2215)

Energy east was never sent to the National Energy Board. In fact, within a month, he was asking the Alberta government and all of his other suppliers to move capacity from the energy east project to the Keystone XL pipeline. Let us make no mistake about it, our government was prepared to work with TCPL every step of the way, through the interim principles, to see its project. We did not pull the

project from the NEB; the corporation did, for pure and simple economics.

The Conservatives may not like to play from an economic playbook. In fact, if we look at their debt ratio and we look at their horrible management of the economy for 10 years, I can understand why a simple economics lesson is lost on that side of the House. However, on our side, simple economics, complex economics make sense. It is why this government has invested \$4.5 billion in a pipeline to get us to new markets.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: That is really complex economics there, really complex.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order, please. I want to remind members, if they have something to say, comments or questions, they may want to jot them down so they do not forget them when they get up for questions and comments.

The hon. member for Edmonton Centre.

Mr. Randy Boissonnault: Madam Speaker, I appreciate memory lapses on the part of the people on the other side. On this side, we are going to continue with our defence of Canadian workers in the energy sector.

Despite the empty rhetoric and talking points we hear from the Conservatives, our approach will help to diversify Canada's energy markets by ensuring that good resource projects get built in a timely, responsible and transparent way.

That is why the government and my friend, the Minister of Natural Resources, the member of Parliament for Edmonton Mill Woods, have developed a comprehensive response to the Federal Court's ruling, by instructing the National Energy Board to reconsider the effects of marine shipping related to the project and to report back by February, by relaunching phase 3 consultations with indigenous communities affected by the project, work that the minister has been conducting over the last weeks and that he will continue to do.

Let us be clear. We have to respect all of our legal and constitutional obligations in that we have to take into account environmental considerations. We have to ensure that our consultations are meaningful, that we make accommodations and that we work with indigenous peoples in the communities along pipeline lines to ensure the build is respectful and meets their needs. This is a direct part of our program and our project to ensure Alberta resources can get to new markets.

We see our support for the energy sector in the new USMCA agreement, which features significant gains for Canada's energy sector, an agreement that enhances our competitiveness and inspires greater investor confidence. It is an agreement that removes NAFTA's proportionality clause and restores Canada's sovereignty over our own energy resources.

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The side agreement on energy between Canada and the United States recognizes the importance of integrating North American energy markets based on open trade investment, commits our two countries to supporting North American energy competitiveness, security and independence, requires independent energy regulators and prohibits discriminatory or preferential access to energy infrastructure.

It is important to pause and understand where some of the elements in the fall economic statement came from. When the Prime Minister met in the recent past with members of the oil sector, executives, he asked a very simple question. He asked them what they needed from the federal to help them get their product to market. It was very clear. They asked him to get them a pipe to tidewater that would get them to customers other than the U.S. and get them accelerated capital cost allowance so they could build and ensure they were able to recoup their capital costs before they started to pay royalties.

What have we done? What has the Prime Minister led this government to do? The \$4.5 billion investment in the TMX pipeline is producing \$300 million a year right now. Should we be able to do exactly the plan we are following in the right way, it could be three times that amount going through that pipe on an annual basis, which would be \$900 million going to new markets. The \$14.7 billion in accelerated capital cost allowance in the fall economic statement is exactly what oil executives have asked a Liberal government in Ottawa to do.

That is like a Liberal government in the 1970s, when there was a Liberal government in Ontario and a Peter Lougheed-led government in Alberta that decided to create Syncrude, which decided to be innovative and take this new stuff out of the ground, known as oil sands, and figure out how to separate it and get it to the world. Syncrude was led by a federal Liberal government, an Ontario Liberal government and a Conservative government led by Peter Lougheed. That was the kind of leadership we saw in the 1970s, and it is the kind of leadership we see again in 2018.

● (2220)

[*Translation*]

Once again, we have listened and taken action. We have offered an accelerated investment incentive that lets businesses immediately write off the full cost of machinery and equipment used in manufacturing and processing, as well as all clean energy equipment.

We have also promised to modernize federal regulations, because we understand that the regulatory burden can add up over time. The fall economic statement proposes to eliminate obsolete regulatory requirements, making Canada a more attractive place to invest.

[*English*]

This includes encouraging regulators to take into account efficiency and economic considerations. How will we do this? An annual modernization bill to keep regulations up to date, an external advisory committee to look at Canada's regulatory competitiveness, a centre for regulatory innovation and immediate action to a number of business recommendations.

As well, to boost trade overseas, our government is proposing to accelerate investments in trade transportation corridors, leading to

Asia and Europe. Just yesterday I had the honour to join the Minister of International Trade Diversification in my own home city of Edmonton, as we announced a new e-hub logistics centre at the Edmonton International Airport. This is another example of how this government is not only working to meet the needs of energy sector workers, but diversifying our economy so we can be a global hub in centres across the country for global commerce. That is leadership, that is innovation and that is exactly why we, on this side of the House, are working to improve the lives of Canadians.

I was a management consultant before I came to this place. This place has a lot of process. I am in the Parliament of Canada not to spend endless hours on process, but to deliver results. I have nieces and nephews who are now 17, 15 and soon to be 11. When they ask me what I do, I ask them if they watch me on TV. They tell me not for too long because it looks a little boring. I told them that in a nutshell, we were making decisions now to make things better for them in the future, so when they were finished school, they could decide if they wanted to go into the trades, or go to northern Alberta Institute of Technology and become a broadcaster, or to go into the oil patch or be a Ph.D. in neurophysics.

Our whole purpose on this side is to make the lives of Canadians better and that includes the hundred thousand Albertans who lost their livelihoods in the 2008 downturn.

Our country is doing well. We are leading the G7. However, 12% of the population, 16% of the GDP, is still hurting. While we have five out of six cylinders firing in the country, with our plan and our project and the work of this part of the government, we will ensure that all cylinders are firing in the country, and that Albertans and Canadians get back to work.

At the end of the day, when I talk to my niece and nephews 10 years from now and they ask me if I am proud of my time in the House of Commons, I will tell them "We got the work done. We transformed the energy sector. We kept our promises." That day I know I will be proud not only of my work but of every member on this side of the House.

● (2225)

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is no wonder Alberta is in a crisis right now. We have a former Liberal cabinet minister, the MP representing the heart of our oil industry in Calgary, commenting earlier that northern gateway was merely on pause, when in fact the Liberal government killed it. We have the member for Edmonton Strathcona going on and on about the virtues of refining in Alberta, when the results are it is the lowest value add. The extraction and the pipelines is the highest value add of anything going on, not refining.

Now we have the member for Edmonton Centre, the same one who stood in the House and voted with the government to kill northern gateway; the same one who voted for a job-killing carbon tax; the same one who voted to end tankers off the B.C. coast, effectively stopping a future northern gateway; and the same one who is with a government that has appointed radical anti-Alberta activists to senior advisory roles in the ministry of natural resources.

My question is about Bill C-69, which the member for Edmonton Centre previously supported. It has been called “the bill to end all pipelines”. If the goal is to curtail oil and gas production and have no more pipelines built, this legislation has hit its mark.

I would like to ask the member to stand in the House, face the camera and tell the people of Edmonton and Alberta that he will not support Bill C-69, that he will support Albertans instead.

Mr. Randy Boissonnault: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the hon. member's colourful remarks and a recap of my record, for which I am very proud. I said that I am here to deliver results, and that is exactly what we are going to be doing.

Let us talk about the fact that when we respect indigenous peoples, when we work with environmentalists, when we work proponents to ensure their projects can pass in a timely manner, that is how we accelerate the work of getting projects to market. On this side, we are not just working to ensure we can get TMX built. We want to ensure there is a process in place that can allow many more pipes to be constructed under our watch. That makes me very proud.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in what imaginary world did any of those things happen under the Liberals' watch? During the election, they promised they would redo the Trans Mountain Kinder Morgan pipeline and did not. They added on this funny ministerial panel, which said to the government that there were six pieces of work undone, all of which were barriers to the project. The Liberals chose to do none of them. Then the courts told them they failed in all the things the member just said, things like indigenous consent, environmental assessment and protecting endangered orca. They failed all those things and the court said so. The bragging on the other side of the House does not make any sense.

Now we are doing a court ordered new review, where people have to make their submissions by fax machine. Who owns a fax machine? In what world is this part of the government's innovation agenda? It is crazy. There is still no climate change considered and there is still no cross-examination of evidence, so there is no basis for the expansion of the project that risks our coasts. The process is certainly not in place. Could the member explain himself?

Mr. Randy Boissonnault: Mr. Speaker, I respect the hon. member's passion on this issue. There are \$1.5 billion for ocean protection and \$165 million to protect the whales. The interim principles framework that the Minister of Natural Resources put in place was commented on favourably by the Federal Court of Appeal.

It is true that we have more work to do on consultations, and we are owning that. That work is being done now and is being done in the right way. We have engaged the services of retired Supreme Court Justice Frank Iacobucci. He has recently reported to the Prime Minister. We are focused on getting TMX built in the right way. Let

us be clear. The emissions from that expansion are built into the climate change framework.

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to pick up where my colleague from Edmonton West left off, because there was no clear answer from the member for Edmonton Centre with respect to Bill C-69, which will do what Gerry Butts has long fantasized about, and that is to keep Alberta energy in the ground.

Could the hon. member explain how the standing process for the energy regulator will enhance certainty, when it opens it up to foreign interests and anti-oil sands activists by removing the requirement that in order to make a submission to the national energy regulator, one must be directly impacted or have knowledge with respect the project? How does that add certainty?

● (2230)

Mr. Randy Boissonnault: Mr. Speaker, despite all the respect the hon. member is due, he is wrong. When I have more time in the House, I will come back and take head-on the boots and suits arguments that Conservative-funded lobbyists are lobbying at our side to try to scare the industry sector and Canadians that somehow protecting the environment, getting projects built in a timely manner and ensuring companies save money is a bad way to do business. Bill C-69 would modernize the NEB and would ensure that projects in the country would get built in a timely manner.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the issue we face right now is a matter of where we are able to sell our product. The reality of the situation is that in 2006, when Stephen Harper came into power, 99% of the oil in Canada was sold to the U.S. When he left in 2015, it was still 99% of the oil being sold to the U.S. That is the fundamental problem here. To somehow try to pin this on this government is absolutely ludicrous.

I am wondering if the member for Calgary can comment on the fact that for 10 years there was an inability to get anything built to get oil to a new market.

Mr. Randy Boissonnault: Mr. Speaker, despite the fact that the Calgary Stampeders won the cup, I remain from Edmonton. I am the member for Edmonton Centre.

I can say very clearly that our government is cleaning up a mess which the other side left us. We are doing so by working with indigenous peoples, by making sure that we protect the environment, by following a very clear path that the Federal Court laid out for us.

We inherited 99% of our product going to the U.S. We are going to work in the right way to see new markets opened for Alberta oil.

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Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that member spoke about Syncrude and its great track record in the 1970s and 1980s. My grandfather was working for Syncrude at the time and he sure remembers the national energy program better than that member does.

What is really sad about this is that the member is sacrificing the interests of his own constituents and his province on the altar of his cabinet ambitions.

He voted against energy east. He voted against the Trans Mountain pipeline. He voted in favour of Bill C-69, the no pipelines bill. He voted in favour of Bill C-48, the tanker exclusion zone legislation. He talked about the court ruling with respect to that, but that does not justify his vote in favour of a permanent tanker exclusion zone that would prevent any pipeline, no matter how much consultation happened, from going through northern B.C. He refused to support the repeal of the Trans Mountain ruling.

Every time the member has a chance to stand up and vote in the House for his constituents, why does he consistently choose to vote with the Prime Minister instead of with the people who sent him here?

Mr. Randy Boissonnault: Mr. Speaker, allow me to be very clear. It will be a cold day in hell before I will vote for a Conservative opposition motion that is simply there to obfuscate, to try to trap our side, to try to divide our side, to try to sow division among Canadians.

On this side of the House, we are here to build. We are here to invest in the future. We are here to see that Alberta oil gets to new markets despite all the theatre and rhetoric on the other side.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill.

I am very sad to be here this evening. I am sorry that we have to have this debate once again.

It is certainly no secret that the last few years have been very hard in Alberta, not just for Calgaryans but for all Albertans, and I would even say the nation, because the oil and gas sector is one that has a rich history of supplying jobs not only in Calgary where I was born and raised, not only in Alberta, but also right across this country. To use a term from Lemony Snicket, a series of unfortunate events brought us here today. It is a number of events that, I must admit, include those of the province, without question. The truth of the matter is that when we ask who created this price differential crisis, it was the Liberal government. It certainly had a lot to do with it.

I will mention some statistics that have been mentioned already this evening. As we know, the oil and gas sector has lost over \$100 billion in investment and over 100,000 jobs. That is eight times the GDP and more jobs than the entire aerospace sector or five times the GDP and almost as many jobs as the entire auto sector. As I said, it is not just an Alberta crisis, it is a national crisis. The Canadian Energy Research Institute says that every job in Canadian upstream oil and gas creates two indirect and three induced jobs in other sectors across the country in other provinces. Every one job in the oil sands creates seven manufacturing jobs.

Another very disturbing fact is that a recent World Economic Forum report, which ranks countries based on a global competitiveness index, also reflects Canada's competitive disadvantage relative to the U.S. Canada ranks 12th out of 140 countries while the U.S. ranks first. I have a story directly related to this.

I was in the diplomatic corps prior to my job as a parliamentarian and, as such, I was very fortunate to be invited to an event in Calgary called U.S. Select, which the American ambassador to Canada attended. When I went to this event, it was terrifying because the American government, with much success, was luring away investment and jobs to the United States of America. That is not very hard to do at this time, unfortunately.

The Conservative government has an incredible track record of four pipelines, two of which increase coastal access. There is the TransCanada Keystone pipeline, Enbridge's Alberta Clipper, Kinder Morgan's Anchor Loop, increasing capacity to the west coast, as well as Enbridge's Line 9B reversal. Everyone knows the Liberals have killed two major pipelines: Enbridge's northern gateway pipeline, as well as TransCanada's energy east.

Who can forget the absolute horror of the Trans Mountain pipeline, which for us on this side of the House was like the plot to a bad horror film. Just when we thought it could not get any worse, it did. Every day we would think about the looming deadline and having to come up with something. Lo and behold, Canadians bought a pipeline. In this case, the butler did not do it. It was an ending we could not possibly have foreseen. As I said, it was like a plot to a bad horror movie.

Worse than that, Bill C-69, without question, in the minds of many Albertans and certainly in my mind, would kill the potential future of any energy projects going forward.

• (2235)

To add salt to the wound, the Prime Minister, the very individual who said he laments the existence of the tar sands, I believe is the term he used, had the actual nerve to show up in Calgary this week to try to play friendly and show that he is on the side of Albertans and Calgaryans. I am afraid Calgaryans know better.

An hon. member: They didn't buy it.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Exactly. Mr. Speaker, they did not buy it for a minute, because actions speak louder than words. The actions of the current government have shown over and over again that it is the one that created this pipeline differential crisis by not doing the things to ensure that our product could get to market. Albertans will not stand for it. Calgaryans will not stand for it.

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I am going to mention some quotes from stakeholders. This first one is very dear to me. It is from Nancy Southern, the CEO of ATCO. I am very proud to be on the Trilateral Commission with Nancy Southern. The ATCO AGM is run like clockwork. These incredible corporations in Calgary have rich histories and have solid ways of doing things. They are very gracious. They will go with the flow, so to speak, until they absolutely possibly no longer can. It was at this AGM, where I was so fortunate to be present, that Nancy Southern spoke these words: “How heartbreaking it is to see our wonderful resource-laden province so constrained by regulatory policy and politics of various dispositions.”

We could have heard a pin drop in that room, because everyone knew that Ms. Southern was speaking the truth. Thank goodness she was speaking the truth. She was not alone in the truth that she was speaking.

Despite the fact of who created this price differential crisis, and it was the Liberal government, it does not have to be this way. That is my message to Calgarians and Albertans: It does not have to be this way. There is another way.

What will a Conservative government do in 2019 when we come to power? We will repeal the Liberal carbon tax. We will repeal Bill C-69, the anti-pipeline bill. We will end the ban on shipping traffic on the north coast of British Columbia. We will enact legislation that will clarify the roles of proponents and governments that are involved in consultations. We will ensure that standing is given only to those with expertise or who are directly impacted by the project in order to end foreign-funded interference in regulatory hearings. We will provide certainty to investors on approval timelines and schedules. We will use the federal declaratory power to declare a major project for the general advantage of Canada under section 92.10 of the Constitution Act, 1867, where we deem it necessary for future projects.

I am saying that it does not have to be this way.

Here is the best news of all. Young people are getting the message. Yesterday, I had the absolute pleasure, along with our deputy leader, the member of Parliament for Milton, as well as our natural resources shadow minister, the member of Parliament for Lakeland, to meet with an incredible organization, a group of young people called the Young Pipeliners Association of Canada. I hope that Molly, Sarah, John and Tran are listening to this because we were listening to them yesterday. We want them to know that we hear them. We understand that they value this industry, that they understand and value the history of this industry, that they value their jobs, and that they value this sector as the future not just for Calgary, not just for Alberta, but for all of Canada. I hope the government will join these young people, and our party, the official opposition, the Conservative Party of Canada, in supporting this industry, in destroying Bill C-69, and in taking responsibility for this price differential crisis, because the Liberals created it.

● (2240)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I brought this up in a previous question and I think it bears repeating, because I would like to hear the answer from the member across the way.

The reality of the situation is that Stephen Harper was horrible at building pipelines, not because he did not want to do it, but because at the same time he was touting that we were going to be the new energy sector that was going to be a new superpower, he was undercutting the process by continually attacking environmentalists, attacking the fight on climate change, and essentially in the process, putting a target on the back of the oil sector. That is why he was unable to accomplish getting oil to new markets.

The facts are the facts. In 2006 when Stephen Harper came into power, 99% of the oil that we exported went to the United States. That did not change by 2015 when he left. Therefore, can the member at least acknowledge that just a bit of the responsibility bears on the previous government?

● (2245)

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Mr. Speaker, I think a big part of being a parliamentarian is taking responsibility. That stands not only with us as parliamentarians but with governments as well. I, for one, am sick and tired of the Liberal government attempting to blame its incompetence and inaction on the previous administration, which is simply not the case.

What I will take responsibility for, for the previous government, is 1.3 million jobs. That is what I will take responsibility for as a member of the party that was the previous government.

What the Liberal government can take responsibility for is the designed and orchestrated phase-out of the oil sands, destroying jobs across the country, and the attempt to kill, murder, an industry.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, just last night on *As It Happens*, CBC Radio host Susan Bonner asked a question of Dan Halyk, CEO of Total Energy Services in Calgary. For the first time in 22 years, this company is shutting down field locations.

She asked him about the glut and the fact that there is no way to move the product because of the lack of pipelines in the country. This was his response, and I would appreciate a perspective from our member on this side of the floor who just shared very good comments.

He said:

First of all, we foresaw a rise in production, particularly in oil, five years ago, but expectations were that reasonable rules which are in place for construction and development of infrastructure pipelines are in place, and I think every fair-minded, reasonable, balanced person expected pipelines to get built. I don't think anyone would have foreseen the extreme difficulties we have in this country in constructing that infrastructure.

Industry invested in good faith on the premise that reasonableness would prevail. That certainty is not what's happening, and the end result is production, particularly in the case of larger projects which take years to develop, have now come on-stream. What hasn't progressed is construction of infrastructure. That is a huge problem. It is not an industry problem in the sense that industry was ready, willing and able to invest and proceed. It's been the political side that has failed.

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Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for those excellent insights. I would respond by saying that the world is hungry for ethical oil, oil that is extracted to the highest environmental standards. This is a demand that is not going away and that will only, in fact, increase.

What the government has done in not providing the mechanisms for these projects to be approved and to get these products to market, which the world is asking for, is a complete disservice to Canadians.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, there was one part of the member's speech with which I completely agreed, and that is that the experience of the Kinder Morgan pipeline is the worst horror movie anyone could imagine, and it just keeps getting worse.

I want to put in her mind this notion, because I followed the process carefully. I was an intervenor. Every single step that led to the Federal Court of Appeal quashing that permit was virtually in concrete before the election. The NEB process was set up under Bill C-38 rules, and the process was moving in that direction. The advice from the NEB panel would not have been different if Stephen Harper had still been prime minister, and I doubt that the cabinet under Harper would have done anything different than what the cabinet under the current Prime Minister did, which was ignore the flaws and approve the pipeline.

● (2250)

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Mr. Speaker, I genuinely believe, in my heart of hearts, that everything might have been in place, but the reality is that there are no shovels in the ground. There is no sight of any shovels in the ground. It was a failure in the consultation process.

Once again, it is complete incompetence on the part of the government. I fail to believe that our government, based upon, as I mentioned, our successful track record of the four pipelines I indicated, would not have been successful in that venture. I feel that strongly.

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very humbled to be able to participate in this incredibly serious emergency debate on the oil and gas industry in Canada and the crisis situation facing Albertans. This is a serious issue for Albertans, and they are starting to despair.

There are 29 Conservative members of Parliament in the House of Commons, and all of them would have loved to have had the opportunity to speak to this important issue tonight. However, we only had six spots, and I was privileged enough to be granted one of them.

For those who may not know, I am not an Alberta member of Parliament. I come from Ontario, from Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, which is just north of Toronto. Like probably many other Canadians, I did not fully understand and appreciate the extent, the seriousness, the severity and the contribution of the oil and gas industry not only in Alberta but in Canada as a whole. Then I had the opportunity to go to Calgary.

The member for Calgary Nose Hill, the member for Lakeland, the member for Foothills, and many of the other Alberta members of Parliament took the time to explain to me just how significant and

serious this is. I want to thank the Conservative members of Parliament, and I want to thank their constituents, for giving me the opportunity to communicate to them the very important message that I am going to do everything I can to ensure that those in Canada, like me, who do not understand how important Alberta is to Canada, understand. I hope I also can communicate the important message to Albertans that we understand how much they matter to Canada, because if Alberta is in crisis, Canada is in crisis. It is time for us to unite and build a nation, because this is one country, one Canada.

Times are tough, and Alberta is in crisis, yet in the economic update, we heard from the finance minister that the economy is growing, everything is rosy, we have nothing to be concerned about and the Liberal government can take credit for everything that is great. There are certainly no problems that need addressing or to be fixed.

Do not be fooled. We can agree to disagree, but even if we look at the statistics the finance minister is providing us, they are lag indicators. He is looking at data in the past. He is not actually looking at where we are today and therefore at what that means for the future.

If we look at Alberta as the initial indicator, it is the beginning of what will happen to the rest of the country. Alberta has lost over 100,000 jobs, and it has lost over \$100 billion in investment.

Why does the oil and gas industry matter? For many years, it has been the economic engine and has driven much of the growth the country has enjoyed. It has the third-largest oil reserves. It is the fourth-largest oil exporter, and it is Canada's second-largest export. It is the number one contributor to private investment in the Canadian economy, and it contributes over 11% to the overall Canadian economy. That is nothing to sneeze at. That is significant.

That incredible economic engine is now stalled. Why is that? It is not about corporations making informed economic decisions that were out of the control or the purview of the government. It is because of policy and regulatory decisions the government has chosen to make, and in some instances, has chosen not to make.

● (2255)

The regulatory burdens that have been placed on the approval process to get pipelines built are incredibly complicated and unclear, and the goal posts keep changing. They are overwhelmingly complex and therefore are driving those corporations outside of this country, because like other industries, Canada is competing with other jurisdictions to bring that business to Canada. If our regulatory and policy environment is so difficult to understand, they are going to choose other jurisdictions where they can get those things built.

What does that mean? It means that we cannot get our incredible oil and gas to market. We cannot build pipelines to tidewater to get them to foreign lands abroad, and we cannot get them south. We cannot get them to market, and unfortunately, the longer we wait, the more those other suppliers of oil and gas in the world we are competing with will fill the void. We will lose that window and never get it back.

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We are also losing massive amounts of capital investment that we need not only for today but for growth and a continued economic engine into the future. We are also talking about energy security, because we need to have our country able to look after itself. We have enough energy reserves. We need to have energy independence, because it gives us energy security as well as economic security and to a certain extent, in these uncertain times in the world, defence security.

That is why the oil and gas industry matters in Alberta, but why does it also matter to Canada? We are not only losing the revenue from the oil and gas industry, but one job in oil creates seven manufacturing jobs. We have all kinds of businesses in the financial markets and the stock market that come from oil and gas; \$3.9 billion in Ontario alone was provided from oil and gas purchases, and 12% of jobs in the oil and gas industry can be created in Ontario. That would generate \$153 billion that will contribute to oil and gas in the Ontario economy from 2017-27 if we can get some of these pipelines built. That would contribute \$12.6 billion in taxes in Ontario, which would go a long way for all kinds of services in Ontario that are highly needed. By not being able to leverage that potential, not only is Alberta suffering but Ontario is suffering, as are other parts of the country that would benefit.

The Prime Minister was in Calgary last week, and he talked to Albertans and said that he feels their pain. He also said that this is a complicated matter and there is no simple or easy answer, yet to simply say that he feels their pain is really not enough. Ultimately, he is the Prime Minister. The job of being Prime Minister is probably to solve the complicated and difficult challenges facing the nation. We are looking to the Prime Minister to do what needs to be done. He needs to lead the country, and he needs to solve difficult problems, and he needs to make sure these things get done.

In closing, I would also like to make sure that we speak to Albertans. Do not despair, because there are many of us in the House of Commons who understand just what a crisis this is. We are uniting with Albertans, and we are not going to stop until we are able to build the nation that we need to be with these pipelines, because we are looking at one country, one Canada.

• (2300)

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, like my hon. colleague, I am a Quebecker. I come from a different region, but I also care very much about the people of Alberta.

I listened very carefully to a lot of the speeches tonight, and I am a little perturbed that so much of it was focused on blaming one side or the other for things that happened instead of looking at solutions.

I have heard a couple of solutions from my Conservative colleagues. They have talked about how horrible Bill C-48 is and how horrible Bill C-69 is, yet the hon. member voted in favour of both bills at all stages. How does she reconcile the opinions she has expressed tonight with her current verbiage?

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Mr. Speaker, obviously what my hon. colleague is referring to is when I was actually a member of Parliament as a Liberal, and I did not fully appreciate just how devastating Bill C-48 and Bill C-69 were, not only to Alberta but to the entire country. Therefore, I am very grateful to colleagues on this side of the House who have given me the opportunity to understand

the complexity and why those were bad bills. I have no problem reconciling it, because I did not know what I knew then, and I am doing my very best to know what I know now and make amends.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my colleague seemed to lay a lot of the blame for none of these pipelines getting built on the doorstep of environmental impact processes and regulations that are too difficult for these pipelines to pass. I know that she has the unique view here in the House from both sides. Does she not realize that these difficult processes that these pipelines are going through are the rather weak processes that the Conservatives dreamed up in the previous Parliament?

We have different views on this, but Bill C-69 has not passed yet. It is still in the Senate. I do not think it would change things much, despite what we hear from the Conservatives. However, what these pipelines have gone through in terms of assessment processes are the flawed processes that—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill.

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Mr. Speaker, essentially what they have done is two things. They have frozen the existing processes to ensure that nothing happens and they have created an incredible breadth of uncertainty around what the processes are going to be in the future. Therefore, we cannot expect industry to wait around to see what it is going to be in the future, and spend that time and money knowing that certain processes have been frozen in place.

Hon. Kevin Sorenson (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on Monday night we debated in an emergency debate about the 2,500 people laid off in Oshawa. I appreciated the member's speech then, and I appreciate it again tonight.

There is nothing that would shut down investment in Alberta and investment in Canada like Bill C-69, according to a whole list of gas and oil people. It would shut down investment in jobs. Money would be leaving our province and country, and one report said it would be \$100 billion, but what I have is \$85 billion. We are seeing jobs leave, 100,000 in Alberta and a carbon tax coming in. There is the purchase of a pipeline that leaves those who would invest in the sector asking why they would invest, because the government is just going to take over, or the government is going to make it impossible for them to take the oil to tidewater. The government also banned shipping traffic on the west coast.

Maybe the member could fill us in a little more about the policy she talked about that is hindering job creation in this country.

• (2305)

Ms. Leona Alleslev: Mr. Speaker, I think it would be unfair of me to even try to compete with that excellent, broad-spectrum list of all the things. I think the punchline really is that anyone wanting to invest here is having a really difficult time understanding exactly where the goalposts are, what they are going to have to demonstrate, what they are going to be held to, and what kind of timeline they can expect.

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It does not matter what we are talking about, the complexity or uncertainty, no one knows when they come to invest in Canada what they can expect, and that is driving them to other jurisdictions where the information is clear and they know that they can get stuff done.

Hon. Kent Hehr (Calgary Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Kingston and the Islands.

It is a great honour and privilege to speak tonight in this emergency debate on the crisis that has emerged in the Canadian oil and gas sector.

People in my riding, people in Calgary, kids I went to school with, kids I grew up with, are all having a difficult time right now. I know that. I have family members who work in the oil and gas industry. My sister Kristie Smith works for TransCanada pipelines. Her husband Bob works for the Pembina Pipeline. This is personal. We understand that it is a difficult time.

I was with the Prime Minister last week in Calgary, where we met with oil and gas executives. There is no clear path forward they say. Both have differing ideas on what we should do. What they did say, and it is what our government is delivering on, is that we are going to ensure that we get access to new markets. We remain committed to building the Trans Mountain pipeline project in the right way.

We also delivered something else in the fall economic statement. We delivered what those people who work in that industry are asking for, the capital cost allowance structure, which will allow us to build more projects more effectively and more efficiently.

We have heard a lot of rhetoric in tonight's debate from the members opposite. I understand that they are concerned about the people of Calgary and Alberta and the like, but nevertheless, they seem to have forgotten how we got here.

Just pick a date at random, let us say, 2006. Let us go back to 2006 when the Harper government was elected. That government immediately said, with sound and fury, that it was going to build an energy superpower here in Canada. Conservative members at that time, all the men and women, put all their thought processes, all their workings together, and worked day and night, I assume, to try to create this. That is what they said they would do. Yet here we are.

When we took power in 2015 after they had been in power for a decade, not one inch of pipeline had been built to new energy markets. What we are dealing with right now is the fact that there is a differential, and that differential is caused by our having one customer, the United States. When the Conservatives came to power, 99% of our oil went to the United States. At the end of their decade in power, that number was the same.

Here we are today. This government has invested \$4.5 billion in the Trans Mountain pipeline. We will build this in the right way. It shows our commitment to the people I represent in my riding of Calgary Centre and our commitment to the people of Alberta. When Alberta is successful, Canada is successful.

Not only could the Conservatives not get pipelines built, in their wisdom, or lack thereof, they also said in 2012 that they were going to design a system that would get all of these energy projects built. They said they were going to put all the king's horses and all the king's men, all of us, in a room together to figure out how to build

these energy projects super fast, super quickly, with no problems. Yet here we are.

The Conservatives managed in this process to basically cause themselves to be where we are today. Here we are with their process in place, which essentially ended the northern gateway pipeline and essentially left us here where we are at with the Trans Mountain pipeline, where we followed their process.

● (2310)

Here they are saying that we should do nothing more, that we should not endeavour to try to do better, that we should endeavour to try to set up a process that actually allows for good projects to get built, with one project, one review, to allow people to go through this and get some certainty to it. They want to somehow go back to yesterday when clearly the process they laid down did not work. They have to admit that.

In no uncertain terms can they deny the fact that the process they put in place in 2012 was an utter failure, clearly. I hear none of that here tonight, that the process they worked night and day on to create this superpower that they said they were going to do, has led to nothing but failure. That is where we are today, with a differential a mile wide that has been caused by the failure of the former Conservative government, one, to build pipelines, and two, to have a process that actually allowed people to be heard. Here is where we are.

The Federal Court has said we have a constitutional duty to ensure we are consulting meaningfully with our indigenous people, that we are moving forward in an environmentally friendly fashion that ensures what we said in the 2015 election campaign, which is that the economy and the environment are two sides of the same coin. In this day and age, we have to move forward with that because that is what Canadians expect and that is what Canadians are demanding.

We have to also learn to look at some of the successes our government has had in terms of actually building a sense of understanding among the people of Canada around the Trans Mountain pipeline. When we came to power, the Conservative government had so alienated the indigenous population, alienated the people concerned about the environment, alienated a whole swath of Canadians who simply did not believe them when it came to the environment or consultation. That support for the Trans Mountain pipeline languished around 40%. That was the amount of public opinion support for this energy project.

Because we understand that the environment and the economy are two sides of the same coin, we have now seen people get behind this, understanding that here is a government who understands it is a balance and understands that energy projects to be built in the 21st century have to do these necessary things. It is a government that understands the importance of leaving a better environment going forward. It is a government that understands the importance of our consultations with our indigenous communities.

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We also have to understand that our government has moved forward on many approvals too since we came to power. The NGL pipeline, the Enbridge Line 3 pipeline and Towerburch are all projects that are going to lead to a lessening of the differential. Our government remains committed to those. We understand that this is important for us to deliver on, not only for the people of Alberta but for all Canadians.

As I said, when Alberta is successful, Canada is successful. After a decade of failure by the Harper Conservatives, we will continue to move forward on the Trans Mountain pipeline. All the energy executives we have talked to said that is the most important thing. They said that they need pipeline access. We are moving forward on that project in the right way. We will continue to do better on our indigenous consultations and our environmental stewardship because in the 21st century, that is the only way forward. The Conservatives just did not understand that then, and it appears that they do not understand that now.

• (2315)

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the member do I thought the impossible, which was defend three years of failures that the Liberal government is responsible for. What the Liberals have been good at is defending the jobs of Liberal insiders whose sole goal is to shut down the oil sands and cost hundreds of thousands of energy workers their jobs all across the country, not just in Alberta.

I am going to actually name these Liberal elitist insiders. The principal secretary to the Prime Minister, Gerald Butts, is a known supporter of the tar sands campaign. The chief of staff to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Marlo Reynolds, the former executive director of the Pembina Institute, is a known supporter of the tar sands campaign. The senior policy adviser on energy and environment, Sarah Goodman, the former VP of Tides Canada, is a known supporter of the tar sands campaign. Zoë Caron, a past president of Sierra Club Canada and a former official with the World Wildlife Fund, is a known supporter of the tar sands campaign.

Why is the member so good at defending the jobs of Liberal insiders but is not great at defending the jobs of Alberta energy workers?

Hon. Kent Hehr: Mr. Speaker, with the deepest of respect to the hon. member, I think he may have lost track of his senses during that long list that he must have got from The Rebel Media. How can he even say that? Our government is so committed to the people of Alberta that we invested \$4.5 billion in a pipeline. We know that it is in the national interest to move that project forward in the right way. For him to say that is just nonsensical.

I would ask the member to revisit the evidence as to what we did and how we are going to go forward.

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the speech from the member for Calgary Centre. I cannot believe how he can actually stand behind the Prime Minister, who has failed this country so badly with regard to Canada's energy resources and Alberta's energy resources, in particular.

We have heard speeches from across the country from hon. members this evening. I will speak as a member from B.C. about the

impact it has had out there. There are manufacturers and machine shop people who work in B.C. in my area, who had been working out in the energy sector in Alberta. Now, they cannot.

The member for Calgary Centre talked about the new capital cost allowance structure. That sounds great on paper. The fact is that they have scared away business investment so badly from this country that nobody is going to take that offer. They are not going to spend money on equipment in this sector unless we get rid of the government and put a government in place that is going to put energy resources at the forefront again.

How can the member defend that?

Hon. Kent Hehr: Mr. Speaker, the decade of failure by the Harper Conservatives to move forward one inch of pipeline toward new markets gives me confidence in what we are doing. We are investing in Trans Mountain to ensure that pipeline goes forward in the right way and that it will ensure access to new markets. I think that is evidence of our commitment to moving a nation forward.

We remain committed to Alberta. We remain committed to understanding how important a role it has played in the development of Canada. This will continue to move that project forward.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I come from a community that is quite concerned about the environment. I get a lot of questions about pipelines and what is going on with the oceans protection plan and what we are doing in terms of environmental assessments and approvals and, also, looking at how we are working with indigenous peoples. I noticed on social media that the minister is out in British Columbia working with the Métis Association of British Columbia right now.

Could the member comment on the process that we are using, in terms of environmental and indigenous consultations?

• (2320)

Hon. Kent Hehr: Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that in the 21st century we have to move forward with indigenous consultation and environmental protection. We saw clearly much of the failure in the Harper Conservative era with their disregard for both of those approaches. That is where we are, stalled project after stalled project after stalled project.

Essentially, we are in this bind here because of the 10 years of a Conservative government not understanding the real important work that has to be done. That is why our government is committed to ocean protection and putting a price on pollution. One thing they forget is putting a price on pollution. The oil companies in Alberta, such as Cenovus, Suncor and many others, called for us to put on that price because they know that the world wants to see this in their energy—

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise in the House tonight to speak on this very important issue. I want to thank my colleagues in the Conservative Party for initiating this discussion.

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A lot of people have been affected in Alberta by the downturn in oil prices. It is very important to remember that at the heart of this, people are suffering economically in ways that will affect all aspects of their lives. It is incumbent upon us and the government to do whatever we can to ensure that they can rebound in the most timely and expeditious way possible.

I must admit that when I heard the proposal for this debate earlier this evening, I thought it was going to be an opportunity to have a good, wholesome discussion about what some of the possible solutions are. As usual in this place, it did not exactly turn out like that. There seems to be a lot of finger pointing. I will admit that I took part in that myself, but the reality of the situation is that there is a lot of blame to go round and I do not think it is entirely fair to blame one party or the other party, one government or the other government.

The member for Lakeland who started the debate mentioned that this has been a crisis for three years and that the entire crisis is the responsibility of this particular government. That just does not make any sense, because three years ago the government was literally swearing in its cabinet and getting going. To try to blame it for everything that has happened over the last three years is just not practical and does not make sense. The reality of the situation, which I already brought up tonight, is that when Stephen Harper government came to power in 2006, we exported 99% of Canadian oil to the States. He had a prime opportunity when oil prices were at a great selling price to start diversifying the market, but he took the lazy approach and did not do that.

Yes, we ran into some problems in 2008 that would have made it more challenging, but despite the rhetoric about what the Conservatives did, the four pipelines that were built and their government's approval of this or that, if we fast forward to 2015, we were still in the exact same position, with 99% of our oil still going to the States. That is the fundamental problem, the fact that we are not getting our oil to any other markets. Therefore, to try to blame this squarely on the last three years is disingenuous at best, and an outright falsehood of reality at worst.

Let us talk about why it was so difficult for Stephen Harper to get it done. I believe Stephen Harper wanted to build pipelines, but he was unable to do so because while he was touting that Canada would be an economic superpower with its oil industry, he was simultaneously undercutting the environmentalist movements, the global climate initiatives and, in essence, painting a target on the back of the oil industry in Canada. That is what he was doing. As a result, there were injunctions and legal manoeuvres throughout the entire process that made it very difficult for him to do that.

I believe that Stephen Harper and the previous government had the right intentions, but they set the playing field in such a way that it made virtually impossible for them to do that. That is why this government is taking a different approach, an approach that respects the processes and the various players and opinions that formulate how we will go about approving projects and getting them done. In that, the single most important issue is that we diversify the market to ensure that oil can go to other parts of the world so that we will not run into a problem like this again in the future.

I will read a quote from a Maclean's article from January 5, 2015 to back up what I said. It states:

Instead of convincing critics Canada could be trusted to develop a carbon-intensive resource in a sustainable fashion, Ottawa instead boasted about Canada's 'emerging energy superpower' status, lashed out at environmentalists and thumbed its nose at international climate change efforts, painting a target on the industry's back in the process.

● (2325)

It is also worth noting that 65,000 jobs were actually lost when oil prices started to decline under Stephen Harper, if we can be honest and forthright about the facts. It is also interesting that the previous government had such a poor record on pipelines and on the environment and climate change. The Conservatives were great at neither. Harper fought global efforts to deal with climate change and pulled out of the Kyoto accord.

When I talk about what we can do differently and the opportunities we have, let us talk about some of the stuff that we have been able to do and action we have been able to take after 10 years of Conservative inaction. We have supported the Keystone XL pipeline. On the Trans Mountain expansion project, we are moving forward in the right way, through meaningful consultations. We have also approved the Line 3 replacement project, the LNG Canada project and the Nova Gas pipeline. There are a number of examples where we are moving forward in the right process in order to make meaningful decisions without creating massive controversy that makes it literally impossible.

The reality, and what the Conservatives are going to need to understand at some point or another, is that one cannot bombastically attack everything that contributes to a process that is going to make these projects a reality. That is what they did for 10 years.

I also want to take a moment to talk about the bigger macroeconomic project here. We have a situation where not only is so much of Alberta's economy dependent on oil that is going into the States, but so much of Alberta's economy is dependent on oil. If we can also diversify the economy in terms of where the jobs are located and where industry is, we can also further insulate ourselves against other potential threats that might emerge to one particular sector of the economy. It is very simple. I think everyone can understand the notion of not putting all of our eggs in one basket. It is the same idea.

That is why, to Alberta's credit, it is actually doing some pretty impressive things when it comes to promoting the renewable energy sector. If we look at the statistics, we will see that Alberta is actually doubling and tripling the jobs in the renewable and clean tech sector. That is a really smart move, because it is diversifying its economy. Albertans are getting well-paying jobs that are going to be the jobs of the future and they are setting up an environment where the economy can be diverse and not just dependent on one particular sector or another.

Let us talk about what Alberta has committed to. It has committed to having 30% of its electricity come from renewable sources, such as wind, hydro and solar by 2030. This has a promising new potential for employment growth of 30% to 50% in this particular sector. Again, we know these are extremely well-paying jobs, and when we can diversify a market, we can further insulate it.

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I see my time is running out. I have enjoyed the discussion tonight. I have learned a lot in terms of the various different positions on this, but I genuinely think that in order to advance any particular industry, we are going to have to take a balanced approach. The reality of the situation is that for 10 years, the Conservatives did not take a balanced approach. They tried to bully their way through a particular industry imposing things that were not going to happen because there was too much opposition. At the end of the day, what we are seeing is an approach that will work, one that brings all the players together to have a meaningful process and meaningful deliberation so we can create projects that will genuinely benefit Alberta and the country as a whole.

• (2330)

Mr. Jim Eglinski (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened attentively to my colleague across the way complaining about all the problems the Conservative Party had trying to bring pipelines to the different coasts. The Liberals have been in government for three years. They changed the regulations. They talk about transparency and their ability to negotiate. What happened with Trans Mountain when it went to the Supreme Court? It was turned down. The court said they did not do a proper job. That is the Liberal government. For the last three years they have been working on that project, so perhaps I would ask the member, what happened with them?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, when we look at individual projects like the one the member is referring to and the decision by the court, the reality of the situation is that we respected the court's decision on it. The court said that we needed to go back and follow a process to ensure all parties were consulted, and that is exactly what we said we would do. It is exactly what we are doing. We are respecting that process.

At least I am willing to stand here and say that there is responsibility to go around the entire chamber. As the member for Lakeland did in the introduction to this debate, to say that this is only a problem that has existed for the last three years, and that this government has been here for exactly three years therefore this problem is solely on its shoulders, is ludicrous. These problems do not develop instantly overnight. It was the 10 years of inaction.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member is of course trying to lay all the blame on the Conservatives and the Conservatives are blaming them. His party ran on the promise to redo the process of the Trans Mountain pipeline approval. The NDP ran on the same promise because we knew the Conservative process had been flawed and would be thrown out by the Supreme Court, and yet the Liberals did not do that. They created a little sham dog-and-pony show that followed the route of the pipeline, and the courts found that to be completely inadequate and quashed those approvals. Can he explain why his government decided to make the same mistakes the Conservatives made and expected a different result?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I did not say that this was entirely a Conservative problem, as the member said I did at the beginning of his comments. It is quite the opposite. What I said is that there is blame to go around. There was a process that was followed, which the court decided needed to be re-examined and more attention needed to be paid to one particular area. We respected that. We respect it to this day, and we will move forward based on that.

The reality of the situation is there is blame to go around. All I was trying to highlight is that if one tries to put the blame squarely on one particular government based on certain timelines that fit a narrative, it just does not add up. Humility is a great lesson to learn in this job. If the Conservatives just starting saying that maybe they should take a little bit of the responsibility for this, perhaps it would go a long way in adding credibility to their arguments.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member said that some of the blame belongs to the government, and he is part right, all of the blame belongs to the government. From his speech, though, he does not actually seem to understand the process by which pipelines are built. Up until now, pipelines have not been built by the government, they have been built by the private sector. Under the previous Conservative government, every private sector project proposed was approved, which included four pipelines, which helped increase access to tidewater. A fifth was approved, and the Liberal government passed a tanker traffic exclusion zone, not only to prevent that pipeline from going forward, but to ensure no pipeline could go forward in the future, until that legislation is repealed.

He talked about the issue of climate change. His government took on the same targets we had, so for him to say that somehow something has dramatically changed is wrong. The only difference is that their plan involves a tax whereas ours did not. Can the member at least recognize the process by which pipelines are built, and the fact that under Conservatives—

• (2335)

The Deputy Speaker: We are out of time.

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, obviously the private sector builds pipelines, but the federal, local and provincial governments play a large part in determining the regulations behind that and how it is going to go forward. He talked about the success the Conservatives had in building pipelines. Yes, they had success in some areas, in areas that continued to deliver oil to the exact place we did not need to keep delivering it because we were already putting 99% of it there. What they needed to do was focus a little attention on getting it to new markets, and that is what they failed to do.

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the challenge that we face today in the energy sector is very simple. It is a question of stability and a question of certainty, both for the people who are making the investment decisions to invest in production in Canada's energy sector, and the people whom I talk to every day, who have selected me to be their voice in Ottawa. It is a question of certainty, and it is a question of stability.

The colleagues opposite who are laughing at this tonight should give their heads a shake. When people are sitting around a corporate board table and trying to determine whether or not they should spend several billion dollars on a major capital investment, they look at several determinants. They look at labour availability, political stability, market conditions, and all sorts of things. They make a determination based on a set of information available at the time, but they have to be certain that the information is right and that it is going to stay stable.

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If there is no certainty in an area, workers who are trying to decide whether or not to stay in a region, or whether or not to sell their house, or what sort of purchases to make, or how to make ends meet, are going to make a decision one way or another.

The problem we have seen with the government over the last three years is the question of instability. When we started to see a shift in the supply side model of energy products in North America, as the Americans started to come on stream with more energy supply—and of course we should spend a bunch of time talking about the demand side model internationally as well—what the government should have done at that point in time, when they the Liberals came into government in 2015, was to do everything in its power to make the situation more certain and stable for the workers in Canada's energy sector so that companies could stay and prosper in Canada, and for those who seek to invest in Canada's energy sector, to do the same.

What does the government need to do to rectify the decisions it has made that have led to instability, so that we can see projects built from here on in?

First of all, the government has to scrap its carbon tax. It creates investment instability in the energy sector and is a burden on energy sector workers. There is no economic modelling to show that it will actually reduce greenhouse gas emissions, because for the most part carbon in Canada is price inelastic.

The second thing that it needs to do is to repeal its cancellation, during a major downturn in the Canadian economy, of the oil and gas exploration drilling tax credit. It needs to reverse that decision that it made.

The government needs to reverse the tanker ban that it put in place.

The government also put in place a five-year moratorium on northern oil and gas exploration, giving the territorial governments less than two hours' notice. That caused instability. It needs to reverse that decision it made.

The government also need to reverse the decisions it made around the methane regulation framework that it put in place. That is an example of the instability the government caused when it knew that the energy sector was going through a downturn.

The government needs to scrap and do everything possible to stop the passage of Bill C-69, which it has tabled. That bill creates instability. It creates a new regulator and an environmental assessment process with indeterminate timelines. If people are sitting at a corporate board table and trying to make a decision whether or not to invest, it is not about just getting to a yes, but about getting to a yes or no within a defined, clear set of timeframes. Bill C-69 completely undermines that.

Any investor who is looking at investing in Canada's energy sector looks at Bill C-69 and says, "No way." The government put that in place in a time of economic downturn, and it needs to scrap that.

● (2340)

The Liberals need to scrap Bill C-48, which put in place the unilateral imposition of a ban on using B.C.'s north coast for oil and gas exports. They put that in place. They need to reverse that.

Bill C-86 gives cabinet the authority to unilaterally shut down the shipping of natural resources by water anywhere in Canada, including offshore oil and gas. That is instability that the sector looks at. They need to repeal that bill that they put in place during a major downturn in Canada's energy sector.

They need to repeal Bill C-68, because it dramatically increases the red tape on project development by adding a multi-month review under the navigable waters act for any water on a project site that is large enough to float a kayak. It adds instability. It is unnecessary red tape. They need to repeal this bill that they put in place during a major energy sector downturn.

They need to repeal Bill C-88, which politicizes oil and gas development in the Far North, by providing cabinet in Ottawa the unilateral power to shut down oil and gas development in the Far North.

As well, they need to stop the proposed fuel standards that they are proposing to unveil before Christmas that will equate to a carbon tax of \$228 per tonne of fuel, which would almost certainly mean the end of the oil and gas sector.

They also need to apologize for standing here and applauding Barack Obama after doing nothing to prevent the veto or speak against the veto of the Keystone XL pipeline.

They need to apologize for the fact that they did nothing when they allowed Denis Coderre to dump millions of litres of raw sewage in Quebec and say that energy east was not in the best interest of Canada. Instead they stood up here and agreed with him. The speech by the member for Calgary Centre was such a disgrace. He said he was going to pound on the table for a pipeline. Where was he when Dennis Coderre was doing that? He got kicked out of cabinet. He was our supposed voice in cabinet for Calgary who did nothing to stop any of these bills.

They politically vetoed the northern gateway pipeline. In a political process, the government overturned a years-long regulatory review of the northern gateway pipeline that had over 200 conditions on it that was set and ready to go. That created uncertainty and instability, and politicized a system during a downturn in the energy sector.

They need to invoke section 92.10(c) of the Constitution Act to bring the Trans Mountain pipeline completely into federal jurisdiction so that B.C. cannot obstruct its building out through permitting or other mechanisms in their jurisdiction right now.

Mr. Speaker, I am sharing my time with the member for Peace River—Westlock.

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They need to start building the Trans Mountain pipeline. If what the Prime Minister said is true, and it is in the best interest of this country, why are the Liberals kicking the can down through a potential spring election window? If they are serious about it they should be building it out today. There should be shovels in the ground tonight.

The last thing they need to stop doing, for the love of all that is holy, is stop abdicating the responsibility for getting these policies right. Every time, they stand up here and say that it is Stephen Harper's fault. They had three years to get these projects done. With that litany of lists that are nowhere near complete, all they have done every step of the way is add uncertainty and instability for the investors in Canada's energy sector and for the workers in my community. All the people in my riding want to do is get back to work. Everything the government has done has been to abdicate responsibility and create instability.

The last thing they need to do is the Prime Minister needs to stop going overseas and telling his true agenda to the world, which is that he wants to phase out Canada's energy sector. If I was a worker in Canada's energy sector or if I was looking to invest in this, I would be saying that is a pretty clear policy. He has backed it up with action. Every single one of these bills and actions has been anti-energy sector.

None of the Liberals can stand up in this place and say they have done anything for Canada's energy sector. However, they can tonight by undertaking to repeal all of these bills and standing up and saying that they were wrong, that this stuff was wrong, that it created instability and the death of Canada's energy sector.

We are out of time. The Liberals need to build Trans Mountain. They need to get the shovels in the ground tonight, repeal these bills, and start being serious about one of Canada's most prosperous and stable industries in this country.

● (2345)

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I know there are many members interested in speaking to this as well. I wonder if I could seek unanimous consent for us to extend, by one hour, the period allotted for this emergency debate.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member for the point of order. We are under what we call sort of an autopilot motion, where there are no dilatory motions in this type of debate. That order was passed by unanimous consent earlier.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Malpeque.

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have not been here for whole night, but I hear a lot of politics and a lot of solutions. That last speech goes to the politics. Everything the Liberals have done is bad. It did not mention what the Conservatives had done. That is what the member tried to say.

This crisis has been a long time coming. This government has worked hard to try to get pipelines in place. I do agree with one thing the member said. She said to make it more certain and more stable with respect to where we were going with the energy industry and with pipelines. In fact, Bill C-69 is designed to find the balance

between the environment and the energy industry and give that certainty for the future.

I am pleased to have been in Alberta and across the country as chair of the finance committee. I have heard a lot from the energy industry in Alberta. It does need that stability and that certainty. I agree with that point. However, the only way we will get there is to find solutions in this place rather than playing this partisan political game, which comes as much from that member as anyone in the House.

Hon. Michelle Rempel: Mr. Speaker, I will agree with the member for Malpeque on one thing. Bill C-69 does provide certainty for the energy sector; certain death. That is what every industry leader has said about creating the most politicized process, which is indeterminate in length with no particular reason as to why, outside of to kill the energy sector.

I stood and I said all the things the government needed to do to create certainty in the sector for the people in my riding who were out of work and for the investors who needed to invest in these projects to make them go forward. The government will not admit responsibility or failure. It needs to do that. It needs to repeal these bills and it needs to bring back certainty and stability in Canada's energy sector.

I will not apologize for being good at my job.

● (2350)

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member called on the government to get the shovels in the ground tonight on the Trans Mountain pipeline project. I do not know what part of the law she does not understand. Right now, the court of appeal has struck down the permissions that the government gave to the Trans Mountain pipeline. If shovels went in the ground tonight, we would be in court tomorrow and back at square one.

This rhetoric about trying to rush things through, trying to repeal laws that are in the way, that is how we got here in the first place.

In what world does the member think those things would create the confidence of Canadians in this process, in our laws to get things actually going? This is what has caused the problem.

Hon. Michelle Rempel: Mr. Speaker, we could be debating legislation tonight that would retroactively remedy or say that the tanker ban analysis that was done was complete and get the shovels in the ground tonight. If the government had appealed the Supreme Court decision and ordered a stay, we could have had shovels in the ground tonight.

The reality is that the Prime Minister and the finance minister expect to go to Calgary and be met with adulation, and thanked for their presence. The people in my community are smart. They understand what the government could have done if it had the political will to get this thing done. It is either in the national interest or it is not. We cannot have it both ways.

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If Liberals are serious about building these things, they need to use every tool at their disposal to get this done, including having the political will to legislate on these things. They cannot let the court do their dirty work for them in the long-term, without taking direction here in this place. That is what they failed to do. It is unconscionable. It is unacceptable, and they need to go.

The Deputy Speaker: There are eight minutes remaining in the time allocated for the debate this evening and we will resume debate with the hon. member for Peace River—Westlock.

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very glad to be able to participate this evening, regardless of how much time is left in the debate.

One of the things that happened in 2015 is that I was elected. One of the reasons I ran to get elected was that I always felt that Alberta was getting a raw deal when it came to its resource development. This is a vast and great country, but I felt that there were parts of this country that were not fair to Alberta in saying that we were not doing our due diligence when it came to developing our natural resources. I wanted to come here to champion the Albertan way of life and the fact that we develop our resources in the best way possible.

What I do remember from before I was elected is that it was Liberal Party members who went around the country discrediting whatever we were doing in Alberta. They went around saying that we were polluting the environment when we were not. They went around saying that the processes for developing pipelines did not meet with the approval of Canadians when, in fact, they had for a very long time. They went around saying that the Navigable Waters Act was an environmental policy when it was not. Those things got me frustrated enough to get involved with the political process, to buy a party membership, put my name on a ballot, win a nomination and come here to this place. It pleases me greatly today to be able to stand and defend the interests of Albertans, particularly in the north.

On Saturday evening, I was standing in the lineup at a Subway and I saw Wade in the lineup behind me. I asked him how things were going. He did not remember me at all, but I had worked on his truck many times when I worked at Stephani Motors. He said, “Well, it’s going”. I asked him if he was keeping busy. He said, “No, not really, but who are you?” I said, “Well, I’m Arnold, and I used to work on your truck at Stephani’s.” He said, “Oh, well the truck is still working good, but I haven’t used it in over a year. I gave up the oilfield contract that I had. I’ve been farming ever since, and so I don’t need that truck anymore and it’s been parked.” I asked him if he was going to go back. He said, “I’m getting too old for that game now and there’s just not a lot of money in it.” He was quite dejected about the whole situation. It is with that conversation in mind that I stand, and for the people like Wade that I represent here, and really want to participate in this debate tonight.

Another fellow I met on the weekend was Roland. He runs a heavy-duty mechanic shop. I met him the other day at the gas station. I asked him how things were going. He said, “Well, it’s going pretty good, Arnold.” I said, “Did you move into your new house? I saw you built a new house.” He said, “Yeah, we’ve moved in now.” I said, “Is it finished? I made the mistake of moving into my house before it was completely finished and it’s been four years now and I haven’t quite completed the basement yet.” He said, “Well, that happened to me too, but it’s not for lack of time that I haven’t

finished my basement. It’s for lack of money. Things are just tight nowadays. Since the oilfield dried up, there’s just not a lot of money to do those things that need to be done.”

I recently took a cab ride in Calgary. I asked the driver where he was from, and he said he was from Pakistan. I asked what had brought him here. He said, “Oh, I had a great engineering job. I worked there for two years, but I was laid off two years ago. I’ve been picking up every job that I can find in the meantime.” Here he was, driving a cab. He did not see an end in sight. He said, “I think I’m going to be moving to Toronto or something like that.” He did not know where he was going to go.

This is not just an Alberta story. This is a Canadian story.

I remember working on trucks for people from Newfoundland, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia. They would come to the shop to get their truck fixed. They were happy to have a job in northern Alberta. One of those people who was working in the oil patch in northern Alberta is the member for Tobique—Mactaquac. He has great stories about the money he made in northern Alberta, the times he had and the adventures he went on.

That is the story of hundreds of thousands of Canadians from across this country who have made their fortune in northern Alberta. That is the story of the 100,000-plus jobs that are missing. They are not only in Alberta. Those are people who were making money and sending it back home to Newfoundland. Those are people who were making money and sending it back home to New Brunswick. Those were the guys who flew in for 10 days on and four days off. Those are the guys who rode our airplanes.

● (2355)

Since being elected, I cannot tell members how many fewer plane flights there are going east to west. That has had a significant impact on every part of this country, not just northern Alberta. However, it does affect northern Alberta significantly. The hotels are now empty, the gas stations have about a third fewer customers. Depending on where those business are located, for some, their customers have been cut in half. The recreation centres have fewer people going to them, the highways are less busy and, therefore, there is less need for all of the services that come with that. Northern Alberta is seeing a trickle-down effect across its economy. I think about the guys like Wade and Roland, and my cab driver, and even the MP for Tobique—Mactaquac who had a great time there and the people of his riding who will not have the same experience he had making his fortune in northern Alberta.

It is a Canadian tragedy that we are not able to get our magnificent resource to market, a resource that has made Canada amazing, so we can share the wealth with all of Canada. I am proud to be Albertan and I am proud to be Canadian. Let us get Canadians working again.

Mr. Matt DeCoursey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague talked about the experience of our colleague from Tobique—Mactaquac and how he regrets that other young people from Tobique—Mactaquac may not have the same experience. I can tell members that young people in Tobique—Mactaquac are employed in Tobique—Mactaquac. Small business is thriving in Tobique—Mactaquac. The manufacturing sector is thriving in Tobique—Mactaquac. Tobique—Mactaquac is home to one of Canada's global success stories, McCain Foods. As one of the leading innovative companies, it sells the world's best French fries to businesses around the world.

Businesses are in good shape in places around the world. We understand there is a challenge in Alberta, but there is job growth across the country and we cannot lose sight of that when we talk

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about the challenges we are facing right now in the resource sector in Alberta.

• (2400)

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is right. The economy across this country thrives when we are able to take the money we make in northern Alberta and invest it in businesses back home. Every one of the truck drivers I talked to, whose trucks I worked on, had a side gig going back home in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. That is what they were doing. They were making their money in northern Alberta and investing it back home in New Brunswick. That is how the Canadian economy works and that—

The Deputy Speaker: It being midnight, I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until later this day at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 12 a.m.)

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