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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Thursday, November 7, 2013

—

Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, November 7, 2013

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1005)

[*English*]

COMMISSIONER OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

The Speaker: I have the honour, pursuant to section 66 of the Official Languages Act, to lay upon the table the annual report of the Commissioner of Official Languages covering the period from April 1, 2012 to March 31, 2013.

[*Translation*]

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(f), this report is deemed permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Official Languages.

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[*English*]

PUBLIC SECTOR INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

The Speaker: I also have the honour, pursuant to section 38 of the Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act, to lay upon the table the report of the Public Sector Integrity Commissioner concerning an investigation into a disclosure of wrongdoing.

[*Translation*]

This report is deemed permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates.

* * *

[*English*]

PRIORITY HIRING FOR INJURED VETERANS ACT

Hon. Rob Nicholson (for the Minister of Veterans Affairs) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-11, An Act to amend the Public Service Employment Act (priority hiring for injured veterans).

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

[*Translation*]

NATIONAL HOUSING ACT

Mr. Jean-François Fortin (Haute-Gaspésie—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-550.

He said: Mr. Speaker, the proposed enactment amends the National Housing Act to provide that part of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's retained earnings from its housing loan insurance business be transferred to the provinces, to meet their urgent needs for affordable social housing.

The bill will limit the potential equity of the CMHC to about 1% of its loan portfolio, in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions.

These measures would ensure that anything in excess of the amounts provided for in the reserve fund and equity would be returned to Quebec and the provinces, so that they could invest the money to meet their needs.

This new money from the CMHC could be added to the program already in place and would enable Quebec and the provinces to maintain current funding levels and to develop and reinvest in the construction, renovation and conversion of affordable housing.

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

* * *

[*English*]

NATIONAL SECURITY COMMITTEE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS ACT

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-551, An Act to establish the National Security Committee of Parliamentarians.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce a bill, which, if passed, would establish the national security committee of parliamentarians. I would note that this bill has been presented to this House on a number of occasions, beginning with Bill C-81, introduced by the then Liberal Minister of Public Safety.

This legislation would ensure that Canada's intelligence gathering community has the kind of proactive oversight already in place in a number of world jurisdictions. This legislation is required on an urgent basis.

Business of Supply

I would remind the Minister of Justice, the Minister of State (Finance), and the member for Windsor—Tecumseh that they, on behalf of their respective parties, endorsed the national security committee of parliamentarians in a 2004 report. Therefore, I would hope that this legislation would move forward on an urgent basis.

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

* * *

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (B), 2013-14

A message from His Excellency the Governor General transmitting supplementary estimates (B) for the financial year ending March 31, 2014, was presented by the President of the Treasury Board and read by the Speaker to the House.

* * *

• (1010)

[Translation]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Ms. Nycole Turmel (Hull—Aylmer, NDP) moved:

That, at the conclusion of today's debate on the opposition motion in the name of the Member for Burnaby—New Westminster, all questions necessary to dispose of the motion be deemed put and a recorded division deemed requested and deferred to Tuesday, November 19, 2013, at the expiry of the time provided for Government Orders.

She said: Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties, and if you were to seek it, I think you would find that there is consent to adopt this motion.

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

Some hon. members: Yes.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

[English]

PETITIONS**SEX SELECTION**

Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition in which the petitioners call upon Parliament to condemn the practice of gender selection pregnancy termination, which discriminates against females. They call on Parliament to take this action. There have been statements in Parliament by all parties who have condemned this practice, yet Parliament itself has not passed a motion or taken a stance on this.

I am pleased to say that at the Conservative convention last weekend, they took a stand on this, and we are determined to, in fact, have Parliament condemn this practice.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Craig Scott (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition addressing the homophobic laws recently adopted by Russia's Duma.

Dozens and dozens of residents of Toronto—Danforth and its neighbour, Toronto Centre, signed this petition at the Old Nick on the Danforth. They are calling on the Minister of Foreign Affairs to institute a visa ban for the Russian parliamentarians who originated these repressive laws that have so much potential to not only deepen hate but to give a green light to violence against the LGBTQ community. This visa ban request from the petitioners is supported by over 100 human rights organizations in Canada. The petitioners specifically note that the New Democratic Party, the NDP, has requested that the minister put this ban in place.

I would end by noting that the visa ban measure was dismissively ridiculed, on national news, by the Liberal Party of Canada.

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition today on behalf of hundreds of people in the industrial Cape Breton area. They are outraged by the closure of the veterans office in Sydney, one of eight offices being closed across this country. Sheldon MacNeil, the president of branch 3 Legion in Glace Bay, and Tom Kennedy put this petition together. It sheds light on the fact that they are holding a huge rally on Saturday to voice their concern about the closure. It is with great pride and support that I offer this petition on their behalf.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1015)

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY**OPPOSITION MOTION—KEYSTONE XL PIPELINE**

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP) moved:

That, in the opinion of the House, the Keystone XL pipeline would intensify the export of unprocessed raw bitumen and would export more than 40,000 well-paying Canadian jobs, and is therefore not in Canada's best interest.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise in the House to speak to this motion.

Business of Supply

I would like to preface my remarks by talking a bit about my past. I used to work in one of the now closed oil refineries in this country, the Shellburn Refinery in Burnaby, British Columbia. As a result of having worked with oil, having had to clean out the oil tanks at the refinery as part of my job, I developed a healthy respect for that substance. When cleaning out oil tanks, people need oxygen tanks and full safety equipment. If the safety equipment malfunctions or the oxygen tanks run out, the worker is not around any more.

That degree of danger and a healthy respect for a substance that can bring some benefit but also some danger is something I would like to bring to the debate.

Just to start off, I would like say that we are talking today about Keystone and value-added jobs. We are also talking, though, about the government's lack of action on climate change and the environment. That is part of the ongoing narrative. As President Obama said so well when he was looking at Keystone, the Conservative government simply has to start taking environmental measures.

As we will see later on, Canada is beyond being a climate change laggard; we are among the worst of the 60 countries annually surveyed on climate change. We are in 58th place out of 61 countries. It shows an appalling lack of leadership and an appalling lack of responsibility on the part of the government.

There are environmental issues we will be bringing to the fore throughout the course of the day while we are debating this issue. There are also economic issues, which I will come back to in a moment, and of course, safety issues.

One of the things I will be pointing out in my 20 minutes is the fact that under the Conservatives, there is not only increasing danger in our railway system, which has been sadly and tragically underscored by the appalling devastation in Lac-Mégantic, but in pipeline management, as well. Under the Conservative government, we have seen a steadily increasing number of pipeline leaks and pipeline spills. In fact, there has been a doubling over the last few years on the Conservatives' watch.

When we are talking about the issue of Keystone, we are talking about value-added jobs, of course, but we are also talking about a complete abdication of responsibility by the government on the environment, on climate change, and on pipeline safety. I think those are important issues to bring to the fore.

Earlier I referenced that I was refinery worker. I would also like to flag that on natural resources issues generally, the Conservative government has been appalling bad.

I represent the riding of Burnaby—New Westminster. Many of my friends went to high school in New Westminster, at the New Westminster Secondary School. After high school, my friends went into the softwood lumber industry. They worked at the three plants that existed there: Interfor, Canfor, and Western Forest Products in New Westminster. There were hundreds of well-paying jobs and thousands of indirect jobs that depended on the softwood industry.

All of that was eviscerated and evaporated overnight when the government irresponsibly signed the softwood lumber sellout. Now we have Conservatives laughing at the loss of jobs. I am sorry, but I

think we should be standing up for the workers rather than having Conservatives laugh at the loss of jobs. Two thousand indirect jobs were lost as a result of the signature on that agreement. They may laugh at those families, many of whom I went to high school with. Those families had to cobble together a couple of part-time jobs.

The one hope they have is looking to 2015 and looking to the election of an NDP government that is actually going to take workers seriously.

I have seen first-hand the devastation in my community wrought by the incredible irresponsibility of the government, signing an agreement it had not even read and did not even understand. The NDP certainly raised this issue consistently in the House.

• (1020)

I saw first-hand in the natural resources sector the loss of jobs, which eventually added up to about 60,000 manufacturing and value-added jobs lost in the softwood lumber industry following that agreement.

When we look at that, when we look at the actual loss of jobs in smelting and refining even in the mining industry, it is a source of real concern. Because the number of mining and quarrying jobs has gone up over the last few years, but Statistics Canada tells us that the number of jobs lost in the smelting and refining sector, when we are talking about mining, has gone far beyond any gain of jobs in mining and quarrying.

If we look at the lumber industry, at the mining industry and now at the energy industry, this has been a dismal period for working families. There is absolutely no doubt. We have to come back then to the issue of the energy industry. The Conservatives messed up the two other areas. Why would they be pushing Keystone, which results in a loss of value-added jobs?

I will start off by saying two undeniable facts and a third one that really impacts on Canadian working families.

The first undeniable fact is that under the current government we have lost half a million value-added and manufacturing jobs. That is a simple fact. It is undisputed. Even the Conservatives admit to it. They say they have given a few part-time service jobs so that must compensate. The reality is that half a million value-added and manufacturing jobs being lost on the watch of the Conservative government is undeniably a sign of failure.

Second, is our current account deficit. What we are doing increasingly is exporting raw materials and importing the value-added products and the manufacturing products from overseas. In 2011, that deficit on current accounts was \$49 billion and it gets worse. Last year, it went to \$62 billion. That is a record. We have never had a deficit that large in our nation's history. That is directly related to the government's failure on value-added jobs, its failure to understand that we need coherent policies and we need to put those policies in place to ensure that Canadians get to work.

Business of Supply

The third point I would like to make and the third undeniable statistic is that the working families across this country, so many of whom are represented by NDP MPs in this Parliament, are now struggling under a record debt load. It is a burden that we have never seen in our history. It is actually highest in Alberta. Those working families struggling under a burden of massive debt because they have seen an erosion in real income at the same time as expenses continue to climb, that is something that is extremely germane to this debate. We are talking about Canadians over the last seven years getting poorer and poorer, and more and more in debt every year that the Conservatives are in power.

When we talk about value-added jobs, we are talking about something that has a profound impact on the quality of life of ordinary families right across this country.

Here we have the failure of the Conservative government in a whole range of sectors, a failure to create value-added jobs, failure to create manufacturing jobs, crippling debt loads and a current account deficit that is by far the worst that we have ever had in our history. What is the Conservative government's solution to all the problems it has inflicted on Canadians over the last seven years? Its solution seems to be to move to raw bitumen exports, and somehow that will address what has been the chronic mismanagement of the nation's economy for ordinary working people, families that simply are working with a lower quality of life than they had before.

Then we have to look at what the actual impacts are of this strategy for raw bitumen export. That brings us back to the issue of Keystone. In speaking about Keystone, I would like to start by citing some of the Albertans who have raised real concerns about what the impact of the Keystone pipeline is. We are talking about a pipeline that exports raw bitumen out of the country. What have some Albertans said about what this means in terms of good, well-paying, value-added jobs?

● (1025)

Former Alberta Premier Ed Stelmach, who certainly seemed to understand that issue, said the following. I will read the quote slowly because it is important to have it on the record:

...shipping raw bitumen is like scraping off the topsoil, selling it and then passing the farm on to the next generation.

He said that in 2006.

That is really what we are talking about here. We are not talking about creating value-added jobs. We are talking about scraping off that topsoil and then sending to the next generation a farm that has no topsoil left. We have basically gone through the resource. We have not gotten the value-added jobs that should be coming with that, and yet at the same time, we have a government that is absolutely obsessed with the idea that this is the only way for Canadians to prosper.

Obviously, if that type of approach has not worked in a whole range of other sectors, Ed Stelmach is absolutely bang on in saying that this is not an appropriate response from any government that wants to create well-meaning, value-added jobs.

Gil McGowan, the president of the Alberta Federation of Labour, said the following about Keystone:

What we fear is that the consequence of this particular action will be to deny Albertans literally thousands of high-paying, long-term jobs in upgraders and refineries....

...[every] barrel of bitumen shipped down the Keystone pipeline or other similar proposed pipelines is a barrel of oil no longer available for value-added production and job creation here in [Canada].

Gil McGowan, the president of the Alberta Federation of Labour, in other words, the president of a federation of workers who work in the energy industry, said that in December 2007.

Those are two Albertan voices saying, very clearly, that the idea of sending raw bitumen out of the country means that literally we are sending jobs out of the country. This is a matter of real concern.

As far as the figures given and the approach given by the current government, I would like to cite a few other voices.

Robyn Allan comes from western Canada, like myself. She is a well-known economist in western Canada, as well as the former CEO of the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia, who is well-known for her commentary on the energy sector. She said that:

Chopping local downstream expansion projects....

In other words, not having value added but looking to export raw bitumen.

...breaks the value-added chain. Canada's oil resources increasingly become a pool of raw crude waiting to be siphoned off along pipelines serving economic development and energy security needs of other nations. These nations are smart. They know controlling the supply chain mitigates the pain of rising oil prices.

If more bitumen upgrading was undertaken where it comes out of the ground, we wouldn't need as many new pipelines. She references that about 30% less capacity is required when we are moving upgraded bitumen, as opposed to exporting raw bitumen.

Studies have been done along the Keystone pipeline. Informetrica, in 2006, studied the issue of exports of raw bitumen and came to the following economic analysis. At a rate of 400,000 barrels per day of export of raw bitumen, 18,000 jobs are lost. Here is an indication, by Informetrica, that for every 100,000 barrels of raw bitumen that are exported, we are looking at 3,000 or 4,000 jobs that are lost, which could be there. The building trades could be there and the energy sector could be there, both in terms of upgraders and refineries as well.

We are not talking about figures such as those sometimes cited by our friends on the government side. They will throw out studies that are promptly dismissed, because unfortunately in each of those cases, when we look at the studies themselves, they are not credible. When we have the credible studies that show what the economic impacts are, we have simply not had any understanding from the Conservatives of what the impacts are of putting all the eggs in the basket of raw bitumen exports.

● (1030)

The Alberta Federation of Labour also did an economic analysis, which they submitted to the National Energy Board, on Keystone XL. It showed that, as a result of the raw bitumen exports going through Keystone XL, we would be losing at least 40,000 Canadian jobs. That is a considerable amount. When we think of the growth in the energy sector, the loss of 40,000 potential jobs is extremely significant for our economic future.

Business of Supply

What we are seeing in study after study, whether it is done by Informetrica, Robyn Allan or the Alberta Federation of Labour, is that we are simply giving away a resource without putting in place the smart economic policies that allow for the value-added jobs that need to come with that resource. We can talk about the shut down of Interfor in New Westminster, B.C., and the subsequent export of raw logs that resulted, or the shutting down of smelting and refining of our minerals, losing more jobs than we have gained in the mining and quarrying sector. We can also talk about the export of raw bitumen, and losing as a result tens of thousands of potential jobs.

In every one of those cases, we are talking about ordinary families struggling to get by under phenomenally heavy debt loads that get worse every year as a result of the policies of our federal government. Rather than those families getting relief and an economic plan in place that would actually make sense to fully develop those resources and have value added, we see a government hell-bent on exporting those jobs. We have seen from a number of very credible observers and analyses that, obviously, there is an impact.

I would like to come back to the issue of climate change and pipeline safety because those issues are also germane to the debate that we are having today.

As I mentioned earlier, there is an annual evaluation of how Canada is doing called the "Climate Change Performance Index". In 2013, out of 61 countries evaluated by the Climate Change Performance Index, where do members think Canada stood? Do members think Canada was in the top 20? Well, it was not. Was it in the top 30, 40, 50? No. We placed 58th under the current government.

Placing 58th out of 61 countries in the 2013 Climate Change Performance Index is not an "F", it is being thrown out of the program. It is lamentably bad. There were countries that did worse. There were three of them. Kyrgyzstan was 59th, Iran 60th and Saudi Arabia was 61st.

Obviously, if what we are seeing around the world are other countries taking climate change seriously, we have to get with the program. It is not just Canadians who feel that way.

President Obama referenced this in connection with Keystone. He said very clearly that Canada, being a climate change laggard, had to start taking very concrete action on climate change and the environment. President Obama could not have been more clear. Therefore, if Keystone is not approved, it is as a result of the failure of the Conservative government to take any sort of action on the environment and climate change. Being 58th in the world clearly shows that.

I also mentioned pipeline safety. We have seen a doubling of the number of spills across Canada, which is of increasing concern to Canadians.

We believe in our leader, the member for Outremont and Leader of the Opposition, who has said repeatedly that we need to put in place a national energy strategy. We need to ensure value-added production in this country. We need to ensure that we have the top level of pipeline safety, and take action on climate change, of course,

but also take action on the environment. We need to start transitioning to clean energy.

There is a trillion-dollar market worldwide, which is going to double over the next decade. Canada gets very little of that. In fact, in very real terms, the hundreds of thousands of new jobs that are coming from clean energy simply are not reflected in the Canadian economy. Therefore, folks across the country who will be looking in 2015 for real leadership can look to the NDP to put in place that national energy strategy in co-operation with the provinces, which will bring those value-added jobs and clean-energy jobs for all Canadians.

• (1035)

Ms. Lois Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened quite carefully to the comments on climate change made by my colleague. My question is simple. Could he table in the House the number of flights he has taken back and forth across the country this year. Also, when is his flight, either tonight or tomorrow?

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, I am saddened by that. We are having a serious debate on value-added jobs and the environment and, as usual, the Conservatives do not seem to have anything to add to the debate.

It is sad when we think of the hundreds of thousands of value-added jobs we have lost under the current government and the appallingly poor reputation this country has now as a result of the Conservatives' inaction on climate change. Out of 61 nations worldwide, we rank 58th; however, all they can do is bring ad hominem attacks on individual MPs. That is exactly what many people have referred to as the "bullying" that takes place from the Conservative government. The Conservatives attack people. We had the Minister of Natural Resources say that anyone opposed to the northern gateway pipeline was some kind of a radical. In my province of British Columbia, that is three-quarters of the population. Three-quarters of the population are saying that it does not make sense to threaten thousands of jobs that depend on a clean environment for the 104 full-time on-site jobs that we would get through the northern gateway project.

The Conservatives need to start listening to the public, and they can start by listening on the topic of value-added jobs.

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my hon. colleague's speech today. I find the motion and his speech somewhat contradictory. On the one hand, he is saying that the New Democrats are bringing forward the motion because they want to have more jobs, processing and upgrading this product here in Canada. On the other hand, he is saying that they are bringing the motion because of their concerns about the environment and greenhouse gases. Surely, if we do more processing and upgrading, that would contribute to emissions. I don't know what his solution to that is.

Business of Supply

I am also concerned that the NDP wants to manage the economy and make decisions for the private sector about where it should do things, and so forth. That is somewhat contradictory and confusing. At the same time, the New Democrats are saying their concern is that this will increase oil sands production. They have said before that they are against the Keystone pipeline because of that. They say it will increase it by 830,000 barrels per day, yet they support the energy east pipeline, which will carry 1.1 million barrels per day. In other words, it will carry more than the Keystone pipeline, which would carry 830,000 barrels a day.

How does the NDP explain these contradictions? I must say that it leaves me a bit baffled.

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, it is a difficult task, but I will try to make the Liberals a little less confused. They do seem to be very confused on the policy positions they are taking.

I would start off by saying we have been clear that we think west-east pipelines, with refining and upgrading taking place in Canada, will reduce a huge dependence on foreign supplies of oil. Oil is being produced in the Middle East and shipped around the world, which is not a smart environmental initiative. That is happening on an ongoing basis. The Conservatives are looking at exporting raw bitumen. We are saying that a sensible national energy strategy would reduce our dependence on foreign supplies of oil and increase our energy security while we are transitioning to a clean environment economy. We have made no secret about that.

What I find confusing is that the Liberal leader has said, on the one hand, that he is for the environment. On the other hand, he has said that he is for Keystone. He says he believes that the CNOOC takeover of Nexen made good sense, even though most Albertans were opposed to that as well. We have a Liberal leader who is all over the map. I am certainly hearing that when I go door-knocking. The reality is that we do not know where the Liberals stand, yet they seem to stand with the Conservative government pretty well every day. What Canadians are looking for is a new government that will take a new approach and listen to Canadians. Canadians will say no to the old rhetoric of the past that came from the Conservatives and Liberals. I am convinced of that.

● (1040)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague if he thinks the environmental and safety risks create a deficit. The environmental repercussions come at a real-life cost to Canadians.

That cost is not offset by the jobs that are created from developing these resources, even if the people with those jobs invest in the local economy when they do their shopping.

Does it not create a deficit when we decide to develop something without taking full advantage of the gains available to us?

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, I would like to salute my colleague from Abitibi—Témiscamingue, who is now part of our natural resources team and who, each day in the House, stands up for the people of Abitibi—Témiscamingue.

There is a real contradiction here. There is no balance right now. As the member just said, pipelines are not as safe. The number of

pipeline leaks has doubled. Our record on climate change is horrendous. We rank 58th out of 61 countries, just above Kazakhstan. Canadians know full well that we can do better and that we need to do better.

We need a government that realizes that we can take care of our environment, create jobs with green and clean energy—which has enormous potential—and that we can also upgrade the value of industries such as the oil industry, where those value-added jobs are currently going.

The majority of oil used to be refined and produced in Alberta. Now, with the Conservative plan, very little of it would be. We are concerned that tens of thousands of jobs will be lost. We need to take a balanced approach, and the NDP will do just that in 2015.

[*English*]

Mr. Dan Albas (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member opposite's speech today. He is talking about an energy strategy. Obviously, he says that the NDP seems to now support a west-east pipeline, so I am glad to hear that.

In that case, I would ask the hon. member if he would then be supporting Bill C-3, an act to enact the aviation industry indemnity act and so on, particularly part 5, which would amend the Canada Shipping Act, 2001, to introduce new requirements for operators of oil handling facilities, including the requirement to notify the minister of their operations and to submit plans to the minister. This is an area of regulation that does need to be increased. We want to have sensible policies to make sure we do have a strong energy security plan going forward. I ask the member if he will support that bill and if his party supports that bill, because it is very reasonable.

Second to that, the fact is that the way the market works, if we cannot go through a pipeline, the other options are things like railways, trucking and so on. Does he understand that by opposing all pipelines that go north-south or that would go to international waters, he is actually putting that product to other lines that are not as safe as pipelines? I would just ask him to think about those things, because most trains go right beside streams and lakes. Has he considered that, and has he considered that the methods the NDP is using right now would actually cause more challenges for our product environmentally?

● (1045)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Burnaby—New Westminster has a little over 30 seconds.

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, with 30 seconds, I do not know where to start. I am reminded of the Prime Minister's contradiction from one day to the next in question period; the member contradicted himself from the beginning to the end of his questions.

Basically, this is the reality. On the west coast of British Columbia—and the member should know this—the government has closed the Kitsilano Coast Guard Station. It shut down the marine traffic control centre. It shut down the emergency oil spill response centre. It held a press conference to say that it was going to do something about security, and we know that the rescue vessel that they had for the press conference ran aground. We have a government of Keystone Kops, but it is putting the coast of British Columbia at risk and it is putting the lives of British Columbians at risk. We will not stand for it.

We are going to keep standing up for British Columbia—

The Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources.

Mrs. Kelly Block (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to have the opportunity to clearly lay out the absurdity of the NDP's position on the Keystone XL pipeline, in general, and resource development. I am hoping we may finally receive a clear and consistent statement from the NDP on its anti-development agenda. Its policy chaos and political opportunism of the last two years has been incredibly difficult for me and Canadians to follow.

Let me begin by stating our government's position on Keystone XL. We support this important project because it will create hundreds of thousands of jobs for Canadians and billions in economic growth. It is an important project for the Canadian economy and, as the U.S. State Department confirmed, it will not significantly exacerbate the problem of GHG emissions. The fact is that pipelines are the safest method to transport oil, with a safety record of over 99.999%. We have taken action to further improve this record. We have doubled the number of annual audits, increased pipeline inspections by 50% and imposed strict fines for Canadians who break our strong environmental protections. We are also requiring that companies operating a major pipeline in Canada demonstrate \$1 billion in financial capacity, to ensure they have the ability to clean up after any spill.

Our government believes we must develop our economy while protecting the environment. I am proud to say we are doing just that. This is what Canadians want and what our government is delivering. It is no wonder that a broad coalition of Canadian political leaders, industry and business groups, as well as labour unions, has formed to support our plan and the Keystone XL pipeline.

The problem is that the NDP has refused to listen to anyone who disagrees with its position. It is, not surprisingly, ignoring the thousands of businesses across Canada that support Keystone XL and the voices of Canadian business in Canada, such as the Canadian Chamber of Commerce and the Council of Chief Executives.

They also will not listen to the elected leaders of provincial governments across Canada. The provinces of Alberta, British Columbia and Saskatchewan have shown strong support for this project. They have been sharply critical of the NDP and its anti-development agenda. The Premier of Saskatchewan went so far as to say that the NDP leader was betraying Canadian interests. The Premier of Alberta agreed, berating the NDP leader for not showing national leadership. The NDP will not even listen to its own provincial cousins, who have also supported this project. The leader

Business of Supply

of the Saskatchewan NDP was clear when he said, "...I support the Keystone XL pipeline...".

Of course, the NDP has also decided to ignore the labour unions that it claims to represent in this chamber. Buzz Hargrove, the former member of the Canadian Auto Workers, who was a leader in the labour movement for decades, chastised the NDP for its anti-Keystone position. I remind members opposite that he said we should not stop the expansion of the work in the oil sands, nor Keystone XL. We need the jobs.

It is not just Buzz Hargrove who opposes the NDP's position. Canadian labour unions, such as Canada's building trades, the United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipefitting Industry of the USA and Canada, the General International Union of Operating Engineers, the Laborers' International Union of North America, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers know that the future prosperity for Canadian families lies with the responsible development of our natural resources. That is why they publicly support major energy infrastructure projects.

Chris Smillie, the policy director for Canada's building trades union, which represents more than 450,000 Canadians, concluded that the NDP appears to be "more of a fringe group still rather than the official Opposition" and that:

The NDP would be very bad for workers and the entire Canadian economy. They haven't risen to the task.

Finally, the NDP will not even listen to the science. When an over 2,000 page technical scientific report on Keystone XL, done by the U.S. State Department, was released, the NDP dismissed it. Instead, the deputy leader of the NDP dismissed its findings without even a cursory review.

● (1050)

This report concluded that:

...approval or denial of the proposed Project is unlikely to have a substantial impact on the rate of development in the oil sands, or on the amount of heavy crude oil refined in the Gulf Coast area."

It added that its denial would therefore have a negligible impact on emissions.

The common theme in the support given by all these organizations and people across Canada for Keystone XL is the thousands of jobs and the economic growth this pipeline would create. Canada's natural resource sector currently contributes to the employment of 1.8 million Canadians, almost 20% of Canadian jobs.

Canada is a leader in mining, with over 50% of equity for mining projects raised in Canada. We have the third-largest reserves of oil in the world and we are the second-largest producer of uranium. Whether it is natural gas, metals, minerals, or forestry, Canada punches above its weight. This is something all Canadians should be proud of.

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Unfortunately, the NDP has never shown any pride in these facts. It is hard to find a time when New Democrats say anything in support of Canadian industry. The NDP wants to shut down the employment of tens of thousands of Canadians in Canada's nuclear industry. These are highly skilled positions that pay well and contribute significantly to Canada's engineering and scientific workforce.

In response to a 2008 Greenpeace survey, the NDP said:

Canada's New Democrats do not support nuclear energy. Nuclear energy is dangerous, prohibitively expensive and far from a solution to climate change.

Or to quote the leader of the NDP:

I want to be very clear. The NDP is opposed to any new nuclear infrastructure in Canada.

New Democrats are also opposed to the use of shale gas in Canada, even though the decision to pursue its development is solely under the purview of the provinces. In their ideological opposition to resource development, they do not even respect provincial jurisdiction.

New Democrats cannot even unite to support the forestry sector, which employs hundreds of thousands of Canadians. The member for Winnipeg Centre stated that we should not "...be talking about a better way to cut down more trees and build with material that begins to rot the moment you use it."

Finally, the NDP's opposition to the oil sands could not be clearer. Famously, the NDP leader says that the oil sands are contributing to Dutch disease by hollowing out Canada's manufacturing sector, even though this industry is employing hundreds of thousands of Canadians across this country. In Ontario alone, there are 500 manufacturing companies that are supplying the oil sands.

The Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters say:

The fact is that all Canadians stand to benefit in very real ways from the wealth created by these developments...

If I had the choice to listen to the NDP or the very organization that supports Canadian manufacturers, I know where I would stand.

Economists across the country, including our former governor of the Bank of Canada, have all debunked this myth. The NDP, though, refuses to listen. This blatant disregard for the benefit of the oil sands is not surprising. The NDP's former environment critic called for a moratorium on oil sands development. The leader of the NDP personally wrote the foreword to a book by Andrew Nikiforuk, praising the author's insights, which included shutting down the oil sands by 2030 and imposing a massive carbon tax to discourage their use.

The NDP's opposition to the oil sands is even more apparent when the topic of pipelines is discussed. The NDP has opposed every pipeline that is currently before a review panel, prior to hearing the evidence, and many that are not even at the stage of a review panel. For a party that says it respects science, it would appear that it does not at all.

The NDP is opposed to the northern gateway without hearing from an expert panel on the safety of the pipeline. It will not even wait for an application from Kinder Morgan for its Trans Mountain pipeline before coming out as firmly opposed to the project.

● (1055)

On Keystone XL, New Democrats are not content to argue against Canadian jobs in Canada; they must also go to our largest trading partner and argue against Canada. They sent their deputy leader to Washington, D.C., to argue against Canadian jobs, followed shortly afterward by the leader of the NDP.

In fact, following the meeting with House minority leader Nancy Pelosi, the minority leader said that Canadians are opposed to pipelines. I can only imagine what the leader of the NDP told her in that meeting. I would have hoped that as a country we could keep our disputes internal; instead, New Democrats have decided to argue against Canadian interests to our most important ally and trading partner in the U.S.

Finally, I would like to touch on the topic of refineries, as New Democrats have talked often about this subject.

Our government is, of course, very supportive of the refining sector. We have lowered taxes for these companies, just as we have lowered taxes for companies across Canada. We are also supportive in principle of a pipeline going from western Canada to the east in order to provide low-cost Canadian crude.

Canada is a refining powerhouse, refining more oil than we use in Canada. We currently export more than 400,000 barrels of refined product to the United States every day. Canadians are justifiably proud of their refinery sector.

The New Democrats, though, have a completely incoherent position when it comes to refineries and building pipelines to the east coast.

First, they want to institute a job-killing carbon tax that would hit refineries the hardest of any industry in Canada. Their 2011 election platform planned to raise over \$21 billion from their carbon scheme. In fact, the leader of the NDP is counting on \$21 billion in revenue from his carbon tax, the centrepiece of his economic plan. To win the NDP leadership, the leader of the NDP promised to go beyond the carbon scheme, but that is only the beginning of the NDP's policy incoherence on refineries.

New Democrats support refineries, but not the pipelines that would transport the crude oil to them. They say they do not want to subsidize the oil and gas industry, yet the only way to institute their refinery plans is to use government tax dollars to build refineries. Of course, refineries are owned by oil and gas companies. I am sure the members opposite are shocked to hear this.

Finally, New Democrats say they support pipelines going east in order to support refinery jobs in eastern Canada, yet they are opposed to line 9B, the only pipeline that has been officially proposed to do precisely that.

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The leader of the NDP has been very clear in saying, and I will translate, “We cannot reverse the flow of the Enbridge Line 9 pipeline”. Through this reckless position, New Democrats are putting 500 refinery jobs in Lévis in jeopardy.

To quote the head of Valero, which owns the refinery in Lévis, and again I translate, “The project aimed to reverse the flow of the pipeline between Montreal and Sarnia is a necessity, and its failure would put into question future investment at the Lévis refinery, which could lead to its eventual closure”.

For a party that claims to support a pipeline going east and refineries, the NDP has a strange way of showing it. With friends like that, who needs enemies?

Our government will continue to support responsible resource development to create jobs and economic growth across Canada. There are over \$650 billion worth of projects being proposed in Canada over the next 10 years. These projects would create thousands of jobs and billions of dollars in economic growth. We must seize the opportunity before it is lost to us, but we must do so while protecting the environment. Our government's plan on responsible resource development provides a balance of environmental protection and economic development. The NDP's plan will only kill Canadian jobs and economic growth.

In conclusion, our government will continue to aggressively defend our interests on the international scene and seek to have Keystone XL approved. We will not apologize for defending Canadian jobs and we can only hope that the NDP will do the same.

• (1100)

Mr. Robert Chisholm (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I was riveted by the presentation from the member opposite in the way she tried to cast the positions that have been taken on this and other issues by the official opposition.

It reminded me very much of what the Prime Minister said in his speech to the Conservative delegates the other day, when he said that he did not give a darn what the opposition said or, frankly, what Canadians said about any particular issue.

That is why I want to ask and probe a little further about comments the Prime Minister made about the President of the United States, because he said the same thing about him on the approval of the Keystone XL pipeline. He said he will not take no for an answer. In fact, he said, “We haven't had that [no] but if we were to get that, that won't be final. This won't be final until it's approved and we will keep pushing forward.”

I want to ask the member if she would explain to us why the Prime Minister of Canada would be so outspoken and irreverent, speaking in these terms to the elected leader of the United States of America on an issue within the boundaries of that country.

Mrs. Kelly Block: Mr. Speaker, I find that question very curious. I would think the answer is obvious.

It is the role of the Government of Canada to continue to aggressively act on behalf of the interests of Canadians. As I said, our government will continue to aggressively defend our interests on the international scene and will seek to have Keystone XL approved.

I do not know why the member is so confused and needs clarification on that point. That is the role of the Government of Canada: to ensure the best representation of our interests, both at home and abroad.

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonaville—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member alluded to the carbon tax being proposed by the NDP, even though I do not think the party explicitly said that.

However, her party's position in the prior election looks eerily similar to what the NDP said in the last election. Could the member explain the difference between her party's promise and the NDP promise?

Mrs. Kelly Block: Mr. Speaker, when we look at the position that our government has taken as opposed to the position the opposition has taken, we can see that our position is very clear.

Let us talk a little more about their position. The NDP supports refineries but not pipelines. The NDP says it does not want to subsidize the oil and gas industry, yet it wants government tax dollars to build refineries. The former NDP environment critic called for a moratorium on oil sands development, yet now the NDP wants more refineries built to process oil sands crude.

The NDP does not care about independent, comprehensive scientific reviews. It has already decided it is against projects that support Canada's energy economy and the jobs that come with it.

While the NDP's position is incoherent and contradictory, we will continue to champion a sensible approach that protects the environment while supporting the economy.

• (1105)

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member for Saskatoon—Rosetown—Biggar's speech was well researched and demonstrates why she is such an effective member of Parliament. I want to comment on a number of elements of her speech.

She talked about the immediate dismissal of President Obama's scientists by the New Democrats. They did not even bother reading the State Department's report on science; they just immediately rejected it. It is almost like they are deniers of science. The lack of trust the New Democrats have shown in President Obama and his scientists is of deep concern.

I am also stunned that the New Democrats are prepared to dismiss, out of hand, the teamsters, the building trades council and to dismiss the wisdom of Buzz Hargrove when it comes to this issue. When this government brought out an environment policy, Buzz Hargrove supported it. The New Democrats want to dismiss these Canadians as second rate and do not want anything to do with them.

The last point I want to comment on is that the New Democrats want to propose more refineries in Canada. This would cause emissions to skyrocket in our country. They support a carbon tax on increased emissions. I guess they could get more tax revenue that way.

Mrs. Kelly Block: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague could not be more right.

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Our government is playing a leadership role and taking significant action to address climate change. We have comments from Chris Smillie, the policy director for the Canadian building trades, which represents over 450,000 Canadians, who concluded that the NDP appeared to be more of a fringe group still, rather than the official opposition.

I suggest the New Democrats have to develop a more coherent policy position if they want to be credible in the eyes of unions across the country and Canadians.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, something I would like to pick up from my friend from Nova Scotia is the Prime Minister's diplomacy with a bat in New York and in Washington. He said, "I won't take no for an answer". This is the strategy of the current Prime Minister who has been lacking in strategic coherence on a whole number of files, but in this one—

• (1110)

Mr. Leon Benoit: Come on, you do not believe that.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: I am sorry, is he handling the scandal in the Senate very well? Is the slow peeling-off of the Band-Aid working out strategically for the grand master right now? No.

In the Keystone issue and the promotion of Canada energy abroad, we are looking at a Prime Minister who says that to the U.S. government that he "won't take no for an answer".

I would like members, and my friend from Saskatchewan across the way, to imagine for a moment the reverse scenario, that of a U.S. president visiting, say Toronto, and talking about a contentious project that was mostly based in Canada that had all sorts of controversy about it for Canadians. I would like members to imagine this U.S. president would come to Canada and say, "I don't actually really care what the decision from the Canadian government is, America will not take no for an answer from Canada".

Could members imagine the natural and appropriate outcry from the Canadian government, from the official opposition and from Canadians in general, to the idea of a foreign leader coming into our country and saying "no is not an option". It speaks of a certain arrogance and a lack of tact that has created the very uncertainty in the energy sector for which the Conservatives are responsible. They cannot simply bully and bulldoze their way over serious and legitimate concerns.

The Prime Minister has expressed no regret for such a statement and for such arrogance. Does my friend think that was a tactically intelligent thing to do, to go and essentially dismiss the U.S. President and the U.S. government and their opinions over such an important issue as the building of a significantly long pipeline?

Mrs. Kelly Block: Mr. Speaker, if we are to talk about coherence, let us talk about the resource policy of the no development party: oppose any project that creates jobs in the oil sector; lobby the U.S. government to oppose Keystone XL and the 140,000 jobs it would create for Canadians; oppose the nuclear sector and its 30,000 jobs; oppose clean energy initiatives such as the Lower Churchill project; and oppose the forestry sector and its communities.

While the New Democrats oppose everything and would destroy hundreds of thousands of Canadian jobs with their reckless agenda,

our Prime Minister and our government will continue to support responsible resource development to create jobs and economic growth across Canada, here at home and in the United States.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise and attempt to contribute to this debate on an NDP motion because the Liberal Party recognizes the importance of a national energy strategy. As Alberta's Premier Redford said, it is important for our economy, for job creation and for the future of our middle class.

[*English*]

The NDP motion states:

That, in the opinion of the House, the Keystone XL pipeline would intensify the export of unprocessed raw bitumen and would export more than 40,000 well-paying Canadian jobs, and is therefore not in Canada's best interest.

I do not think Canadians would be surprised by this motion from the NDP, but they will be disappointed, yet again, by a lack of commitment to natural resources development and, most important, the creation of economic opportunity.

It is nice to know that some people are watching our debate today. The Canadian building trades Council has tweeted, "Cnda needs to get the #keystone debate right. Did u know almost 2/3 of bitumen will be upgraded in facilities built by skild trades workrs?"

First, the amount of production from the oil sands and from Alberta generally is well above the capacity we are going to see from the existing pipelines. Even if Keystone is built, even if, as I hope is Energy East is built, obviously following the proper environmental regulations and processes, there is still excess capacity.

More important, what the building trades council is saying is that much of this bitumen will be upgraded. Moreover, what the NDP seems to fail to comprehend is that even if we have more upgrading and refining in Alberta or in Canada generally, the product is not all going to be consumed in Alberta or even in the rest of the country. It is going to have to be moved somehow. Why would the New Democrats be opposed to the best means available to move the product, which obviously is pipelines?

That is the point and that is where the NDP motion today makes absolutely no sense. The NDP members seem to be conflicted about what their reason for this resolution is. If it is actually because they want to create jobs in Canada, it is illogical economically. If it is actually about the environment, it is not realistic because we know that more and more oil these days is being moved by train, so there are alternatives.

Nevertheless, first, it is important to get Keystone built because pipelines are the best way to do this and the safest way to move oil, in my opinion. Second, it is important that we get access to that U.S. market and other markets, which is why Energy East is so important.

This misguided motion really fails to recognize the importance of our energy sector. It fails to address the need to get our natural resources to those markets about which I have talked.

It is disappointing to see the NDP approach in a week when we witnessed the premiers of British Columbia and Alberta coming together and working together to advance a Canadian energy strategy, which will help Canada develop its resources responsibly, while promoting clean energy and reducing carbon emissions. Those should be our objectives.

Unfortunately, there is an absence of this kind of leadership in Ottawa, both within the NDP and within the Conservative government. The Prime Minister has failed to advance strong environmental policy in our country, including transparent oversight, tougher penalties and a price on carbon pollution. Even though Conservatives talked about it in previous elections, they have not moved on it at all.

This inaction has had serious consequences for our environment, our reputation internationally and our economy. It is having serious consequences right now in terms of creating the social licence in the U.S. to get the approval that Keystone requires. That is letting down the producers and letting down Canadians across the country, particularly in the province of Alberta and also in Saskatchewan. If we do not demonstrate to the world that we as a country are serious about the environment, we will find it harder and harder to export our resources to global markets.

• (1115)

If we follow the NDP approach, we would end up moving backward, instead of building a better future for our middle class.

Once again, the NDP is attempting to score cheap political points with a motion condemning the construction of a vital piece of energy infrastructure, despite the fact that it has come out in support of similar projects in other parts of the country.

The Liberal Party supports building pipelines to move our energy resources to market. These projects cannot ignore very serious concerns about aboriginal rights, responsible development and strong, environmental protections. Instead of opposing energy development, foreign investment and job creation, in my view, the NDP should be engaging in the discussion on a national energy strategy, which would provide stable growth in an environmentally responsible fashion. That is the challenge. That is the balance that has to be achieved here.

The NDP motion instead provides clear evidence that its party does not recognize the importance of Alberta and all of western Canada to our shared future. The NDP argues that the Keystone XL project should be rejected because it would increase the development of the oil sands. In fact, its candidate in Toronto Centre has said “we need some kind of moratorium on further development” on the oil sands. I hope my hon. colleagues will be commenting on whether they agree with that point of view. I hope I will have a chance to ask them about that during the questions and comments on their speeches.

To me, that is not a realistic or responsible approach. The fact is that if we listen to people who are experts on energy internationally, they will say that whether we like it or not, we will consume

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petroleum products for decades to come. Should we be trying to deal with that and reduce the emissions from those products, both in their production and consumption? Absolutely. Should we be moving to renewables? Absolutely. However, the fact is that we are going to use them and it is going to take a long time to move away from them. We should move quickly to do the things I just described to help our environment, but it does not happen overnight.

If the NDP is arguing this in terms of rejecting the project because it will increase development, at the same time we have its party leader wholeheartedly supporting the Energy East pipeline, which would move more oil from the oil sands to refineries in eastern Canada and for export abroad than Keystone would. If it is really about emissions, it does not make any sense. The New Democrats are doing this because of the environment, which they were arguing as part their argument and which is a contradictory argument that it is an element of what they are saying. It does not hold water in view of the position in relation to Energy East.

In fact, on August 1, the NDP energy critic and the mover of today's motion, said that the Trans-Canada Energy East pipeline was a “win-win” for Canada. What is fascinating about the NDP position is that Energy East has projected to increase oil sands development 30% more than Keystone XL would do. It is 1.1 million barrels per day versus 830,000 barrels per day. It is not logical.

Someone has to ask how serious this motion is. It looks like a typical, hypocritical move from a party that has difficulty being consistent on the big issues. Just like the Conservatives, the NDP leader and his party do not understand that the job of the Prime Minister is to open up markets abroad for Canadian resources, help create Canadian jobs and help create a responsible and sustainable way to get those resources to those markets.

Even the NDP leader's provincial counterparts do not support his position on Keystone. We know the history of the NDP in Saskatchewan is deep and rich, and I respect that. In September, Saskatchewan NDP leader Cam Broten soundly rejected the federal party's stance on the pipeline and noted that approval of the Keystone XL project was in the best interests of Saskatchewan.

This motion also reminds us that, in the view of the NDP, a vital part of our economy is a disease, effectively. That is unfortunate.

• (1120)

When our Liberal leader was in Washington recently, he told an audience, an audience actually of American liberals, that we in this party support Keystone XL. We support Keystone, because having examined the facts and accepted the judgment of the National Energy Board, we know that it is in the national interest.

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It would not eliminate all our economic problems, as its most ardent supporters might suggest, nor would it precipitate the end of the world as we know it, as its most vocal opponents contend. On balance, it would create jobs and growth, strengthen our ties with the world's most important market, and generate wealth and jobs. It would offer much-needed flexibility in the constrained continental energy delivery system. Most of all, it would be in keeping with what I believe is the fundamental role of the Government of Canada: to open up markets abroad for Canadian resources and thereby create jobs for Canadians and help provide better lives for our people, which is what we are here for. It would help create responsible and sustainable ways to get those resources to those markets.

The NDP approach is to oppose this project, which is akin to opposing the development of our Canadian economy. That is not leadership.

Neither is the Conservatives' approach, though. Whether it is the bullying around Keystone and northern gateway with their one-sided approach to regulation in Bill C-38 or their demonization of people who care about the environment, the message from this right-wing government is clear: This is a black-and-white, us-versus-them world, and one is either with us or against us; we are not going to take no for an answer.

That is not realistic.

In his own words, the Prime Minister "couldn't care less" what Canadians think.

After eight years, here is what the so-called friendliest government the Canadian energy industry has ever had has accomplished. We are further than ever from a sensible policy to reduce carbon pollution. The government has failed to move the yardstick on one of the most important infrastructure projects of our generation, the Keystone XL pipeline. It has needlessly antagonized our closest friend and most important market. It has failed to gain access to the growing markets of the Asia-Pacific region.

It is time that both the Conservatives and the NDP got behind projects like Keystone XL and stopped acting like Keystone Kops.

Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened very carefully to our colleague's comments. It is ironic and very curious. I seem to recall that it was the Liberal leader who went to Washington and said that the strongest middle-class jobs in Canada right now are in the resource sector. That raises the question of why he would want to export basically unprocessed oil. We would be sending 40,000 jobs to the south. It does not make sense. I wonder if he would explain this contradiction from his leader.

Hon. Geoff Regan: Mr. Speaker, the basic problem I see with my hon. colleague's argument and with the NDP's argument is that they are viewing it as an either/or proposition. Either we stop Keystone and force all this to be processed in Canada or we are going to lose all these jobs.

I laid out for her the fact that even the building trades council told us that two-thirds of the bitumen that would be coming would, in fact, be processed in upgraders in Alberta and perhaps in Saskatchewan. I also talked about the fact that even if we do refine or upgrade more of it in Canada, we would still have to move the resulting product, because we would not consume all of it in Canada.

We are talking about how we would get the product to markets around the world. The NDP has completely failed to recognize that this would help us create the jobs it said it is in favour of.

•(1125)

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Lapointe (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I found the Liberal leader's remarks in Washington last December quite disturbing.

Not long ago, the Obama administration clearly stated that before even beginning to consider the project, it would have to ensure that environmental parameters were in place. Right after that, the Liberal leader expressed his unequivocal support for the project and made some pretty harsh comments about the positions environmental groups have taken on the issue. That was a major misstep for a leader who claims to care about the environment. How can he possibly justify such statements?

To top it all, the next day, the Liberals asked a question in the House about the need for a better environmental framework. I would suggest that next time, the Liberals think before they act, especially when they are in other countries.

Hon. Geoff Regan: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my hon. colleague's question. However, I suggest he take a look at statements his leader made in other countries. He made statements critical of the Canadian government and Canada's position.

Sure we have problems here. Sure we disagree on some things, but I am very proud of the fact that, unlike the NDP leader, our leader chose not to attack the Conservative government when he was in Washington.

The other weakness in the member's argument is that he claims they will reduce oil sands development while stating that oil sands development will create jobs in Canada. They have to choose one or the other; they cannot have it both ways.

[*English*]

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a couple of points for my friend. First, does he, the Liberal Party, and his leader realize that when they sanction Conservative efforts and policies, they sanction all the policies in that agenda? They are saying that the environmental assessments that have been torn apart by the government and the changing of Canadian law to allow pipelines to be rubber-stamped are also sanctioned by their party, because to condone one is to condone the other.

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The process by which the Conservative government arrived at promoting this pipeline, and the gateway pipeline in northern B.C., which I think his leader opposes, is the same process. To suddenly say that the Conservative energy policy is terrible but that the Liberals agree with it is not really a tenable option to have.

Second, this idea that when travelling abroad, Canadian leaders, such as our New Democratic leader, should never voice any concerns about Canadian policy, particularly such a wrong-headed policy as the one being promoted by the Conservatives, and that it is somehow undiplomatic, seems patently bizarre. The only thing his leader could do is go down to Washington and congratulate the current Prime Minister for his energy promotion. While that makes them friendly, and I know that the grand compact may come together, it seems strange that the only thing he and his party think is tenable for Canadians to do when abroad is simply agree with whatever the government of the day has to say.

We need to tell the Americans that there is a second view on energy policy in Canada. All the ads being paid for by the Canadian government in Washington, all the lies being repeated in the promotion, and the arrogance that has been suggested by the Prime Minister in saying that they will not take no for an answer and that this is a no-brainer project, is not in agreement with the majority of Canadians.

When our leader went to Washington and said that, I do not know why the member sees that as such a problem. To say that conversation is important is a Canadian value. That is what we promoted when we were in Washington, Canadian value—

• (1130)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Halifax West.

Hon. Geoff Regan: Mr. Speaker, I hope my hon. friend from Skeena—Bulkley Valley will start listening, because I am trying to answer his question. It is unfortunate that he mischaracterized completely our position and what our leader said and did when he was in Washington. To say that we have sanctioned the Conservatives' energy policy or their environmental policy would mean that he has to have had his ears plugged for years. He certainly did not listen to my speech if that is what he thinks. He certainly has not listened to any of the speeches members on this side of the House have been making for a long time.

Where the NDP have really blown it is that they fail to understand the economics of this. They fail to recognize that the product we are talking about will be refined where it is cheapest to do so, which is typically near a large urban area. However, they decided they wanted to interfere in that process, that they should decide where the bitumen is upgraded and the oil refined. They have failed to recognize that even if they are right that they should be determining where this should be done, the resulting product would still have to move somehow. How would it be done unless there are pipelines like Keystone and energy east?

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Lapointe: Mr. Speaker, one question comes to mind following my hon. colleague's remarks. What people need to understand is that there is no longer any difference between the Liberal and Conservative positions—absolutely no difference, zero.

The Liberals are simply saying that the Conservatives inadvertently made a couple of statements that did not come out the right way when they were in the United States. That is the only argument they have left.

Let us be clear: all complex questions in relation to the environmental framework have gone out the window. Now the Liberals are on their side. That is why there can be no progress on the natural resources file. No one trusts this black-and-white thinking when it comes to resource development.

Hon. Geoff Regan: Mr. Speaker, clearly, my hon. colleague did not listen to my speech, so I suggest he read it. He could look at Hansard tomorrow, or the blues later today, and read my speech. I explained some of the many differences between us and the Conservatives.

However, what I find strange, unfortunate and disturbing about the NDP is how little they understand economic realities and the fact that petroleum products will be refined where it is cheapest to do so. In some cases, it is done in Alberta, which is good.

However, the NDP believe that if they form the next government, they will decide where it will be done. That does not make sense. We all know what happened in the Soviet Union and other places where efforts to control economic development did not turn out very well.

The fact is that refining all these products here in Canada is not realistic. Furthermore, we need a way to move the products once they are refined.

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by saying that I will be sharing my time with my colleague and friend from Ottawa Centre.

We experienced this in Quebec: we stripped our land of its natural resources and shipped them to other countries as quickly as we could. Rip it, strip it and send it so others can build bridges and all sorts of things.

We experienced this. At some point, we realized that it was not a brilliant approach and we learned our lesson.

Unfortunately, the Conservatives have not learned from the past or from others. I believe they have not learned because they do not want to. They do not want to know, as we say. They have their blinkers on and they just keep going, without caring about anything and without looking past their noses.

As the Prime Minister said recently, they don't care.

• (1135)

[*English*]

However, the New Democrats care. That is why we have presented this motion today, the motion presented by my colleague, the member for Burnaby—New Westminster, whose personal commitment to this issue I really admire.

[*Translation*]

There are two main problems with the Keystone project. First, it is a mismanagement of our natural resources and our economy and, in a nutshell, it is a mismanagement of our future.

Business of Supply

The Prime Minister's government is obsessed with natural resource development, often to the detriment of other sectors of our economy. All it wants to do is export our crude oil.

As the premier of Alberta said, moving crude oil is like destroying a plot of land, selling it and then handing the farm down to the next generation. If we want to properly develop the Alberta oil sands, we have to meet three basic conditions. First, we have to do it in an intelligent way. That means that we have to consider our long-term interests, which, I believe—and this is very important—include protecting our environment and everything that sustains us. The third condition is that we have to think about the future, especially that time when the oil will be gone.

What the government is proposing does not meet any of these three conditions. I would like to quote Gil McGowan, president of the Alberta Federation of Labour. At the National Energy Board hearings on the TransCanada Keystone project held in December 2007, he said:

What we fear is that the consequence of this particular action will be to deny Albertans literally thousands of high-paying, long-term jobs in upgraders and refineries....[E]very barrel of bitumen shipped down the Keystone pipeline or other similar proposed pipelines is a barrel of oil no longer available for value-added production and job creation here in Alberta.

However, the government is stubbornly insisting on going forward with this project. With such an approach, it is not surprising that Canada now has a trade deficit even though we had a surplus when the Conservatives took office.

I have other important concerns. In 2010, the oil sands accounted for 7% of Canada's greenhouse gas emissions. That is expected to rise to 14% by 2020.

Like the Liberal governments before them, the Conservatives—other than one leader who never became Prime Minister—do not take climate change seriously. However, there comes a point where we must do just that.

Since 2006, the government has been promising to regulate emissions from the oil and gas sectors. If I am not mistaken, it is now 2013. Nothing has been done for seven years. Is this because of ill will or incompetence? Seven years seems like a long time to wait to resolve such an important issue. Worse yet, the Conservatives think that others are not aware of what is happening. They are a bit like children who believe that they can behave however they like and still get whatever they want. Unfortunately, that is not how things work.

We know that President Obama has serious doubts. Although he says so in a very diplomatic fashion, the reason for his doubts is quite clear. President Obama said that he would evaluate the project based on whether or not it will significantly contribute to carbon in our atmosphere. He added that there is no doubt that Canada, at the source, could potentially be doing more to mitigate carbon release.

What was our Prime Minister's response? He said that he would not take no for an answer. We have to wonder what he will do. Maybe he will close the embassy in Washington. The Prime Minister does love to close embassies. He is looking to set an all-time record for closing embassies, on top of his records for issuing gag orders and muzzling scientists, to name just two. Maybe he will send a few important ministers to Washington to make a lot of noise, as he likes

to do. However, he will do absolutely nothing to address the root cause of the problem, which is his poor environmental management.

• (1140)

[*English*]

We know that colleagues on the other side are very skeptical of root causes. We heard a few months ago that the root cause of terrorism was terrorists. Well, I think that for the Conservative government, the root cause of climate change is probably climate. I think it should take the issue a bit more seriously.

[*Translation*]

That is all typical of this government's attitude. Make a whole lot of noise, but do not take any meaningful action. That is also typical of the Conservatives' short-sighted approach.

If we want to manage our natural resources properly, we have to think about the environment and climate change; we have to think about the future of Canadians and younger generations. We have to think about what we will do after, what we will do to break our dependence on fossil fuels. We need to focus more on green technologies, and we need to offer high-quality jobs here in Canada, not elsewhere.

I do not think that the members on the other side of the House are paying attention to what I am saying or what my colleagues in the official opposition have to say about this. That is too bad, and it all comes down to their attitude, which is that it does not matter what happens as long as it is not in their lifetime.

Unfortunately, this government's attitude is already having disastrous consequences for this planet. It is people like you and me who are paying the price, in Canada and around the world.

• (1145)

[*English*]

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I noticed recently in an article that the candidate for Toronto Centre said that we need some kind of moratorium on further development. That is certainly a little alarming. I believe she was referring to the oil sands of Alberta and Saskatchewan. I wonder if my hon. colleague feels that is really the right way to go.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Hélène Laverdière: Mr. Speaker, that is a very technical question.

I thought I heard the term moratorium, which I did not really use, so I find it difficult to put this into context. However, the fundamental principle for the development of this resource, as with all our natural resources, is to proceed intelligently by creating jobs here in Canada and preserving our environment.

Business of Supply

[English]

Mr. Ryan Leef (Yukon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague across the way said that members on this side of the House are not listening to them. I am sure she would agree that our responsibility is to listen to Canadians. We are listening to Canadians in the union trades, provincial premiers, including NDP provincial premiers. The voters in British Columbia were pretty clear in the last election when New Democrats told the truth about their position on pipelines. We saw exactly where it got them in that province.

It is not our side of the House that needs to start listening to them. It is the New Democrats' responsibility to start listening to Canadians' positions on this pipeline development. It is coming from their own union shops and NDP leadership across the provinces, provincial premiers.

What value does the member opposite put on the comments and concerns of provincial premiers on this topic?

[Translation]

Ms. Hélène Lavergère: Mr. Speaker, quite frankly, we really have nothing to learn from the other side of the House when it comes to listening to Canadians across the country, experts and officials.

Unfortunately, if there is a government that does not listen to the people, it is the current government. Indeed, my colleague seems to forget that we are in the House to represent our constituents. It would not be the first time that someone across the way fails to properly understand how the parliamentary system works.

Let us talk about listening. Former premier Ed Stelmach said that shipping raw bitumen is like scraping off the topsoil, selling it, and then passing the farm on to the next generation. They spoke about the unions. However, the president of the Alberta Federation of Labour said that there were fears that this project would effectively deprive Albertans of thousands of good jobs.

Would my hon. colleague like me to go on? I could give many other examples.

[English]

Mr. Robert Chisholm (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask my colleague to expand a little on this point.

Clearly, the government opposite does not care about the 40,000 jobs in processing bitumen, nor does the Liberal opposition care about that. My concern is that the leader of the Liberal Party, when he was in Washington last week, dismissed environmental concerns that have been expressed by Americans and Canadians. Now we learn that the Liberal candidate in Toronto Centre does not want to participate in a debate on climate change.

I wonder if the member would like to comment on what this says about the commitment of both the Liberals and Conservatives on these important issues.

• (1150)

[Translation]

Ms. Hélène Lavergère: Mr. Speaker, with regard to jobs, it has been clearly shown that exporting our jobs to the U.S. will certainly not benefit the Canadian economy.

In terms of climate change, the approach of the Conservatives—along with the Liberal governments before them—consists of burying their heads in the sand, hoping that the problem will disappear by itself. I am sorry, but we are dealing with our future and the future of our younger generations. I will oppose this.

[English]

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, what we are debating today is not just about one project. It is about leadership, policy and the future of our country.

Make no mistake, what we are talking about is how to responsibly develop our natural resources. This is not a new debate in this country. For many years, we have talked about the whole myth of Canadians being hewers of wood and drawers of water, and the notion that we could only take our raw materials and send them abroad.

Clearly that kind of approach is the past. What we are looking for is the future. The Conservatives are clearly living in the past. We know that. There is no question. In fact, they do not even apologize for it. They just talk about getting this raw material out, sending it to someone else, and that is fine. Rip it, strip it and send it, as they say.

We are saying that is not responsible development. We have heard that not only from people who look at the need for value added to create more jobs but also from people who are looking at what is happening in terms of the effects of this rapid development. Let us look at scientist Dr. Schindler's work on the effects of the rapid development, which was commissioned by the current government. It is about responsible development.

The government is in the past. Rip it, strip it and send it. We know where it sits.

In fact it was very bizarre when most recently our Prime Minister was in New York, not addressing the UN General Assembly as all responsible world leaders who were in New York were doing. Let us remember, our Prime Minister was in New York when the General Assembly was sitting and most world leaders were speaking to the General Assembly about the vision of their country, dealing with the major issues, be it on Syria or be it on climate change.

Our Prime Minister did not show up even though he was in town. He was addressing the Canadian American Business Council, which is a good group to speak to. We spoke to that group when I travelled with our leader to Washington. He was speaking to them about the need to push this project.

Now what is interesting about that is that most people thought our government was being hosted by the Canadian American Business Council. It turns out that taxpayers paid for this audience, \$65,000 of taxpayers' money so that the Prime Minister could have an audience to push his agenda.

Business of Supply

It was quite shocking. This information got out because the bill was sent by mistake to CTV as opposed to the embassy, but that is kind of how these guys manage things. It was \$6,500 for coffee, by the way. I thought it was outrageous enough to have a \$16 juice, but this was \$6,500 for coffee.

This was the approach the government took, but we know what it is about. We know it is the past. It is the old idea of not being able to do value added, so it will just rip it, strip it and send it, and that is the vision.

This debate is also about the other vision for development in this country. We believe we should have value added. We believe that we should take the resources that we have been given, our future for future generations, and be responsible with it. It is not just about hurrying it out the door and getting it over the border. It is about actually doing value added.

That is why New Democrats are putting this issue on the table. We agree with those who say we should look at the effect of the pipeline for Canadian workers and what it means in terms of the future. The future means looking at beyond a year or two years or three years. It means looking at it over a period of time to see the effects of these kinds of projects on our economy and on our environment. Our leader has been straightforward in saying that we need sustainable development, which is not the case with the government's agenda.

What is shocking is the Liberal Party. The Liberal Party would have us believe that it is concerned about the environment and responsible development. The Liberals jettisoned that. In fact what happened, which was shocking for many of us, is that when the leader of the Liberal Party went to Washington, he shocked a lot of people when he said that he was not going to criticize the policies of the present government. He did not believe that was his role, and I will come back to that later. Then he went on to advocate for and promote the Conservative government's agenda on the pipeline.

• (1155)

What was strange about that was that he was saying on the one hand, "I will not criticize the government abroad", and I think we will understand why that is a problem in a second, but then he went on to say how he supported the government's agenda on this pipeline project.

Many people were quite confused. They thought the Liberal Party still believed in sustainable development or some notion of responsible development, and that when it came to this new Liberal leader, the Liberals would actually take on the Conservatives on irresponsible development. However, he did not do that. It was surprising, because he then criticized our leader for going to Washington to explain our policies of responsible development.

I was with our leader when we met with business leaders and members of the administration. We talked very frankly about the need to have good relationships and about the need to have responsible development, and they quite agreed. In the United States right now, this topic is being debated very robustly. As a responsible opposition, we are debating it here today because we think it is important.

Our visit to Washington was to say how we disagreed fundamentally with the government on the environment in particular.

When the government decided to rip out environmental assessments at the federal level, not to participate responsibly in talks on climate change and not to follow up with commitments, we believed it was our responsibility as the responsible official opposition to let people know, especially our friends in the United States, our closest ally, what our vision was, and we got a very warm reception from them.

It was confusing for many people when we heard the leader of the Liberal Party saying that we should not do that when we go abroad. That is not leadership. Leadership is when we talk to our friends and allies about our vision.

I will give some detail. We were talking about the need for value added here in Canada. They understood that. Why? In the United States, and most government members probably do not know this, it is prohibited for states to export crude. They do not allow the export of crude, in other words, unrefined petroleum, in the United States, with the exception of Alaska. If we think about that, it is the exact opposite of our government. Our government encourages the export of unrefined and raw materials that are not value added. The Conservatives think it is great. They say we should go ahead and do it. We send our raw materials down to the states. They will refine it and we will buy it back. It is not responsible. It is the past, and we need to look to the future.

However, when the Liberal leader went to Washington, he said that looking at this particular project, it was a good project and it would create jobs. He actually said it would create jobs in the United States, so it really was confusing for Canadians. Whose jobs is he promoting, Canadian jobs or American jobs? I understand Conservatives do not worry about that, but when the leader of the Liberal Party goes to Washington and starts promoting a project that he acknowledges will create American jobs, we have to wonder what kind of vision he has.

He went further. He dismissed any criticism of Keystone as political games. When the leader of the Liberal Party promotes the Conservative agenda in Washington and suggests that outsourcing jobs is good for Canada, we have to challenge that vision.

The notion he argues that official opposition or opposition leaders should not go to Washington to critique the government is so offside. Before President Obama was president of the United States, he went on a world tour to say how he was different from then-sitting President Bush.

If we are to have responsible leadership in this country, we need a responsible leader. We have a responsible leader in this party. I would challenge anyone to look at our vision, compare it to the vision of the past, of the Conservatives, or the confused vision of the Liberal Party and decide who is serving Canada's interest. I would argue it is the NDP, and that is why we brought the motion to the House for debate today.

Business of Supply

• (1200)

Mrs. Kelly Block (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, earlier this morning, his colleague, the opposition critic for natural resources, made the observation that imports of foreign oil by tanker from the Middle East is bad for the environment and that it is better to use Canadian oil. Let us imagine for a moment that his colleague, and the member, are genuine about the arguments they are making today. We know that a pipeline going east would allow eastern Canadian refineries the opportunity to refine lower-cost Canadian oil and thereby protect jobs in this important but challenged industry, like they say they are trying to do. I am wondering if he could explain why then his party is opposed to Line 9?

Mr. Paul Dewar: Mr. Speaker, let me reiterate the problem with the government. As I said in my comments, it is living in the past. It still believes in the idea of just rip it, strip it and send it. We believe in value added.

Contrary to whatever interpretation she has of my colleague's comments, I can tell her that our policy is just that, value added. It is important to look at that.

When I look at what the government has done, it has ignored the opportunities to do value added. It is simply looking at the short term. When we are dealing with our natural resources we cannot just look at the short term because that undermines the future for our next generation. It also undermines the capacity of our economy to grow in a responsible manner. Therefore, when we look at what the government is doing, it is just saying to get the stuff out of here, rip it, strip it and send it. That is not a vision. That is, at the end of the day, doing what was done in the past.

Ms. Lois Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I note that my colleague said that his party and his leader were looking out for the interests of Canada, yet we have a quote from Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall who said that the NDP leader is “betraying Canadian interests”, and “What [the NDP leader] and the NDP are doing is being quite destructive in terms of getting this important pipeline approved”.

If we are looking out for Canadians, for jobs, for opportunity and for economic growth, those are the kinds of things that we need to keep Canada on track for long-term prosperity. I wonder if my colleague has any comments about what Mr. Wall has said, since they are both part of the same philosophical base.

Mr. Paul Dewar: Mr. Speaker, in the last part I was not sure if she was saying that Mr. Wall and our party have the same philosophical base. I am not sure if she was meaning to say that.

I agree with Premier Wall on the Senate. In fact, yesterday was a historic day when the Saskatchewan legislature passed a very important motion to abolish the Senate. We do not agree on everything, but Premier Wall led on this issue and he should be listened to on the abolition of the Senate.

I still point to the fact that it is important to do value added. The government is not looking at that. We want to create jobs here, not in the United States, and that is what its policy is all about.

Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a couple of things I would like the member to clarify for me. I can understand the rip it, strip it and send it quote because they do a lot of that in my community of Nickel Belt with the mines, but I would like him to explain. I am not sure if I heard correctly that the Canadian government spent \$65,000 to bring in some people so they could try to convince them that they need our jobs. Do they need our jobs? Then he said something else about not being allowed to export raw material from the United States, yet the government is trying to convince them that we should do that with our raw material.

I am not sure if I understood correctly. Could he clarify that for me please?

• (1205)

Mr. Paul Dewar: Mr. Speaker, I would love to. It is true. The government paid \$65,000 to basically rent a crowd. It was an important crowd to talk to. We talked to the Canadian American Business Council when we were in Washington, but it invited us and hosted us. The government paid \$65,000 of taxpayers' money to have an audience that would be receptive to its message on the pipeline. It was \$6,500 just for the coffee. It is outrageous.

The other thing he mentioned, and I will underline this point, was that with the exception of Alaska, in the United States it is prohibited to export crude, in other words, unrefined petroleum. It has to be refined. Why is that? It is because the United States understands value added. That is the problem with our government. It is living in the past. It does not understand. We need to create jobs for the future of responsible development. That is what we are arguing as the official opposition, different from the Liberal Party and different from the Conservatives.

Mr. Ryan Leef (Yukon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the hard-working member for Vegreville—Wainwright

I am pleased to have an opportunity to respond to the motion by the member for Burnaby—New Westminster. As members know, global economic forces are undergoing a fundamental shift, and energy is a critical part of that transformation. Canada is being confronted by both daunting challenges and extraordinary opportunities for energy resources. Our sole customer, the United States, is now destined to become the world's top energy producer. Other potential international buyers of Canadian energy, until now, have been out of the reach of our energy producers.

This disadvantage is about to change. The Government of Canada is taking action, responsibly and safely, to propel Canada's energy sector into a new era of sustainable prosperity and security and a brighter, more promising economic future for all Canadians, their children, and their grandchildren.

Here is why our energy sector will continue to prosper.

Business of Supply

The International Energy Agency predicts that global energy demand will rise by more than a third within the next 25 years. More than 95% of the expected increase in energy demand will come from non-OECD countries, with China and India leading the way. The IEA also predicts that 25 years from now, fossil fuels will continue to be the world's dominant source of energy, accounting for more than 60% of global energy demand. People in countries like China, Japan, South Korea and India know full well the extent of the resources that we have here in Canada, and the obvious practical advantages of shipping from our west coast. They also understand that Canada is a reliable source of energy in a frequently unstable world.

Clearly, the time is right for both producer and consumer. We need to diversify our markets, and they need to diversify their sources of supply. As a result, the international demand for Canadian energy will only grow. Canada cannot stand still and miss these opportunities. We cannot and we will not.

Throughout the world, energy security is the common coin for industrial development and is fundamental to the growth and stability of nations. Energy security supports political stability and economic prosperity. The practical question of ensuring energy security on a global basis is a growing challenge, but one for which Canada is uniquely equipped to play a key role. A key point to remember about energy security is that only 20% of the world's oil reserves are not controlled by state companies, and 60% of that free enterprise oil is located right here in Canada.

As I have indicated, by the end of this decade the U.S. is expected to be the world's biggest producer of oil. However, it is expected that the United States will still need to import about 5.5 million barrels a day. Canada has more than ample resources to fill this need. Canada has the third-largest proven oil reserves in the world, some 172 billion barrels, about 169 billion of which are in the oil sands. As extraction technologies advance, the oil sands could yield nearly twice that much, well over 300 billion barrels. That would make the oil sands the biggest oil reserves in the world.

The expansion and diversification of energy markets is a priority of the Government of Canada because it is crucial to jobs and economic growth. Natural resources deployment directly and indirectly supports 1.8 million jobs across our great nation, contributes close to 20% of our nominal GDP, and generates billions of dollars in tax revenue and royalties to help fund government services to Canadians.

Canada's energy sector has proposals to build and improve pipelines west, south, and east to ensure that we have customers for our energy products. However, to preserve and grow Canada jobs and revenues for social programs, we must bring our resources to international markets and the faster-growing economies in the world. That means building pipelines.

• (1210)

The proposed Keystone XL pipeline would feed western Canadian heavy crude to refineries on the U.S. Gulf Coast—refineries, by the way, that currently rely on Mexico and Venezuela for feedstock.

In addition to Keystone XL, two pipelines have been proposed to deliver crude from western Canada to ports on our west coast for distribution to markets on both sides of the Pacific. We are rapidly

developing the infrastructure needed to service these markets. No fewer than seven liquefied natural gas export terminals have been proposed for the west coast. Three of these have been granted the long-term export licences they need to deliver LNG to markets in Asia. The first could be in operation as early 2015.

There are also proposals to adapt two existing pipelines to bring oil from western Canada to eastern Canada for refining and potential export.

Pipelines moving oil from Alberta to Quebec to New Brunswick would be among the most expansive and ambitious stretches of energy infrastructure in the entire world, and they would contribute greatly to the energy security of Canada and all of North America.

The Government of Canada is committed to ensuring the pipeline projects proceed in a manner that is environmentally responsible, economically feasible, and socially beneficial. We have the resources and we are determined to reach out to other nations, both as markets for Canadian energy and as partners in responsible energy development.

Our role as a responsible developer of energy is well known, and it is reflected in our government's commitment to the environment and to creating an opportunity for prosperity for Canadians in every region of the country.

Our approach is in sharp contrast to the NDP. While we support the responsible growth for our energy resources in an environmentally responsible way, the NDP has opposed every effort to expand our markets and create jobs for Canadians.

While we go overseas to fight for Canadian interests, jobs, and economic growth, the NDP sends its leader and deputy leader to Washington, D.C., to argue against those jobs.

While our government has listened to Canadians employed in our energy sector from coast to coast to coast, the NDP has ignored and argued against these jobs as somehow detrimental to Canadians.

We have nothing to learn from New Democrats when it comes to expanding our markets and to expanding our opportunities for Canadian workers. We will continue to fight for Canadian jobs while the NDP, with this motion today, is fighting to stop the development of important and critical infrastructure projects for our nation.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend and neighbour from the Yukon for his speech, although the last few paragraphs were somewhat heavy on rhetoric.

Business of Supply

As he knows, we both come from resource development communities, regions that have relied and will rely on natural resource development for generations to come. He made some mention of the two pipelines through British Columbia, the bitumen pipelines, both the Kinder Morgan and the gateway. I do not know if he made reference to whether he supports them or not, and I would be curious to know if he is supportive of one, or both, or neither.

The question today is about Keystone XL, of course. As my friend knows, we both have significant activity in the forestry and mining sectors in our regions. Particularly in forestry, the raw export of forestry products—just sending out round logs—has been a huge problem for northern B.C., Yukon, and northern economies in general. I just lost another mill in one of my communities in Houston, another 250 jobs, and I am sure the member has stories too. The policies promoted for raw export have been deeply problematic for the resource sector, because we do not add any value.

This project also is raw export, this time bitumen. I wonder if the member has any comment on that as a policy promoted by the government, considering all the job losses that happen because we do not create the value added, as industry could be doing here in Canada as opposed to elsewhere.

• (1215)

Mr. Ryan Leef: Mr. Speaker, industry and these opportunities do not work in a vacuum. Expansion and utilization of Canada's resources, whether we export them in raw fashion or whether we have value added here in our country, do not work in isolation. The development of resources comes with innovation and technology that support a whole group of different sectors in the Canadian economy. That is all excellent.

The hon. colleague heard me talk about the eastern pipeline opportunity that would move oil into refineries in the east, so of course we are looking at value-added opportunities. We are also looking at moving raw exports into markets that need that product at this time. We will continue to do so.

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not know if my hon. colleague recognizes that the policy of the Conservative government in failing to enact or bring forward real and serious regulation of greenhouse gases is one of the things that is making it so hard to gain support in the U.S. for the Keystone XL pipeline.

I will ask the member a related question.

In September 2013, Saskatchewan NDP leader Cam Broten soundly rejected his federal party's stance on the Keystone XL pipeline and noted that approval of the Keystone XL project was in the best interests of Saskatchewan.

As we heard earlier in the NDP House leader's twisted logic, does that not mean that the Saskatchewan NDP leader supports the entire Conservative government agenda? I wonder if my colleague agrees.

Mr. Ryan Leef: Mr. Speaker, certainly that was something he came out and said almost immediately after becoming the NDP leader.

It does show that we are not driving a personal agenda here. We are driving an opportunity for all Canadians. It is something that is

shared by labour unions, workers across our country, leaders of the NDP at the provincial level, and provincial premiers. Canadians are asking us to move forward with this measure, and we are responding.

I will quickly take a moment to address the GHG topic the member mentioned.

The report out of the Obama administration was clear. It said that the Keystone XL pipeline will not contribute in any significant fashion to greenhouse gas emissions and that the denial of that pipeline would not change anything nominally on that front.

Ms. Joan Crockatt (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is too bad that the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley was not informed by the members of his party who are on the natural resources committee, because their own witness testified on the matter of value added and said that the reason there are no refineries being built in western Canada is that they are not economic. No one is preventing those companies from building them, but then, economics was never one of the NDP's strong points.

In the realm of myth-busting, I want to ask the member for Yukon this question: is Keystone XL the first pipeline to move crude oil across the United States?

Mr. Ryan Leef: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague and fellow member of the natural resource committee. She does a fantastic job on that committee helping her riding out, and indeed all Canadians.

This is an interesting point and a great question.

We are being led to believe that this is the only pipeline going into the United States. However, there are nearly 4.3 million kilometres of oil and gas pipelines across the United States. Between 2009 and 2011, the U.S. added 6,844 kilometres of new crude oil pipelines. They are safe, they are effective, and they are efficient. In fact, here in Canada, we have hundreds of thousands of kilometres of pipeline already in existence.

This is just another pipeline. It has greater technology, it is a greater product, and it presents a greater opportunity for Canadians. That is why this government is going to support this pipeline project.

• (1220)

Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our Conservative government is squarely focused on what matters most to Canadians, and that is jobs and economic growth. The NDP has shown clearly, with the motion it has brought before us today, that it, in fact, is not.

Business of Supply

This motion is a silly motion. I do not like using language like that, but I will explain my statement in a minute. It is one of the silliest motions I have ever seen brought to the House of Commons. I will read the motion, and then I will explain why. It is just so ill thought out. In fact, it has not really been thought out. They brought it, obviously, at the spur of the moment, without really thinking about the consequences of what they have in the motion.

This motion was brought by the NDP member for Burnaby—New Westminster, and it says:

That, in the opinion of the House, the Keystone XL pipeline would intensify the export of unprocessed raw bitumen and would export more than 40,000 well-paying Canadian jobs, and is therefore not in Canada's best interest.

I just want to talk a little bit about what that motion says. It makes no sense. First of all, the New Democrats are saying that we should not build this pipeline to get new refining capacity in Canada and more jobs.

Here is the reality. Right now, we refine more crude oil than we need for Canadian use. In other words, we have to export part of the gasoline, diesel, and so on that we already refine in Canada, because there is already an overcapacity of refining. That is okay. I do not have a problem with that. If business determines that it is economical to refine more, then fine, but it certainly should not be based on restrictions that some future NDP government would put in place.

Here is what they are proposing, and this is why it is so silly that it is almost beyond imagination. They are saying to build these refineries. What are they going to do with the diesel, gasoline, and other products they produce in these refineries? What are they going to do with them? Are they going to build big disposal pits and somehow put this gasoline and diesel in these disposal pits? They are going to have to do something with it if they are going to produce a product that cannot be used.

They are saying to not build the pipeline so that we can refine more in Canada. If they produce more gasoline and diesel that is not going to be used in Canada and that has to be exported, how are they going to export the diesel and gasoline? They are going to have to have a pipeline. It is simply not economical to ship gasoline and diesel from refineries, for example, in the Edmonton area or anywhere other than very close to the border. It just does not make sense to ship it to market other than by pipeline.

Pipeline is needed. There is no doubt about that either way, whether we are shipping raw bitumen, upgraded oil, or products refined in Canada. When a barrel of oil is refined, it creates roughly 30 to 35 different products that have to be exported. If we are going to refine in Canada and refine more than we use, we are going to need more pipeline capacity, because we would be shipping such a large number of products, roughly 35. We would have to have a pipeline system that could ship those products.

We can certainly block a pipeline off and ship different products at different times down the same pipeline, but we can only do that to a certain point. Some of those products have to be kept so clear that, in fact, it cannot be done that way. What the NDP is proposing simply cannot be done, unless we build more pipelines.

Let us look at this in a realistic way. I almost feel like it is a mistake to debate a motion that makes so little sense, but I am going

to go ahead and make some other comments that I think are worth making, whether the motion makes sense or not.

• (1225)

As we know, natural resources are a huge part of the Canadian economy. When we take the direct and indirect impact into account, the natural resources sector represents 15% of Canada's GDP, and more important, I would suggest, more than 50% of Canada's exports. That is huge.

When we include the supply chain that provides goods and services to the natural resources sector, natural resources account for nearly 20% of Canada's GDP, or almost one-fifth of our total GDP. Energy resources are a huge part of that equation.

First and foremost, Canada is a trading nation. That is the reality. The NDP does not want to see that. It has opposed every trade deal we have brought to the House. However, the reality is that Canada is a trading nation, and the NDP cannot change that. Frankly, if it did change that, it would mean that a huge percentage of the Canadian workforce would be out of jobs.

We are a trading nation. Right now, 99% of Canada's crude oil exports go to the United States, which is where the Keystone XL pipeline would go, and 100% of our natural gas exports go to the United States. However, as the U.S. becomes more self-sufficient, Canada will need to diversify its export markets. That is why our government is aggressively pursuing new trade and investment opportunities for Canada in fast-growing markets around the world, including the Asia-Pacific.

That is why Canada must build and expand the infrastructure needed to move our product to tidewater for export as well as to the American market. We cannot continue to rely upon one market. It will be a declining market, because the Americans are producing more. They are increasing their domestic oil production at a rapid pace due to new fracking technologies, many of which have been developed right here in Canada.

Expanding and diversifying our energy markets is a top priority of the Government of Canada. Canada's energy sector currently has proposals to build and improve pipelines to the west, to the south, and to the east to ensure that we have customers for our energy products.

We strongly support the Keystone XL project to transport Canadian crude to the United States, and I have explained why that is necessary. It would create jobs, provide economic growth, and ensure energy security for both countries.

Canada is already the largest oil supplier to the United States. In fact, in 2012, we delivered three million barrels of crude oil and petroleum products per day. That is twice as much as the second-largest supplier of crude oil and petroleum products to the United States, which is Saudi Arabia. That is a huge change. Canada provided twice as much as the second-largest supplier to the United States and more than Saudi Arabia and Venezuela combined.

Business of Supply

Even with the International Energy Agency's forecast of rapid growth in American production, the United States will still need to import 3.4 million barrels of crude oil per day in 2035 to keep up with the projected increase in demand. It is clear that the need for Canadian oil will still be there in the United States, but we will have to be competitive.

The Keystone XL would help meet that demand. We simply cannot ignore that it is needed. Our government will continue with that project. There are many good reasons for that.

The NDP, we know, is against trade. It is against development of so many kinds. Its former environment critic called for a moratorium on oil sands development, yet now, just a year or so later, the NDP wants more refineries to process oil sands crude. It wanted to stop the production, but now it wants refineries to process oil sands crude. The NDP is really changing its position on issues on a constant basis. That is something I do not think lends it credibility.

• (1230)

There is no doubt in my mind that New Democrats demonstrate again and again, with the position they take on resource development, that they are simply not ready to govern, and I do not believe that they ever will be.

Mr. Robert Chisholm (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the member opposite from Alberta, and it made me shake my head. Members opposite are in a hurry to ship out our natural resources without adding any value to them whatsoever. The problem is what is happening right now in Alberta. Alberta is running a \$2 billion or \$3 billion deficit right now as a result of the lack of revenue from its resources as the world market changes.

New Democrats have suggested that what we should be doing with our resources, in this case bitumen, is processing them in Canada. There are 40,000 jobs expected to be created as a result of that pipeline. Instead of sending it across the border and creating 40,000 jobs there, and I have nothing against my American friends, we would like some long-term jobs here.

I ask the member why it is he would not like to ensure that 40,000 families sustain long-term jobs here in Canada.

Mr. Leon Benoit: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite has not been involved in any kind of in-depth discussion on these issues. Certainly members of the natural resources committee have heard clearly a few things that relate to the question he has asked.

First, they have heard that the real jobs in the whole oil production and processing industry are in building pipelines and in producing the oil. That is where the vast number of jobs are. Refining would be fine for adding more value. I would like to see it, but there would be a relatively small number of jobs. We were told this by several witnesses in committee, including some of the NDP's own witnesses.

I see that the Speaker is standing, but I would love to have another question along the same lines, so I could add—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Questions and comments, the hon. member for Halifax West.

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciated the speech by my colleague from Vegreville—Wainwright today, for the most part.

Similar to what I said earlier, he pointed out that Canada is refining more than it uses already, and we are probably going to be refining and upgrading more in the future. Even if we do that, how does he propose to move it if there are no pipelines? That highlights the illogic of the New Democrats' point of view. They are pretending that they support jobs, but if one listens to anybody who works in the industry, as I did recently when I was in Calgary, they will say that there is already a slowdown. Things are not happening now in terms of job creation in upgrading and so forth, the things that create jobs here in Canada, because of the lack of access to markets. Yes, we need the energy east pipeline, but they also tell me that the Keystone pipeline is very important.

I do not think it helps when the Prime Minister goes to the U.S. and says that we will not take no for an answer. Maybe my colleague could tell me what he thinks the Prime Minister was saying. What will he do if it is a no? Is that some kind of threat? Is that really a logical, rational approach, to tell the U.S. that we will not take no for an answer?

Mr. Leon Benoit: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member, who is on the natural resources committee. He missed some key studies that demonstrated that the jobs in the oil and gas sector are in production and in building pipelines to move the product.

On his question about the Prime Minister's comments to the American President, he was saying that decisions like this should be based on science and that the science shows clearly that this pipeline can be built in an environmentally friendly way. That is what he was saying, unlike the leader of the official opposition, the New Democratic Party, who went to Washington railing against the development of the oil sands and the pipelines that are needed to move crude oil, upgraded oil, or the products that would be produced in these very refineries the members are talking about. He went there and railed against them, and that makes no sense whatsoever.

• (1235)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Order, please. We will be resuming debate with the hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley. Before we do that, there is a great interest in participating in questions and comments today, as sometimes occurs, especially on opposition motion days. I would just say, to give some preference to other members who wish to participate, that if members in questions and comments could keep their interventions short—up to about a minute or so—then more members would be able to participate in the debate.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, before I get into the issues I wanted to raise here, I want to say that I will be splitting my time with my friend from Western Arctic.

I will wait for *Hansard* to get the exact quote from my friend from Alberta, but it was something to the effect that the only real jobs that get created in oil and gas development are on the mining and pipeline construction side. That is fascinating, because he should go to some of the refineries around his riding in Alberta and some of the LNG-proposed terminals in British Columbia and say that they are not real jobs and that the only good ones are on the mining side.

Business of Supply

It is fascinating to hear the Conservatives talk about what real jobs are and their sudden new-found love of science. They just found religion on science. For years when we talked about climate change, they said it did not exist, that the scientists were all wrong—those elites who they and the Prime Minister keep talking about. Now when there is some scrap of evidence that supports one part of an argument, they suddenly think science is important.

My friend from Western Arctic can probably talk about some of the science and the implications on real people in the real world, as opposed to the fiction the members of the Flat Earth Society have created for themselves year after year. They do not even believe the science and dark art of economics themselves; they said there was no recession, six months into the last global recession, and produced an austerity budget. So much for believing in facts and science. The entire world recognized we were heading into a global recession. The finance minister got up in one of his more sanguine moments and said “Let us have an austerity budget” going into the teeth of a global recession, until he reversed that entirely.

He is also a finance minister who has the lucidity to say that the Senate should be abolished and who had some very interesting comments on the mayor of Toronto this morning, as well, that were quite passionate.

Let us talk about Keystone XL. Let us talk about a Prime Minister

Hon. John Baird: Don't you attack the finance minister. Don't you dare. Little Jimmy is not even here to defend himself.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Mr. Speaker, I will thank the foreign affairs minister. I know sometimes he travels abroad and thinks that he is so far away that he has to shout all of his comments back to Canada. However, we are here in the House of Commons, not 15 feet apart. I can hear everything he has to say, and I will look forward to his questions.

The using of a baseball bat for diplomacy, as the Prime Minister has done, has made it more difficult to approve the projects he is hoping to get approved in the United States. In a question and comment earlier to my friends, I asked them to imagine a scenario wherein a U.S. president comes to Canada to an economic forum in Toronto, to speak to the business community and the people of Canada, and when discussing a contentious project, 95% of which was based in Canada, said, “We will not take no for an answer on this project. If Canada says no for legitimate science-based reasons or social justice reasons, we're simply not going to accept it, as the United States of America”. The hue and cry from our Prime Minister, the Canadian people and the foreign affairs minister would be heard throughout the land, because how dare a U.S. president threaten us that way? We will take care of our own domestic affairs.

How about we allow the Americans to do the same thing? I know it helps the newspapers and television stations in Washington to have all the ad revenue coming from the current government and the Government of Alberta, pumping and promoting this project. Ironically, I was at an oil and gas session organized by the first nations in Prince George just a few weeks ago, where the national resources minister got up and had the audacity and incredibility to say that his government does not promote projects like Keystone or

Enbridge northern gateway. The Conservatives do not promote them; rather, they just buy ads for them. They run down to Washington, banging them over the head in New York. They stand in our communities saying, “You have to; we insist.” They change all the laws in order to make the economic and environmental evaluating processes for these projects a sham. They make it a rubber-stamp process. However, the government does not actually promote them.

We know for a fact that this particular project creates jobs in the United States. I met with a Texas congressman who has become a friend. He is a Republican and a decent fellow, who my friends would get along with so well. Back in 2008, we had a nice meeting in Washington. At one point he said, “This whole Keystone thing, let me get it straight. Is your government actually promoting this pipeline?” He asked that because the refineries that would take all of this raw bitumen and upgrade it are based in his constituency. I said, “Yes, Congressman, the Canadian government's current position is to promote this project”. He said, “I want you to take a message home to my Canadian friends. Tell them this. If the roles were reversed and we had the oil sands and y'all had the refineries, it would be over my dead body that we would allow the raw export of our natural wealth to your country to have all the jobs created”—I think he said “y'all”.

The Conservatives now believe that all those refinery and upgrading jobs are not real jobs. They believe that the temporary pipeline jobs are real jobs, that the jobs that happen once are real but those others are not.

• (1240)

That is what the Conservatives just said, verbatim, that those are real jobs. Tell that to the people in the forestry industry, the fishing industry and the mining industry, and anybody who works in an upgrading facility, anybody who works in a plant that takes the natural wealth and endowment of this country and does something with it. Tell them they are not in real jobs.

I think it was actually a salient and transparent moment for the government, because by its policies, that is exactly what it thinks of those jobs that add value to our natural resources. That is what has happened to those jobs under the Conservative government. We have lost 350,000 of those manufacturing and upgrading jobs since the government took office. That is a fact.

The government is entitled to its opinions, but not its own facts. The facts of the matter are that it simply does not care. The government does not think those are real jobs.

The government talks about opening secondary markets and feeding the U.S. market. Let us understand that this is a generational decision. These pipelines are generational. They are not built for 5 or 10 years; they are built for 40, 50 or 60 years, which is also some of the problem.

My friends talk about how safe pipelines are and that they never leak. They should tell that to the people in Kalamazoo. That is what Enbridge said. It has been cited 115 times by the EPA. It said that, scientifically, this pipeline was in trouble, and this Canadian company said, “Never mind; we are just going to keep running the oil through”.

Business of Supply

All those people lost their houses and got sick because of a company from this country and because of a government in this country that does not think regulations matter and that thinks industry can just watch itself. The Americans named it properly when they called it the Keystone Kops. That is how Enbridge was running it.

These are the same companies that spill here in Canada as well. There have been 850 spills since 2001; significant spills, not trickles. Often they are found by hunters and trappers out in the bush who notice that they are standing in a bunch of muck out in the muskeg and that is not quite right. What is it? It is oil that has been leaking for who knows how long.

The idea that a Canadian government would stand up for the exporting of 40,000 value-added jobs is anathema to me. It is contrary to Canadian values.

If a government ran on some slogan about standing up for Canada, one would assume it meant standing up for Canada, and that it would stand up for Canada and Canadian jobs. No, that is not what the government does. The numbers do not lie.

To my friends across the way, the comments about a “no-brainer” from their strategic genius leader and “we will not take no for an answer” do not make their case. That sounds tough. The boys in the patch like that. The oil executives like that tough-guy stuff from the fake cowboy across the way who grew up in Toronto. That is what they like. They want the sense that the sheriff is in town and he is going to tell those Yanks what for. That does not work.

It actually makes it harder for the President and the administration to approve the project, because now it looks as if he is being bullied. It does not help when the government denies the existence of climate change, year after year. When it finally accepts the science, it does nothing about it. That is not me saying that; that is the Environment Commissioner saying that the government does not understand the implications of the science in climate change. It does not have any programs that are ready to go, that will actually reduce the carbon footprint.

All of those things make it so much easier to get a no. When Canada flips off at the international community time and time again, it makes things harder, not easier. Maybe the government thinks being tough is what it is all about, but it is not.

Now we know, because it has been our history and it must be our future, that the basic and fundamental principle in this country, which is so rich, so diverse and endowed with so much wealth in our natural resources, should be to respect the environment and to actually treat with first nations for rights, title and accommodation, to gain the social licence at the community level and create the jobs that those resources have created for generations.

However, we have a government that is wedded to an ideology that says that is not its role. That is not the government's role. The government's role is to build the biggest rubber stamp it can and stamp everything that comes in front of it, regardless of what the actual prospects say. When someone comes along and says there is a pipeline that will take 40,000 jobs out of Canada, and Alberta will move from upgrading as much as 60% of the bitumen out of the oil sands down to about a third and dropping, the government's saying it

has no part in that conversation is not standing up for Canadian values.

That is not a government standing up for Canada. We need one that will. We need one that understands the balance between the environment and the economy and understands that these resources only happen once. We can only take the oil out of the ground once. By definition, it is not renewable, so let us do it right. Let us have environmental considerations. Let us get the social licence from the community. For heaven's sake, let us create the jobs that have built this country from day one.

● (1245)

Hon. Rob Merrifield (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened to my hon. colleague spew his ideology, and it really is west-coast ideology that is not driven by any facts.

First, I am in the United States a considerable amount of time and I know quite a bit about what is going on there. To help out the member, I would tell members that the oil that came up and was part of the disaster in Lac-Mégantic was not Canadian oil. That was American oil being refined in Canada. The member said that would never happen in America; I beg to differ with him.

Second, the member's ideology in this motion is all about refusing to move oil through a pipeline because it is environmentally a poisonous way to do it. Looking at the facts of it, oil is going to move one way or another. It is going to move by rail or by pipe. The NDP is so driven by ideology that the members will not look at the facts of that; they will not look at what is good for Canada or for the environment. They are just driven by ideology and saying no to something that they have no idea what they are saying no to. I refuse to accept that.

This motion just reinforces what I have thought of the NDP all the time: that anti-trade—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Order, please.

The hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: I have particular concern with my friend's use of terminology, which we can discuss later. Let me read the motion from my friend so he can actually understand what we are talking about today.

Hon. Rob Merrifield: I read the motion.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: No, I do not think he actually did. The Conservatives are claiming that they did, so let me just give it to them verbatim so they can understand what is happening here. It states:

That, in the opinion of the House, the Keystone XL pipeline would intensify the export of unprocessed raw bitumen and would export more than 40,000 well-paying Canadian jobs, and is therefore not in Canada's best interest. That is what the motion says.

The motion is correct in its statement of fact, that 40,000 jobs are associated with the upgrading of this much oil, raw bitumen, moving south. Those are facts. My friends are going to dispute this, but these are the same facts that they rely on when they talk about the economic benefits. They cannot have it both ways.

Business of Supply

This is what is in the reports that study this particular project. If they want to argue about the number of jobs, they can go ahead, but it is job export policy. That is what the current government is running: raw export—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Order, please.

The hon. member for Halifax West.

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the things that my hon. colleague, the House leader of the official opposition, and I have in common, along with our absence of surplus hair, would be the frustration we feel every day in the House of Commons during question period when we in the opposition ask questions and do not get answers from the government. Therefore, I want to give my hon. colleague a really clear, simple question and give him an opportunity to give an answer.

Does the NDP House leader agree with his party's candidate in Toronto Centre when she says about the oil sands, "...we need some kind of moratorium on further development...?"

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure if my friend has ever been to Fort McMurray.

• (1250)

Hon. Geoff Regan: That was not the question.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Mr. Speaker, it is part of the answer. He is impatient for the answer, and we will get there.

I have been to Fort McMurray. I have met with people working in the patch, and I have also met with the mayor of Fort McMurray. The mayor of Fort McMurray has consistently said to the current government and others that the rapid boom-and-bust approval of licences within the oil patch goes far beyond Fort McMurray's ability to keep pace. That has been a fact, not for this year but for the last eight years she has been in office. I have met with the mayor and I wish my friend would spend some time with her.

To the Alberta government and to the federal government when she has been here, she has said—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Mr. Speaker, my goodness, they certainly have a lot to say about nothing.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Order, please.

There really is too much noise in the chamber today. I appreciate that the members are enthusiastic about today's debate, but the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley has the floor now. As in other situations, when members have been recognized and have the floor, it is in the interests of all members to give them the time to say their piece, and there will be other opportunities for members to participate in the debate.

The hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Mr. Speaker, we know that the boom-and-bust economy that is enabled and, in fact, accelerated by governments like the current one causes significant harm on the bust side of things. That is not me who has been saying that; it has been Alberta premiers like Lougheed and Stelmack and on down the line.

What my friends are suggesting with their promotion of the Keystone pipeline is a policy that one cannot touch the brake, that things simply have to go the way they go and, if one were ever to somehow guide them to the benefit of this country, it would cause calamity. If I were on the road with somebody and I said, "It feels as if we are going a bit fast" and the driver said, "Sorry, I can't touch the brake", I do not think I would ever get in the car with that driver again. That is dangerous driving.

These guys are dangerous drivers. They should not be driving this economy anymore, into the toilet.

Mr. Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to debate this topic. I live downstream from the oil sands in the Northwest Territories. We have great concerns about those oil sands.

I will start with a little history. In 2007, the oil sands industry in Alberta was looking at massive investment in upgraders. What happened to change that? In Texas, the government of the day in the United States decided that Venezuelan heavy oil coming from the Chavez regime was not appropriate. The Chavez regime agreed with that and we saw the stifling of heavy oil to the Texas refineries. That changed the situation in 2007.

The upgraders then were to be replaced with the heavy oil upgraders in Texas, and the multinationals that ran the Alberta oil industry had no consideration at all for Canada only their bottom line and their corporations, which is what they can only look at, decided to go to Texas. The bitumen could be put into the heavy oil upgraders there. They would not have to invest \$60 million to \$100 million over 20 or 30 years to build upgraders, modern upgraders that could provide the best possible service in upgrading our bitumen. They would not have to do that in Alberta. They would not have to make that decision. They would not have to invest that money, but they needed to get a pipeline. They wanted to get a pipeline down to Texas where they could use those heavy oil upgraders, which would increase their profits. They did not really have a reason to support Canadian industry, to support Canadian workers or to support the Alberta economy. In fact, if they used these heavy oil upgraders, that could open up more investment than they could put into the oil sands, so they could produce more of it and ramp up the speed by which they developed this resource, because they were just taking it out of the ground and shipping it somewhere else. They could start moving more and more projects.

How does that make the people in our region feel? When we talk to the people in Fort Chipewyan, the people in Fort MacKay or talk to any of the people who actually live in that region, like myself, in Fort Smith, we do not like it. We want orderly development. We do not want the oil sands to blow up to three times its size in the next decade and a half because we are simply taking the oil out of the ground and shipping it out of the country. If we were building the upgraders in Canada, there would be plenty of jobs and economic development for Alberta. This would work. This would mean more orderly development of the oil sands.

Business of Supply

Instead, what do we have? We have the wild west going. The Jackpine project has just been approved. What did the Environmental Assessment Board say about the Jackpine project? It would have significant impact on the environment. However, for economic reasons, it was allowed to go ahead anyhow. It was needed for the economy. Because raw bitumen was just being shipped out, these plants had to be built that take it out of the ground and get it out of the country. What kind of process is that for Canada?

Who are the big promoters of this project in the United States? The guys who control the petcoke industry, the Koch brothers. The biggest climate change deniers in the world love this product. They love to get the petcoke into the states where they send that dirty product that comes out of the upgrading using the coking process, which is a process that actually should not be the main process right now for upgrading, but I will get into that a little later. They take that petcoke and sell it to China, the dirtiest product to put into a coal-fired plant the world has ever seen. That is what is done with it. That is what we end up supporting with our Canadian Keystone pipeline.

The Koch brothers were pretty careful at the beginning. They would not admit any involvement with Keystone. They did not want to tie any of their processes, but it has been proved now, pretty conclusively, that these guys are doing it for their purposes.

• (1255)

This is what Canada is supporting right now. The dirtiest product is going to go from the United States to China and to other countries to be burned in their coal-fired plants.

Keystone XL would produce about 15,000 tonnes of petcoke a day from its process. What can we do differently? We could build upgraders in Canada.

When they switched to coking from hydrogen addition, it was because the price of natural gas went through the roof at the beginning of the last decade. Where is the price of natural gas now? It is down there.

We are building LNG terminals to ship the natural gas out of the country when we could be using it in upgraders in Alberta to upgrade the bitumen in an environmentally reasonable fashion, reasonable but not perfect. Instead, we are going to build the Keystone pipeline, ship it all down, put it in the old beat-up refineries along the Texas coast that have handled Venezuelan heavy crude for the last 40 years. It will stick it in there, it will process it there and it will take the petcoke and ship it to China.

How does that fit with Canada's image in the world? What does that make Canada? More of a pariah? Is this what the Conservative government wants: everyone in the world looking at Canada as a purveyor of ill-gotten environmentally unfriendly good? Is that the Conservative government's plan for Canada's economy?

The Conservatives have to shake their heads a little. They have to recognize that Canada has a place in the world. We are not alone in the world. We are not immune to the opinions of the rest of the world. We live off the opinions of the rest of the world through trade. If we do proper trade, people will continue to work with us.

I sat on a board that dealt with environmental issues on rivers. The Al-Pac pulp mill on the Athabasca River, through public pressure,

was forced to increase its environmental capacity before it was built. The executives of that company told me five years later that it was the best thing that ever happened. They could sell their pulp anywhere in the world as a high premium, environmentally correct product. It was the best thing that ever happened to them.

What are we doing with our oil sands that are going to be around for 150 years? What kind of reputation are we building for this product that we want to sell to the rest of the world for decades to come? We are doing nothing. We are just trying to get it out of the ground as fast as possible. Mine it and ship is the viewpoint right now in this industry.

We could move in another direction. We could set up the most modern upgraders in the world using the excess natural gas we have for hydrogen addition. We could produce an industry that had a lot more environmental aspects to it. We would also then have synthetic oil, which we could send anywhere in the world. Synthetic oil created out of bitumen can go into any refinery in the world.

Rather than being a hostage to the Texas coast where, in a few years, perhaps Venezuela will be back to being a friend of the United States and then, all of a sudden, we would be competing with heavy oil coming by tankard loads from Venezuela to the same refineries. All of a sudden, the value of the bitumen would start to drop because there would be competition for the same upgrading.

I appreciate that I have one minute left, but if we look at it environmentally, our country has about one minute left.

We have moved so quickly to a position in this world where we are simply not accepted anymore. We are not accepted as being good citizens of the world. This is a tragedy that goes on the backs of all those people sitting across there. The Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Prime Minister are the guys responsible for the mess we are in today. They sit there and grin and pretend that this is all just going to pass by. It is not going to pass by. We will remember what they did.

• (1300)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is somewhat disappointing that the motion has been brought forward from the New Democrats. When we look at their past record, I do not know what they have against the Prairies. They seem to attack rural development in our communities in the Prairies. We have had NDP MPs travel to Washington to be critical of the oil sands. The New Democrats say "hear, hear" with grins on their faces. A good number of Prairie people and all Canada benefit when we see development on our Prairies. They should focus a little more positive attention on this.

The New Democrats have a candidate in Toronto Centre and she, in reference to the development of the oil sands in Alberta, made the statement that we needed some kind of moratorium on further development. Is this the position of the NDP? Does it want a moratorium on the oil sands?

Mr. Dennis Bevington: Mr. Speaker, quite clearly, what we want is more value out of the oil sands. That is what we are saying today. There is no question about it.

Business of Supply

I had a conversation at one point in time with the premier of Manitoba, Mr. Selinger. We talked about the potential for upgrading bitumen in Manitoba. There is an opportunity there. Other provinces should take a look at this. Why are we only thinking in terms of exporting raw bitumen when we could be looking at the opportunities right across the country. With the establishment of proper transportation systems within our own country, we could use the bitumen. Perhaps we could upgrade it in Manitoba and create good long-term jobs for Manitobans and for people in Saskatchewan, in Sarnia, Ontario, and on the east coast of our country.

There are opportunities, if we want to talk about upgrading, that go far beyond simply the borders of the Ft. McMurray area. Therefore, be careful when you talk about exporting jobs out of our country.

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Lapointe (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, NDP): Mr. Speaker, just as my colleague was concluding his inspired, well-structured and well-argued speech, the first comment I heard from the other side of the House was “same old crap”. We are talking about a complicated issue here. We are talking about non-renewable resources. We need to examine the environmental regulatory framework and the matter of value added because we are talking about a non-renewable resource. It is not “crappy”, it is crucial.

In fact, it is so crucial that I would like to ask my colleague a question.

• (1305)

[*English*]

Does he have more of what is being called “crap” by the other side?

Mr. Dennis Bevington: Mr. Speaker, right across northern Canada, everyone is looking at resources. How we develop those resources and what we do with them is very important. It makes a huge difference to the communities. In the territory I live in, over the last decade we had a GDP rate of increase greater than almost anywhere else in Canada. At the same time, we saw our cost of living go through the roof. We saw the level of poverty in our communities increase. All of these things happen in resource economies. However, when we put good jobs on the line that are not simply extractive, when we give someone a future in a manufacturing plant, like an upgrader, over the next 40 years, we create some security in the economy. We create something that has value.

Fort McMurray, in some way, will have to switch from exploitation to operation. It understands that. That will build a good community in Fort McMurray. However, with this exploitation, this constant rush to develop these resources, because there is no added value in them, is just a bad idea for Canada and a bad idea for Alberta.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): The time for questions and comments has expired. However, before we go to our next speaker, I have a casual reminder to all members. There have been a number of references across the floor. There are things that help keep our debate civil. For civil discourse in the chamber, I would remind members to direct their comments and speech to the Chair and to avoid the use of the word “you” in these cases because

then the debate becomes a little more personal and has the impact in some cases of creating a certain amount of disorder in the House. I encourage all hon. members to observe some of those tools that help keep the debate civil and we will carry on.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Calgary Centre.

Ms. Joan Crockatt (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time today with the member for Prince George—Peace River. Thank you for the opportunity to join in this important debate on the motion by the hon. member for Burnaby—New Westminster.

I am very certain that all my hon. colleagues here know, if they are being honest with themselves, how important Canada's natural resources have been to our country's economy over the past century. Today we are standing on the brink of opportunities we have never seen before. Canada is about to embark on a series of megaprojects that really could cement our position as a global energy leader.

Over the next decade, several hundred major projects are planned or under way in the resources sector in Canada. These represent investments of over \$650 billion. I know these are big numbers. That is what we are looking at. With over a million new jobs for Canadians.

No other country in the world has resource projects of this scale, creating a truly unparalleled opportunity, not only for investors but also for people who want jobs. These jobs are helping to create thousands of high-quality, well-paying jobs for Canadians in every sector of the economy, in every single province in this entire country.

That is why it is so incomprehensible that today the NDP is advancing this motion that defies rationality, that Keystone will cost us jobs. In fact, the absolute reverse is true. This pipeline is going to enable us to keep growing jobs. It is going to provide us with market access, access that because we do not have it right now, we are losing jobs.

As the government of a global trading nation, we recognize that we have this opportunity in front of us. Indeed, we have an obligation to grow and diversify our energy markets.

That is why over the last two years the Prime Minister and the Minister of Natural Resources have been travelling to the United States, to Asia, to Europe, driving home the message that Canada is open for business and that we are reliable and responsible, an environmentally responsible supplier of energy resources.

There are some clear facts here. Global demand for energy is going to continue to grow 35% from 2010 to 2035. Canada is one of the countries that has immense resources that could meet that demand, but we need to be able to get our resources to the market. Without that access to markets, our oil will be stranded. In that event, of course, our industry will not be developed. What would happen? Jobs that could be created will not be, and Canadians will have had their birthright squandered. That is what the NDP is proposing here.

Business of Supply

New pipeline capacity is critical to move Canada's growing production to tidewater so that we can access those markets. However, energy market diversification is more than just about reaching new international markets. It is also about expanding our markets right here at home. This is about Canadian oil displacing expensive foreign oil that right now is being imported in eastern Canada, in Ontario, in Quebec and Atlantic Canada.

In fact, it is in Canada's national interest to see oil that is produced in Alberta and Saskatchewan travel by pipeline to eastern Canada. Let me explain why.

The U.S. has been buying Canadian crude at discounted prices compared to what it pays for the exact same quality of crude bought internationally. This is because Canada has insufficient pipeline capacity, as I mentioned. Therefore, there were very large discounts in 2012-13. What did that cost us as Canadians? It cost us \$13 billion that we could have recouped if we had international market access. That \$13 billion lost to Canada was a gain for the U.S.

Meanwhile, our own Canadian refineries and much of eastern Canada, which did not have access to that western Canadian oil, paid higher prices for the foreign feedstock that they had to import. A safe, reliable supply of Canadian domestic crude would make Canada less reliant on foreign oil and enhance our energy independence. In fact, when Quebeckers are asked would they rather be importing oil from Algeria or from Canada, their overwhelming response is that of course they would rather be getting it from Canada.

● (1310)

That means infrastructure, including pipelines, have to be built or repurposed, such as Line 9, to move these resources from the west to the east and overseas. We need the resulting jobs, the economic activity and the tax revenues that continue to fund our essential social programs, such as health care and education. That improves the quality of life of all Canadians.

It would also benefit Canada's sizeable refining industry, which already employs 15,000 Canadians and contributes more than \$5 billion to our GDP. Take Sarnia, for example. This was the birthplace of Canada's oil industry more than 150 years ago. It has three refineries with the capacity of 281,000 barrels a day. From there, the refined product goes by pipeline, rail and truck to southwestern Ontario, to greater Toronto and to the U.S. These refineries are situated within a petrochemical complex that makes a broad range of products that market across Canada and the U.S.

Indeed, Canada already is a net exporter of refined petroleum products. We refine more oil right now than we consume. However, refining is a very tight margin business and many refineries have been closing, so the success of our refineries in Canada would be bolstered by a pipeline infrastructure that would deliver to them competitively priced crude from western Canada to make the fuel that we need for businesses, transportation and our daily lives.

In short, pipelines and the energy that they produce fuel our economy. They are also a safe, reliable and efficient way to move our oil products. That is irrefutable. Indeed, over 99.9999% of crude oil that is transported by federally regulated pipelines moves safely without incident. It is the safest way to move our product.

We must always strive to set that bar higher, so our government is introducing new measures to ensure that the system becomes even stronger. We are raising our environmental standards, which are already world class, by enhancing our pipeline safety regime. There are some important components of this plan. Oil and gas pipeline safety inspections have been increased 50% annually, from 100 to 150. Annual comprehensive audits of pipelines have been doubled from three to six.

To ensure pipeline companies have the strongest incentives to operate their facilities at the highest standards, we also intend to entrench in legislation their responsibility to pay for the consequences if there are ever any spills. Our government will propose legislation that will mandate companies that are operating major crude oil pipelines to demonstrate a minimal financial capacity of \$1 billion so that they could respond to any incident and remedy damage. The proposed legislation also includes modern safety regulations for pipelines, such as improving transparency by ensuring that the companies' emergency and environmental plans are easily available to the public to look up and by ensuring that pipeline operators are responsible for abandoned pipelines. We are doing a very good job of this.

The government also believes that delivering North American crude to central and eastern Canada is important for our future. We support the opportunity for our refineries to process substantially more Canadian oil. This would support jobs, making our country less reliant on that offshore foreign oil.

Canadians need to recognize that if the NDP or the Liberals have their way and we delay or halt pipeline projects without scientific justification, our entire country will pay a very steep price. We will run the risk of stranded resources. We will lose the opportunity to utilize our birthright when there is a demand for it worldwide. We will get lower prices for the products that we do export. For Canadians, that means a weaker economy, fewer jobs and a lower standard of living. When we export oil and when we have access to international markets, everyone wins.

Business of Supply

Let me be clear. The only pipeline proposal currently before review that would transport oil to eastern Canada is Line 9B. That is currently opposed by the NDP. That is right. In the NDP's ideological battle against jobs in the oil and gas sector, it is willing to allow 500 unionized refinery workers in Lévis to potentially lose their jobs. While it is clear the NDP will not support Canadian workers, our government will continue to support workers in Quebec and across Canada. Of course, we expect this from the NDP.

• (1315)

In closing, working together, we can help to assure this holds true for future generations. They can take advantage of the natural resources we have had bestowed upon us, but Canadians and parliamentarians must speak up and say yes to pipelines.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take another quick look at the motion being moved in the House, specifically that, in the opinion of the House, the Keystone XL pipeline is not in Canada's best interest because it would intensify the export of unprocessed raw bitumen and would export more than 40,000 well-paying Canadian jobs. I would like to ask my colleague opposite a very straightforward question.

Does she support the idea of exporting our well-paying jobs and our raw resources, or does she support the idea of keeping well-paying jobs in Canada and protecting the environment?

[*English*]

Ms. Joan Crockatt: Mr. Speaker, I welcome an opportunity to answer a question such as this because it displays a fundamental misunderstanding of where the jobs are being created.

The place where Canada can benefit is in producing our resources. There is a high amount of value added in the jobs that are producing them. The technology that is under way in the oil sands is absolutely phenomenal: the cracking, the coking, the steam floods, the SAGDs. There is a phenomenal amount of technology that is being used and that adds jobs with value.

In refining, the margins are very tight. There is very little opportunity for Canada to grow that part of the business. In fact, the NDP's own witnesses at the natural resources committee said there really is not much opportunity for Canada to grow its refining market. There is in the oil sands.

• (1320)

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I had the pleasure of visiting my hon. colleague's home town of Calgary two weeks ago, on the weekend before the weekend of the Conservative convention. I dare say that my weekend in Calgary was perhaps more pleasant than theirs, but I will let her debate that if she wishes.

One thing I heard a great deal about from people in Calgary is how there has been softness. We think of the Alberta economy as being very strong. There is a lot of strength to it and a lot of jobs created, but I heard about how there has been softness in the economy in Calgary over the past year or so. There has been a slowdown in the creation of jobs largely because of the lack of market access, the fact that it is getting harder to get the new oil that is produced to market, whether it is refined or upgraded in Alberta or not.

I would like the member to comment on that.

Ms. Joan Crockatt: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the well-informed question. It is true that right now Canadians are being denied an opportunity to take advantage of selling our product because we do not have access to markets. Canadian companies are increasingly thinking about whether they should hang in with their investments in Canada or take their investments elsewhere where they can freely use them, for example, in the U.S. We just saw the layoffs of 20% of employees at Encana, one of our large natural gas producers, this week in Alberta. If people think this resource will go on forever, we can stick it in the vault, lock it up and take advantage of it later, they are in dreamland. Now is our moment. We must seize it.

Mr. Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay—Superior North, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, Canada exports twice as much oil as eastern Canada imports, and 80% of the imported oil is from Arabia and Venezuela, hardly very secure places to count on for the future. Even dumber, Canada exports at a 20% to 30% discount off world prices and imports the most expensive oil in the world, Brent Crude. My dad was an investment banker and he impressed upon me early to buy low and sell high. Do we get it?

Does the member care about energy security for Canada? Does she care about eastern Canada, and does she care about our oil policy where we buy high and sell low?

Ms. Joan Crockatt: Mr. Speaker, I hope the member was listening to my speech because I addressed that very topic at some length. This is why we are in favour of pipelines, not only the Keystone pipeline but the gateway pipeline, the Kinder Morgan pipeline, Line 9, the west-east pipeline. Pipelines are an opportunity for us to share the resources and benefits that are all Canadians' birthrights. Why should eastern Canada be buying oil at world oil prices, much higher prices, from other countries in the world that are not secure, that are not our friends, when we have oil in our own soil that we could be utilizing? These pipelines are no-brainers. I would urge all members to get behind them.

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to address the motion from the hon. member for Burnaby—New Westminster.

I am pleased to state that our government has made significant progress in setting the stage for a much-needed expansion of Canada's energy infrastructure while enhancing safety and environmental protection.

It is also timely that the Governments of British Columbia and Alberta have made substantial progress in their pipeline discussions. I view this as a very constructive development, especially in relation to British Columbia.

Canada's advanced network of energy pipelines, now consisting of more than 73,000 kilometres of federally regulated pipelines crisscrossing this country, provide safe transportation for over \$100 billion worth of oil, natural gas, and petroleum products every year. This figure alone underscores the great importance of pipelines to Canada. Pipelines are of major importance to our national economy and support tens of thousands of energy sector jobs throughout Canada.

Business of Supply

Pipelines touch almost every Canadian. They transport the fuel that heats our homes and businesses, helps generate electricity, and powers our cars, trucks, and buses. In short, pipelines and the energy they deliver drive our economy and are essential to our standard of living in Canada.

On the practical questions of safety, efficiency, and reliability, the record is clear for pipelines in Canada. Over 99.999% of crude oil transported by federally regulated pipelines moves safely and without incident of any kind, which is an amazing record.

Even with this impressive safety record, our government is working at improvements by introducing new measures to ensure our safety system becomes even stronger. This ongoing goal is reflective of our government's unwavering commitment both to environmental protection and to safety in the energy sector.

Last year we announced our plan for responsible resource development. This plan would ensure that Canada's natural resources are developed in a way that would balance economic prosperity with environmental protection.

Enhancing pipeline safety is a significant component of this plan. Oil and gas pipeline inspections have increased by 50% annually, from 100 to 150. Annual comprehensive audits of pipelines have been doubled, from three to six.

To ensure that pipeline companies have the strongest incentive to operate their facilities with the highest standards of safety and environmental responsibility, we intend to entrench in legislation the responsibility for them to pay for the consequences of any spill—the polluter pays principle. Companies operating major pipelines would need to demonstrate a minimum financial capacity of \$1 billion to clean up after any spill.

We have given the National Energy Board new authority to impose serious financial penalties on companies that do not comply with safety and environmental regulations: up to \$25,000 a day for individuals and \$100,000 a day for companies for as long as the infractions are not addressed.

For the first time, companies must have a senior officer responsible specifically for pipeline safety.

These are just a few of the improvements made by our Conservative government. As Canada's energy infrastructure expands west, east, and south, our next generation of pipelines will be built to the highest quality standards in the world.

The need for this expansion is pressing. Currently 99% of Canada's crude oil and 100% of natural gas exports go to the United States, but as we all know, our American neighbours are finding abundant resources of their own. This means that the U.S. would be relying less on Canadian energy imports into the future. It also means that new infrastructure, including pipelines, must be built in order to open up new international markets and to transport our energy resources to them.

As for practical challenges that this new economic activity entails, there is no question that Canadian crude, including heavy oil from the oil sands, can be carried by Canada's pipeline network with security and safety.

Canada's regulatory and safety regime for developing our natural resources has long been established as among the best in the world, but when it comes to protecting Canadians and our environment, there is no room for complacency. For that reason, our government has firmly stated that no project can proceed unless it is safe for Canadians and safe for the environment.

Building and operating safe pipelines is something that Canada has done for many decades. Few sectors can boast such an outstanding safety record. One of the chief characteristics of a strong safety regime is its ability to continually evolve and improve. As technology evolves and regulations are improved, safety standards are raised.

● (1325)

Last summer I announced that we are taking steps to ensure that we have a truly world-class pipeline safety regime in Canada. Under our new proposed measures, companies would be required to develop and implement a security and safety program that anticipates, prevents, and mitigates conditions that could adversely affect people, property, or the environment. They must prepare and apply an emergency management program focused on emergency preparedness and response requirements.

We will also ensure that companies operating pipelines have the financial capacity to respond to any incident and to remedy damage. To do so, the government will require major crude oil companies to have a minimum financial capacity of \$1 billion. In this way, we are protecting the Canadian taxpayer from having to pay in the unlikely event of a spill. With these proposed measures, we will make existing and new pipelines in Canada safer than ever before.

Energy is a major Canadian resource, a key driver of Canada's national economy. Over the next 25 years, the oil sands alone could support more than 600,000 jobs, including new opportunities for aboriginal peoples. However, the benefits from our economic sector go beyond jobs and reach all Canadians. For example, the oil and gas industries generate about \$22 billion a year in taxes and royalties to governments in Canada. That contributes to Canadian health care and other social programs.

The natural resource sectors already account for nearly 20% of all economic activity in Canada—a big number—as well as one-fifth of all economic activity, over half of our exports, 950,000 high-paying direct jobs, and a further 850,000 indirect jobs.

Canada has a tremendous opportunity to capitalize on natural resource development to further grow our economy. With the development of the Keystone XL pipeline and other necessary infrastructure, we are opening up the way for a new era of growth and prosperity for all Canadians.

Business of Supply

Our government is balancing the need to develop our resources while protecting our environment. On the other hand, the NDP have decided to forgo almost 20% of the Canadian economy. Instead it attacks it at any chance it gets. The NDP has attacked our oil and gas industry, our nuclear sector, and our forestry sector. It has decided to take an extreme position that will not create jobs and economic growth for Canadians, but will instead sap our growth and harm our economy.

It is not just B.C. and Alberta that will suffer under the NDP. There are thousands of companies across Canada that benefit from the oil sands, especially Ontario's manufacturing heartland. Our government will stand firm and resist this anti-development, anti-trade stance and continue our work to create good, high-paying jobs for Canadians across this country.

• (1330)

[Translation]

Mr. Marc-André Morin (Laurentides—Labelle, NDP): Mr. Speaker, surely my colleague across the way knows northern British Columbia and the Pacific coast. Can he tell us if there is a safe way for tankers to navigate between the British Columbia coast and the string of islands lying between the ports housing the terminals and Vancouver? Ocean currents reach a speed of 25 knots. There are many reefs and the channels are very narrow. These are the most dangerous waters in the world.

Is there a safe way to move these tankers, which take 4 kilometres to come to a complete stop?

[English]

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Mr. Speaker, it is an easy answer. There is a lot of tanker traffic that goes there every day right now, and it operates completely safely.

The Port of Vancouver is a great example of many tankers coming and going without incident every year. I think it is a misnomer that there are going to be incidents with increased traffic. That is just not the case. We can see many other ports across the world that have triple and quadruple the capacity of the actual traffic of Vancouver and have zero incidents.

We do not see it as a safety issue with the new regime we have in place and are putting in place. We think we have a good plan, and it is going to work.

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in September of this year the Prime Minister told the Canadian American Business Council in New York that he would not take no for an answer on the Keystone XL project.

Could the member comment on the advisability of issuing ultimatums to our major trading partner, and how he expects that will positively affect the negotiations that will undoubtedly be necessary going forward?

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Mr. Speaker, I was a member of many groups that have gone down to talk to our American counterparts just to encourage them. Most of them understand the benefit it presents to the American economy, just as it does to the Canadian economy. What could be a better source for oil and natural resources than a friendly neighbour to the north, as opposed to some other neighbours that are not so friendly?

In terms of the ultimatum, I think it shows that our Prime Minister is serious about our resources. After all, he is our number one defender in Canada in defending our resources on the world stage. I think it was a very good statement by the Prime Minister to the Americans to show how serious we are about our resource development. We will do what it takes to develop that resource.

Mr. LaVar Payne (Medicine Hat, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague from B.C. Our two provinces are working very well together to move forward in getting our oil out across the oceans, out into the whole environment across eastern Canada, and in developing the opportunity to get world prices for our oil. It is important.

One of the colleagues across the way talked about our captured market and the difference in prices of oil. Yes, we are getting a lower price.

I would like to ask my colleague from B.C., who I know is working hard with our province to make sure we can get those world prices, if he had any comment on that aspect.

• (1335)

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my illustrious colleague. We served on the agriculture committee for a few years, and I have gotten to know him well.

Absolutely, what we need for our Canadian resources, especially our oil, is a world price. Having a landlocked market does not serve our competitiveness as we need it to. Access to foreign markets on the east and west coasts as well to American markets to the south is an advantage that we need. In this new world where we trade with everybody, we really need to have access to all foreign markets to get the best price. Our people deserve that in Canada.

After all, the better the price is for Canadians, the more comes back to us in revenue to help out our social programs. It really benefits all Canadians.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Before we resume debate, I want to compliment all members who participated in the last two rounds of questions and comments on how judicious they were with their time. It allowed many more members to participate—well, not many more, but at least a few more, and that always helps in these kinds of debates.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Brossard—La Prairie.

[Translation]

Mr. Hoang Mai (Brossard—La Prairie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Parkdale—High Park.

I would like to thank my colleagues for their warm welcome. It is an honour to rise today to speak to the opposition motion. I am pleased to thank our colleague from Burnaby—New Westminster for his work on the energy file and on this issue in particular.

Business of Supply

This motion is so important that I feel I must read it.

That, in the opinion of the House, the Keystone XL pipeline would intensify the export of unprocessed raw bitumen and would export more than 40,000 well-paying Canadian jobs, and is therefore not in Canada's best interest.

The motion is about the Keystone XL pipeline.

I feel that this motion highlights the fact that there are different visions here in the House. The NDP is offering a vision of the future. On one hand, we have economic development; on the other hand, we have sustainable development, environmental protection and a number of social issues that must be taken into account when considering a project. I am very proud to talk about our vision today. I will attempt to show the contrast between our vision and that of the Conservatives and Liberals because, in this case, they are one and the same.

The Liberals and the Conservatives joined forces to back the Keystone XL project. They are on the same side on this issue, just as they are on many others.

What is Keystone XL really about? It is about transporting crude oil from the Alberta oil sands south through a pipeline to refineries in the United States. Then the United States can sell that oil back to us. That is it in a nutshell. That is the Conservatives' business plan and the Liberals' as well. We are talking 830,000 barrels a day. It is a huge project.

A project this size often creates jobs. In this case, we are talking about 40,000 jobs. Where do those numbers come from? They are based on a CEP estimate derived from a 2006 Informetrica report on exporting bitumen. The United States has talked about the possibility of 42,100 jobs.

Both the Conservatives and the Liberals are very proud to say that they will create jobs. However, when it turns out that those jobs will be created in the United States, I cannot figure out why the Conservatives are so proud of it, but they are. They go to the United States to meet with people in the American administration and tell them that they will create jobs that will benefit their country's economy.

I am from Brossard-La Prairie, which is not far from Hochelaga, where the Shell refinery closed its doors a few years ago. People lost their jobs. Nevertheless, instead of trying to create jobs in Canada, the Conservatives have decided to create jobs abroad. I understand why they say that our economy is based on natural resources and the oil sands. They want to develop those resources at all costs.

What we are saying is that we have to start with a vision. There is no vision on the other side of the House. We need a vision of what should be done to build a better Canada. We know that the oil sands are being developed and that Canada cannot stop using oil tomorrow. Even I travel by train or by car from time to time, and those modes of transportation use oil.

What we are suggesting is transporting oil from the west to refineries in the east so that we can create jobs.

● (1340)

Our vision is rather broad. We are saying that we want to create jobs, but create them here in Canada. Why fight to export 40,000 jobs to the United States?

The Conservatives, who are once again being helped by the Liberals, are very good at that, as we saw with Electrolux in Quebec. The Conservatives were very proud to say that they reduced the corporate tax rate. They congratulated themselves for it. However, as soon as their tax rate went down, those companies laid off their workers here and moved their production abroad.

Under the Conservatives, about 500,000 jobs have been lost in the manufacturing sector. I find that shocking. It shows they have no economic vision. That is no way to move the country forward. The Conservative vision, now supported by the Liberals, is to sell everything right away. The goal is to develop all that as quickly as possible and shift production to the United States. The Americans will do the work, get the added value, create jobs and refine the product. Then they can send it back to us, sell it back to us and open new markets.

The Conservatives and Liberals do not seem to care about that. They have a rather narrow vision of this kind of development.

We are talking about economic development, but in this case, the environment also matters. Why are the Conservatives hitting a wall in the United States right now? Why is the Obama administration giving the Conservatives a slap on the wrist? They have had no vision when it comes to the environment.

They say they want to push oil sands development to the limit, and in order to do so, they want to ignore all the rules we have in place to protect the environment. This was all set out in the omnibus bills that the government so proudly introduced, which were clearly problematic.

In closing, I would like to say that I am very proud of this motion, because our vision is much broader and more focused on the future, while the Liberals and Conservatives remain very narrow-minded and have no vision of the future.

[English]

Mr. Leon Benoit (Vegreville—Wainwright, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I just want to thank the member opposite for his presentation. However, much of his presentation dealt with a belief that the Keystone XL pipeline could have a negative impact on the environment. The science shows clearly that this is simply not the truth.

I wonder why the member is ignoring studies such as one done by a well-respected firm, IHS CERA, which did an independent study, the latest that I know of, that confirmed once again that the Keystone XL pipeline, "...will have no...impact on...GHGs". The opposition members go there talking about how Keystone will have a negative impact on the environment, and in fact, study after study, the science, shows that it will not.

I wonder why that party will not put aside its blind ideology against development, and in particular, against development in the oil sands. It continues to spew untruths about the science and the reality of the situation involving Keystone and the environment.

● (1345)

Mr. Hoang Mai: Mr. Speaker, first, it is clear that the current government has gutted environmental protection with its omnibus bills.

Business of Supply

Our motion is about creating jobs, not creating jobs in the U.S. We are talking about 3,000 jobs created in the U.S. Our vision is creating jobs here in Canada. That is why we put forward this motion. We hope the Conservatives will support our motion, because we are talking about creating jobs here in Canada and not exporting good jobs. Why have that vision?

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I just want to follow up on my colleague's comments indicating that this was about Canadian jobs.

I am sure he has heard of the Canadian building trades. The Canadian building trades said this morning that almost two-thirds of the bitumen will be upgraded in Canadian facilities by skilled trades workers.

Is this really about jobs, or is this about what we hear from the candidate in Toronto Centre? Is this really about the New Democratic Party standing in favour of a moratorium on oil sands development? Do the New Democrats disagree with the building trades, or is it about a moratorium?

Mr. Hoang Mai: Mr. Speaker, it is funny that the Liberals are raising the Toronto Centre by-elections, because from what I have heard, their candidates do not want a debate. They do not want to talk about issues. They do not have any ideas.

Yesterday we heard from their leader that they were for Keystone, but they did not know how they would go ahead with protecting the environment and are looking into that. They have a party that says that it wants to defend the environment, but they have no clue. They do have a clue. In 2008 it was one way; it was a carbon tax. In 2011 it was cap and trade. They followed what we did. Now they do not know. They got lost. They are trying to figure it out. Maybe it is because of their leader's vision for protecting the environment. That is what we do not know. That is why the candidates in Toronto Centre cannot actually say what their vision is. It is because they do not have one.

[Translation]

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, first of all I would like to thank my colleague from Brossard—La Prairie for his fine speech.

He talked about the good, well-paying jobs in Canada. With the Keystone XL pipeline, the Conservatives are trying to export our well-paying jobs. We are talking about 40,000 well-paying jobs in Canada's oil refining industry that would be exported.

I would like to comment on one part of the motion: the loss of good jobs. I would like to remind members that Alberta processes about 66% of its bitumen. According to the Alberta Energy Resources Conservation Board, this would drop to 47% by 2017 as a result of the creation of Keystone XL. What does my colleague from Brossard—La Prairie think of that?

Mr. Hoang Mai: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Alfred-Pellan for her question.

It allows me to stress the fact that we are talking about the potential creation of 40,000 indirect, direct and induced jobs in Canada.

We would lose 40,000 jobs according to CEP, based on a 2006 Informetrica report on raw bitumen exports. That is a tremendous loss of jobs. The United States is confirming the same thing. Jobs will be created in the United States, not in Canada.

• (1350)

[English]

Ms. Peggy Nash (Parkdale—High Park, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to stand up for Canadians and for the Canadian environment in supporting this motion. I want to read it so that Canadians are clear what we are discussing:

That, in the opinion of the House, the Keystone XL pipeline would intensify the export of unprocessed raw bitumen and would export more than 40,000 well-paying Canadian jobs, and is therefore not in Canada's best interest.

I wholeheartedly agree with this motion. This opposition day is an opportunity for the parties in Parliament to show Canadians where they stand on the export of jobs and on the export of our raw resources, or whether perhaps they stand with Canadian workers and for action on the environment. That is the opportunity we have today.

The Conservatives and the Liberals have joined together to promote the Keystone XL pipeline, despite the fact that it would export tens of thousands of Canadian jobs to the U.S. along with our raw resources. It is the same old story we have seen before.

As Canadians know, the Keystone is a massive pipeline network owned by TransCanada. It is designed to move Canadian oil sands crude to U.S. markets and its refineries. The Keystone XL extension would connect the network to the largest segment of U.S. refineries, located on the Gulf Coast. If it goes ahead, it would have a capacity of 830,000 barrels a day, making it the largest export pipeline under consideration.

The Canadian section would consist of 529 kilometres. The National Energy Board here in Canada approved that section back in March 2010. However, the pipeline requires the approval of President Obama in order to proceed, and he has repeatedly delayed the decision. The President has made energy security a priority, but he has expressed serious concerns about Canada's environmental record.

President Obama said:

I'm going to evaluate this based on whether or not this is going to significantly contribute to carbon in our atmosphere. And there is no doubt that Canada at the source in those tar sands could potentially be doing more to mitigate carbon release.

He said that in July of this year, so clearly the U.S. has concerns about the environmental impact.

In terms of emissions in Canada, right now the oil sands account for about 7% of Canada's emissions. That is from 2010 statistics, but those emissions are forecast to double to about 14% of our emissions in 2020.

The Conservatives have promised emissions regulations for the oil and gas sector since they were elected so many long years ago in 2006, but they have repeatedly missed their own deadlines for presenting these regulations. We are still waiting to see them.

Statements by Members

A U.S. Environmental Protection Agency analysis found that greenhouse gas emissions linked to the Keystone XL pipeline would be 20% higher than emissions compared to existing sources of crude oil, so we would see a very significant increase in emissions.

However, let us also talk about jobs, because Canadians want good-quality jobs. It is what leads to a good standard of living, a standard of living that supports people and their families, and that is fundamentally important in Canada.

Based on an independent study, the export of unprocessed bitumen envisioned in this Keystone XL project could result in the loss of over 40,000 jobs. These are potential jobs, direct and indirect jobs, induced jobs, related jobs. An analysis by the U.S. State Department found that the Keystone XL would support more than 42,000 jobs during the one- to two-year construction period, with total wages of about \$2 billion. That is in the U.S.

• (1355)

Alberta has traditionally upgraded about two-thirds of its bitumen, but that would drop from two-thirds down to about 47%, less than half, by 2017, according to the Alberta Energy Resources Conservation Board.

We know where the Prime Minister stands on this matter. He has gone from calling the Keystone approval a no-brainer to basically saying he won't take no for an answer, which was an interesting approach to our export capacity.

In Washington this spring, the Minister of Finance talked up the job benefits of the pipeline in the United States. He is talking about the creation of good-quality jobs for Americans, not for Canadians. I want to quote him:

I emphasized that the State Department report indicates this is a very important project for both economies, particularly for employment in the United States—more than 40,000 well-paying jobs.

That was back in April. Those are jobs that we could have here in Canada.

However, he is not alone. The Liberal leader, who also came out strongly in support of this pipeline, recently said, “My support for Keystone is steadfast.... There are lots of American jobs involved and there's lots of opportunities for the United States as well”. He said that just last month.

That is very nice for American jobs. We did not hear him say anything at the time about the environment, so we do not know where he stands on that, but we do know his party's record on the environment, which was to sign the Kyoto accord and then do nothing except watch greenhouse gas emissions skyrocket in Canada.

The Liberal leader's chief of staff was previously a lobbyist for Nexen oil, for Syncrude Canada, for BP Energy, so maybe that had some kind of influence. We do not know, but we have to wonder.

We are very concerned about the Canadian environment and we are very concerned about Canadian jobs. Even the Conservatives' finance minister admits that the Keystone XL pipeline will ship tens of thousands of quality, well-paid Canadian jobs south of the border.

Unlike Conservatives and Liberals, New Democrats do not believe in promoting a massive export of our raw, unprocessed resources. We do not think that is a good economic policy. We believe pipeline projects done properly, with good environmental standards, can benefit Canada, but not when they ship away tens of thousands of good-quality jobs and raw resources, leaving the environmental risks and liabilities on the shoulders of future generations of Canadians. That just makes no good sense.

New Democrats want to develop our economy and develop our resources to serve Canada's long-term environmental and economic prosperity. Instead of holding Conservatives to account, we have seen the Liberal Party stand for shipping out tens of thousands of jobs and the Liberal leader cheering them on. We do not believe in putting the interests of one industry before the interests of all Canadians or before the interests of future generations and the Canadian environment.

That is why I am proud to stand in support of this motion. Canadians can count on New Democrats to defend their interests here in Ottawa and across Canada.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): The hon. member for Parkdale—High Park will have five minutes for questions and comments when the House resumes debate on this motion.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Mrs. Maria Mourani (Ahuntsic, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, according to the World Health Organization, nearly 35% of women are victims of physical or sexual violence committed by their partner. In Quebec, 19,373 domestic violence offences were recorded in 2011.

In Canada, an aboriginal woman is seven times more likely to be murdered than any other woman. We are still waiting for an inquiry to look into the cases of more than 600 missing or murdered aboriginal women.

Every day in Canada there are more than 3,000 women and 2,500 children living in various emergency shelters to escape domestic violence.

I want to commend all of the women's groups in Ahuntsic, in Quebec and all over Canada. They fight every day to ensure that our girls can one day grow up and live in a world where being a woman is not a risk factor for victimization.

Thank you for the work you do. You make Canada and the world a better place.

Statements by Members

●(1400)

[English]

CITIZENSHIP CEREMONY

Ms. Roxanne James (Scarborough Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this past Friday, I was honoured to join 99 new Canadians at a very special citizenship ceremony held at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre and the Rogers Centre. I was pleased to be accompanied by the Right Hon. Adrienne Clarkson, former Governor General of Canada; Chris Rudge, executive chairman and CEO of the Toronto Argonauts Football Club; and legendary CFL quarterback Russ Jackson, member of the Order of Canada and Canada's Sports Hall of Fame.

One of the highlight moments of this evening was joining 99 new Canadians on the field to recite the oath of citizenship and open the game with the singing of *O Canada*. It was touching to see thousands of fans play witness to welcoming home these proud new Canadians as one of our own.

I would never have imagined that I would have been able to take part in such a notable event, including being able to stand at centre field and participate in the game's coin toss.

We all know that becoming Canadian citizens is a special occasion, and I know that each and every one of those 99 new Canadians will cherish that moment for the rest of their lives.

* * *

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to commemorate the sacrifices made by our men and women in uniform across Canada and in my province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Nearly 100 years ago, Newfoundland, then a dominion like Canada, committed thousands of troops to the First World War. Sadly, as we remember all too well, the Royal Newfoundland Regiment suffered devastating losses during the Great War, especially at the Battle of Beaumont Hamel. Plans are afoot for a significant commemoration of these events, which live on in the national memory of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Over the generations since, all across Canada sacrifices continue to be made right down to today in loss of life and loss of capacity. The memory of those who died and made the ultimate sacrifice is sacred, but Remembrance Day is also a day for veterans to be honoured for their courage and contribution to their country, and a robust, compassionate, and comprehensive program of support for those who need it must be available.

Remembrance Day, to me, is not just about the past; it is also about the present and the future. Let us not forget.

* * *

NORTHERN GATEWAY PIPELINE

Mr. Brian Jean (Fort McMurray—Athabasca, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Premier Alison Redford and Premier Christy Clark for their hard work and

dedication to Canada's economy, especially to our northern gateway pipeline.

Our energy industry provides Canada with continued job growth and a very reliable economy. Over the next 30 years, this pipeline is expected to create 261,000 jobs and a labour income of \$23.8 billion.

The northern gateway pipeline will dramatically increase jobs and revenue all across our great country in all communities, as would Kitimat Clean, David Black's green refinery process.

Let us imagine the impact on Canada's economy if we focus our energy on upgrading and increasing our oil refining capacity.

Our Conservative government is concentrating on Canada's economy.

* * *

FAMILY PHYSICIAN OF THE YEAR

Hon. Geoff Regan (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I stand today to recognize the outstanding work of Dr. Kathy Gallagher, a physician at the Bedford Waterfront Health Clinic. Dr. Gallagher was recently named Family Physician of the Year in Nova Scotia by the College of Family Physicians of Canada.

She is known as a doctor who takes the time to listen and regularly makes house calls. Dr. Gallagher has demonstrated commitment to her patients and to her practice. She is also a member of numerous committees through the College of Family Physicians of Canada, Doctors Nova Scotia, and Capital Health.

I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Dr. Gallagher on receiving the Reg L. Perkin Award.

* * *

ABUSE OF WOMEN

Mrs. Susan Truppe (London North Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today, for the third consecutive year, I am wearing purple, along with members from both sides of the House in support of the London Abused Women's Centre's "Shine the Light on Woman Abuse" campaign. Since its inception, the goal of this campaign has been to raise awareness around the issue of woman abuse and its effect on society. Organizations, schools, neighbourhoods, sports teams and places of worship in London will be asked to participate by wearing purple. I am proud that the London campaign has grown to 16 cities and 4 counties across Ontario.

This year we honoured Jocelyn Bishop, 21 years old, killed by her boyfriend in July 2010 in London, and Shannon Scromeda, only 25, a Winnipeg mother killed in April 2008 by her common-law partner in front of their four-year-old son. Since 2007, our government has funded more than \$62 million for projects to end violence against women and girls through the women's program at Status of Women Canada.

I would like to congratulate the London Abused Women's Centre, especially director Megan Walker, for shining the light on woman abuse.

• (1405)

[Translation]

NATIONAL DIABETES AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. Alain Giguère (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as part of National Diabetes Awareness Month, I would like to point out just how difficult this disease can make everyday tasks. It is particularly dangerous because, all too often, people are unaware that they even have the disease. Unfortunately, this disease can ravage the body before the victim is even aware of being ill.

This brief overview of the disease reminds us of just how important it is to invest so that every Canadian can finally have a family doctor. Basic medical monitoring would allow patients to be diagnosed in the early stages of the disease and receive more effective treatment.

I would be remiss if I did not take this opportunity to recognize the outstanding work done by the army of volunteers in the health care and medical and pharmacological research sectors, as well as the volunteers who work hard to provide effective support to the victims of this disease. Their work gives us hope.

* * *

[English]

MEMBER FOR KITCHENER—CONESTOGA

Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in June of 2011, I thanked members of the House for the support they offered me through some of the darkest days in my life. My faith in God's care and the genuine warmth and affection expressed by colleagues from all parties helped carry me through, and hope carried me through as well. As I have often noted in the House, without hope, the human spirit dies.

Faith, family, and friends gave me hope, hope that better days would come, hope that after the sunset, after hours of darkness, however long, the sun would rise again. My hopes have been rewarded. This summer, the joy of my marriage to Darlene has brought me more happiness than I could have ever imagined.

I have enjoyed some good-natured ribbing from my colleagues, and my children and grandchildren are teasing me about some of my new-found hobbies, like drinking tea and cycling, but it has been a wonderful journey, thanks to God, my colleagues, my family, and especially to my gorgeous bride, Darlene.

* * *

REFUGEES IN IRAQ

Mr. Russ Hiebert (South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in front of the American Embassy here in Ottawa, five members of the Iran Democratic Association have been on a hunger strike for the past 65 days to bring attention to the plight of a large group of Iranian refugees in Iraq. The 3,000 pro-Iranian democracy activists, known as the MEK, who are refugees in Camp Ashraf and Camp Liberty, are being harassed by Iraqi security forces.

The hunger strike started after the latest assault on Camp Ashraf on September 1, in which 52 unarmed refugees were killed by Iraqi forces and another seven individuals, six of whom are women, were

Statements by Members

taken hostage. The world community has condemned this outrage, and Canada has called for those responsible to be brought to justice.

It is time for Iraqi Prime Minister Maliki and his government to stop pandering to the Iranian regime, free the hostages, and assist these refugees in getting to western nations.

* * *

LOUIS RIEL

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call upon Parliament to correct an historic injustice, set the history books straight and reverse the conviction of Louis Riel for high treason, and instead recognize and commemorate his role as the founder of the province of Manitoba, a father of Confederation and the champion of the rights of the Metis people.

Louis Riel was elected president of the provisional government of the territory he called Manitoba, and he negotiated its entry into Confederation as Canada's fifth province on July 15, 1870. He was elected three times to the House of Commons as a member of Parliament, and he demonstrated his loyalty to Canada by organizing the Metis people to repel the Fenian invasion of 1871.

In spite of this, he was wrongfully tried, convicted, and executed for high treason on November 16, 1885, murdered by the Crown, a case of justice and mercy denied. Sir John A. Macdonald said at the time, “[Riel] shall hang though every dog in Quebec bark in his favour”. In 1992, the Manitoba legislature unanimously passed a motion recognizing the unique and historic role of Louis Riel as the founder of Manitoba.

It is consistent with history, justice, and respect for the rights of the Metis people that the conviction of Louis Riel for high treason be reversed and that his historic role in building our great nation should be formally recognized, commemorated, and celebrated by Parliament with a statue of Louis Riel on the grounds of the Parliament Buildings.

* * *

• (1410)

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon (Miramichi, CPC): Mr. Speaker, women are the victims of sexual offences in approximately 90% of police-reported incidents. That is astonishing. That is why on Tuesday the Minister of Labour and Minister of Status of Women called on communities across Canada to take action in the prevention of violence against women and girls.

Through a call for proposals, our government will fund new projects in local communities that are aimed at preventing and eliminating cyberviolence and providing access to community services to prevent and respond to sexual violence against women and girls. Proposals will be accepted until December 1, 2013, and I encourage organizations from across Canada to apply.

This call is a concrete example of how our government is making a real difference in the lives of Canadian women and girls and making Canada a safer and more secure country for all.

*Statements by Members***RAIL TRANSPORTATION**

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to highlight to all my colleagues in the House of Commons the tremendous work that railways do in our country. Before I start, I would like to offer my sincere condolences once again to the citizens of Lac-Mégantic for the unfortunate incident they had during the summer.

When I was a young immigrant to Canada, our family boarded the train in Halifax at Pier 21. Through the great Atlantic provinces, through la belle province, through the Canadian Shield, the terrific Prairies, on through the Rocky Mountains and settling in British Columbia, our family used the train to settle in the Vancouver area.

I highly recommend that all my colleagues make sure to take a train this winter or this summer, because it is a fantastic way to travel. If there is an ambassador from India or China looking in now, I encourage the use of the Port of Halifax to move their freight to our port and on to our rail lines, because this economy moves by trains.

I want to congratulate all the companies and all the workers who work on our railways every single day to build our economy and to give all Canadians a wonderful opportunity to see what a great country this really is.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Wladyslaw Lizon (Mississauga East—Cooksville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last week the Liberal soft-on-crime spokesman from Malpeque and the NDP member for Vancouver East met to support convicted drug dealer Marc Emery. This individual is serving a serious sentence in the United States for selling drugs online, where anyone can access them.

Criminal acts like these put our children at risk. On this side of the House we have been clear that drug dealers will face the full force of the law. Other parties are only concerned with how they can help the drug trade. In fact, the member for Vancouver East said selling drugs never posed any "...harm to any Canadian or U.S. citizen".

Convicted drug dealer Marc Emery sums it up best. He said: "If the Liberals were still the governing party now...[he] would have been immediately released upon...arrival in Canada...".

Rather than worrying about the victims of crime, all the Liberals and NDP are concerned with is making things easier for convicted criminals. Our Conservative government will always stand up against the shameful policies put forward by the other side.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our Canadian troops sometimes bear witness to atrocities most people could never begin to imagine. It is estimated that up to 30% of soldiers experience trauma from active combat. There are programs available to heal their bodies. It is often minds and hearts that need care the most. The veterans transition program, headed by Dr. Marvin Westwood and his team of professionals at UBC, helps former members of the Canadian military to come to grips with their trauma, so they can make that difficult transition back to civilian life.

I have met representatives about the problems members face and the wait times they face in getting medically assessed and treated for psychological injury. Post-Afghanistan, their numbers keep increasing. Support services at places like Camp Shilo and other bases simply cannot keep up. That is wrong.

In this week of remembrance, with the Prime Minister's communication budget that has increased by over 7%, why not instead put our troops and veterans first, so they receive the services they need every day of the year?

* * *

● (1415)

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Rob Anders (Calgary West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Natural Resources is in Washington encouraging enhanced co-operation on energy and the environment. The NDP is there to attack Canadian jobs.

Our Conservative government remains focused on jobs and the economy. The Canada-U.S. energy relationship is the single most important energy relationship in the world. Conservatives support the Keystone XL pipeline because it promotes energy security and jobs. The NDP members speak out against the most important piston driving the Canadian economy. Our Conservative government, led by the Prime Minister, supports important energy infrastructure. The choice for America is clear: a reliable, environmentally responsible friend and neighbour or more unstable sources.

The NDP is in Washington to kill Canadian jobs.

* * *

LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Mr. Speaker, while Conservatives spent last weekend trying to limit a woman's right to choose, the leader of the Liberal Party is headed to Toronto for ladies' night, charging women \$250 each to "really" get to know him, to talk about women's issues and to share their "favourite virtue".

It is 2013, and all issues are women's issues: health care, the economy, Keystone XL.

It seems the Liberals think being condescending and patronizing is a virtue, and the Liberal candidate in Toronto Centre is doing ladies' night with the Liberal leader instead of debating the real issues with NDP candidate Linda McQuaig.

Instead of heading to ladies' night, I think women in Toronto should head out to the doorsteps and elect a woman from a party that defends women instead of patronizing them.

THE ECONOMY

Mr. John Carmichael (Don Valley West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while our government is putting jobs and the economy first, the NDP opposes all resource development. It opposes energy infrastructure before it has undergone independent scientific review. It ignores facts and science when it suits its ideology. The centrepiece of the NDP's irresponsible economic plan is to increase the price of everything with its \$21-billion carbon tax.

We now learn that the Liberals too are fond of a carbon tax.

Our government will not impose a job-killing carbon tax that would increase the price of gas, groceries, and electricity—a tax on all Canadians. Our government knows that higher taxes stunt job creation and economic growth, which is the very opposite of what Canadians want and need.

Let us hear if the opposition has anything meaningful to say on the economy.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

ETHICS

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, who in the Prime Minister's Office has been questioned by the RCMP so far?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's Office is not being investigated by the RCMP.

[English]

Let me be very clear because I know the NDP has stated the contrary on a number of occasions.

The Prime Minister's Office is not the target of an investigation by the RCMP. On the contrary, we know that it is Mr. Duffy and others. Of course, the Prime Minister's Office is assisting in any and all ways possible with those investigations.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the question was different. Who has been questioned, past and present employees of the Prime Minister's Office? Who has been questioned?

We know that some have been, but the fact that the Prime Minister again refuses to answer is duly noted.

Yesterday, Mike Duffy gave the RCMP hundreds of pages of documents related to his \$90,000 scam with the Prime Minister's Office. What documents have the RCMP requested from the Prime Minister?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I note with some interest that after having been written by the RCMP, Mr. Duffy is finally indicating that he is actually going to provide them with some information. He has been under investigation for some time. That would be the least we would expect.

I can assure the House that the Prime Minister's Office has, at all times and in all manner, provided all and any information that the

Oral Questions

RCMP is requesting. We do not make any excuses for this matter, and we insist that those responsible be held accountable.

• (1420)

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, “that the RCMP is requesting”; yesterday, it was no.

[Translation]

Did the Prime Minister know that the initial plan of his chief of staff, Nigel Wright, was to use Conservative funds to repay Mike Duffy's illegal expenses? Did he know that? We are not talking about someone else. We are talking about him.

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have been clear from the start. I was clear with Mr. Duffy, with Mr. Wright and with the caucus: Mr. Duffy's expenses were inappropriate and it was his responsibility to reimburse taxpayers.

[English]

Mr. Duffy did not do that. He did not reimburse, and to my knowledge, he still has not reimbursed, taxpayers for expenses that were inappropriate. On the contrary, he took a cheque from Mr. Wright to pay those expenses and then claimed he had repaid them himself. For that reason, obviously, Mr. Wright and Mr. Duffy have faced appropriate sanction.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, again a clear question and no answer.

Did the Prime Minister know that the initial plan was to have him reimbursed by the Conservative Party?

First Nigel Wright resigned, and then he was fired. First no one else knew about the Duffy scam, then maybe 13 people knew about it.

With all of these contradictions, does the Prime Minister not owe it to Canadians to be forthcoming, honest and to finally answer these simple questions?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am obviously not going to play the game of the leader of the NDP, who tries to make allegations against people who have been accused of absolutely nothing.

The facts in this case are not good, but they are clear. Mr. Duffy took expense money that we believe was not appropriate. Rather than repay that money, as he had been asked, and as he claimed publicly, he took a cheque from Mr. Wright. That information was not accurately conveyed to me. When I learned that information, I made that information public, and we have taken appropriate sanctions against them.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Good, bad—some progress.

Mr. Speaker, does the Prime Minister remember saying about Paul Martin at the height of the sponsorship scandal that, and I quote, “I don't think he's been forthcoming and honest on fairly simple questions when there appear to be contradictions...”.

Does he remember once thinking that?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition refers to a matter in which \$40 million was taken due to the actions of a political party from the coffers of the taxpayers, and that money, for the most part, still has not been located.

In this case, certain senators made claims that we do not believe were right or legitimate. We know that was done. We have taken action to ensure that those who did that have been held accountable.

[Translation]

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government falsely told the House on several occasions that there were no documents linking the Prime Minister's Office to Mike Duffy's payoff. We now know that that is not true and that the RCMP is investigating potentially criminal conduct by some PMO staffers.

In the documents handed over to the RCMP, was there a document from Chris Woodcock, former senior adviser to the Prime Minister, suggesting that Mike Duffy lie?

[English]

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the Prime Minister just said, we are continuing to work with the authorities on this matter.

The Prime Minister's Office is under no investigation. We are very happy that finally Senator Duffy has decided to co-operate with the RCMP and provide that information.

At the same time, I am sure Canadians are as disappointed as I am that the Liberals fought for the status quo in the Senate and refused to respect taxpayers by supporting those motions. We know how hard the Liberals fought for the status quo and how they ignored Canadian taxpayers.

We are proud that on this side of the House we fought for, and the Senate fought for, and received those suspensions.

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, another stonewall. Why can Canadians not get a straight answer? Are the police investigating Chris Woodcock's emails?

Canadians can only assume the answer is yes. The allegation that Duffy was coached to lie and that the coaching came from Woodcock when he was a senior adviser to the Prime Minister is deadly serious. It is corruption in the highest political office in the land.

Since he became aware of that risk, at least last May or earlier, did the Prime Minister ever ask Woodcock what was going on?

• (1425)

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I just said, we are going to continue to co-operate with the police. The Prime Minister's Office is under no investigation.

I think what this member has to do is explain to Canadians why the Liberals continue to make victims out of these three senators, why it was that their senators either abstained or refused to vote to suspend them, and why it is that, once again, they refuse to stand up for Canadian taxpayers.

I think people understand that when it comes to protecting taxpayers, it is the Conservative Party that they can always count on.

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Wascana, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is more obfuscation.

Chris Woodcock appears at the centre of a cash for repayment cover-up that involved Duffy, Wright, Gerstein, Perrin, Hamilton, Byrne, Rogers, Novak, van Hemmen, LeBreton, Tkachuk and Stewart Olsen, the Prime Minister's entire entourage, for more than three months, yet the Prime Minister noticed nothing, was told nothing, asked nothing, did nothing to head off a criminal conspiracy right under his nose? It is still going on.

Why is Chris Woodcock still being paid by taxpayers?

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are assisting with the RCMP. The Prime Minister's Office is under no investigation.

Again, the member has to respond to Canadians and taxpayers about why it was that Liberals in the Senate fought so hard for the status quo and so hard against taxpayers.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, since Nigel Wright resigned, or since he was fired, whichever one of his versions the Prime Minister prefers to use today, has anyone in the Prime Minister's Office spoken with Nigel Wright?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Mr. Wright is a private citizen.

As we know, Mr. Wright has admitted responsibility for his actions. I understand that he has been fully co-operative with authorities in all investigations.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, how would he know?

On June 5, the Prime Minister claimed that no one in his office knew about the \$90,000 payment to Mike Duffy. Did either Chris Woodcock or David van Hemmen tell the Prime Minister that statement was false?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, the facts are that Mr. Duffy claimed publicly that he had returned money to taxpayers. That claim was, of course, not true. He had received that money from Mr. Wright. He knew that was not true when he claimed it.

I had not been informed of that. It is very clear to me that the sole responsibility for those actions rests with Mr. Duffy and Mr. Wright. That is why they have been subject to the appropriate sanction and are under investigation.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the question was, did either Chris Woodcock or David van Hemmen tell the Prime Minister that was false?

Oral Questions

Again, Canadians note that he does not answer simple questions.
[Translation]

Who told the Prime Minister that Nigel Wright did not pay Mike Duffy with a personal cheque? He knows the answer. Who told the Prime Minister that it was not a personal cheque and that he would have to change his story?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Mr. Wright admitted in May that he paid Mr. Duffy with his personal funds. The facts are clear. I immediately informed the Canadian public, as is my duty.

[English]

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, whoever told the Prime Minister that Nigel Wright did not use a personal cheque was obviously aware of the details of the scheme. Who was it?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am having trouble following that question.

The fact of the matter is this. As I said, Mr. Wright told me on May 15 that he had used his personal funds to pay the monies to Mr. Duffy, the monies that Mr. Duffy claimed publicly he had repaid himself. Obviously, it was unacceptable that this was done, and particularly that I was not informed and my permission to do such a thing was never sought. I obviously would never have given it, and for that reason these two individuals have faced sanctions.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, was Mike Duffy briefed by anyone in the Prime Minister's Office for any of his media appearances? Yes or no.

• (1430)

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again the New Democrats are back into the mode of trying to depict Mr. Duffy as somehow a victim here.

Mr. Duffy took expenses that I do not think anybody in this House thinks are appropriate. Mr. Duffy then claimed publicly that he had repaid them when Mr. Duffy himself knew that not to be true. It is Mr. Duffy who is responsible for those actions, and he should be held accountable.

[Translation]

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, who in the PMO was in contact with Senator David Tkachuk or Senator Carolyn Stewart Olsen to whitewash the Mike Duffy report?

Tkachuk confirmed that he had conversations with the PMO. Who was it with? It was the Prime Minister. He knows it. He can tell us and he has to tell Canadians.

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, as the senator said, the Senate and the Senate committee take responsibility for their own reports.

[English]

Once again, we find the leader of the NDP trying to cast the net wide, trying to accuse people, who have been accused of nothing, of doing something wrong. In this case, Senator Tkachuk has been clear that the Senate obviously got advice from all kinds of sources, but in

the end that committee made its own decisions and its own recommendations.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, actually Senator Tkachuk is on the record as saying he spoke with the Prime Minister's Office. We were asking who, and the Prime Minister again refuses to respond.

Last weekend, Senator Irving Gerstein told Canadians that he outright rejected any requests from the Prime Minister's Office to repay Mike Duffy's illegal expenses. Does the Prime Minister stand by that story? Yes or no.

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, my view on this matter was absolutely clear from the beginning, to all concerned. That was that I believe that Senator Duffy should repay the expenses he had inappropriately collected from taxpayers. That still has not been done, which is one reason the Senate has taken the strong action it has, in fact, action without precedent. I hope this is a good example that will be followed going forward, to ensure that these kinds of things do not happen again in the future.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, that was a simple question, but if the Prime Minister still cannot stand up and vouch for Senator Gerstein's story, what is Senator Gerstein still doing in the Prime Minister's Conservative caucus?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again the leader of the NDP casts aspersions on individuals who are accused of doing absolutely nothing wrong. The fact of the matter is that what was done wrong is that Mr. Duffy made a false claim about his expense repayments, or payments that had come from Mr. Wright that Mr. Wright had not been forthcoming about. That is the responsibility of those two individuals. Mr. Wright has taken responsibility. Those two individuals are under inquiry and investigation.

It is very different than the leader of the NDP, who for 17 years knew of bribe attempts by the Mayor of Laval and refused to take any action himself.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, only a Conservative would consider that asking whether someone was telling the truth would be casting aspersions.

When the Prime Minister named Pamela Wallin to the Senate, he knew she lived in Toronto, not Saskatchewan. Why did he name her? He knew Mike Duffy lived in Ottawa, not in P.E.I. Why did he name him? The Prime Minister knew his close friend, Carolyn Stewart Olsen, lived in Ottawa, not New Brunswick; she worked beside him. Why did he name her?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is obviously a great honour for anyone to be elected to this chamber, to be appointed to the other chamber. Regardless of their backgrounds, all of these people have given many years of public service.

Oral Questions

The fact of the matter is we expect people to respect the rules. We expect people to not make expense claims that are false or that are contrary to the rules or that entirely disregard whether rules even exist. Those senators who have done that, two out of the three senators the NDP leader has named, have been sanctioned. That was appropriate, and I hope it sends a good message.

Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, U. S. President Nixon was forced to resign not because of the Watergate break-in but because of the denials and cover-up that followed. The Prime Minister is in exactly the same boat. The unethical behaviour of the senators and the chief of staff, who he appointed, is shameful, but the real issue is his role in the alleged bribery, corruption, and cover-up.

With the RCMP now knocking on the door of the Prime Minister's Office, will the Prime Minister finally stop evading our questions and tell Canadians the truth?

• (1435)

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me say this. That member and that question are a complete disgrace and deserve no answer.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government would have us believe that the suspension of Senator Duffy, Senator Wallin and Senator Brazeau puts an end to the scandal hanging over the Prime Minister's head. What is worse, the government is trying to cover up the whole thing and refuses to come clean with Canadians. The Conservatives' vote last night was another step in trying to hide the involvement of the Prime Minister and his office. If the Prime Minister has nothing to hide, why does he refuse to testify under oath before a committee?

[*English*]

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our senate colleagues took very decisive action with respect to these three senators. They protected the taxpayers, unlike the Liberals in the Senate and unlike the Liberals in the House. The Liberals in the House, of course, make victims of these senators and disgraced former Liberal Senator Mac Harb. In the Senate, they refuse to stand up for taxpayers. We are doing just the opposite.

At the same time, the minister for democratic reform, who has been compared to Winston Churchill recently by some in the press gallery, has put forward a series of reforms to the Supreme Court that we hope will provide a road map for future changes to the Senate.

Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is again for the Prime Minister.

If the government is not engaged in a cover-up, then why is it refusing to release documents that were requested through the ATIP process that we now know exist, thanks to RCMP court filings?

Why did Chris Woodcock try to deceive Canadians by writing a phony story about Mike Duffy taking out a Royal Bank loan to pay the \$90,000? Why is the government still employing former PMO staffers, like Chris Woodcock, who participated in an attempted cover-up?

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what is clear is this. On February 13, when Senator Duffy approached the Prime Minister to try to justify his inappropriate expenses, the Prime Minister told him he had to repay them. That is the standard we expected. That is the standard he expected. Senator Duffy then went on TV and said that he had repaid using the Royal Bank. We subsequently learned that that was not true.

At the same time, we moved forward, the Senate moved forward, with a motion to suspend these three senators. All Canadians believe that was the right step. The only people who do not believe that was the right step, of course, are the Liberals, who are always fighting for their entitlements.

Whether it is in the House or in the Senate, we will fight for taxpayers.

* * *

NATION DEFENCE

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask about the government's disgraceful treatment of wounded soldiers. Soldiers are being forced out just before they become eligible for their pensions. Sadly, the minister dodges these questions and pretends these soldiers agreed to leave.

Corporal David Hawkins did not agree. He did not want to be discharged a year shy of qualifying for his pension. He wanted to continue to serve.

These soldiers are not asking for special treatment; they are asking for fair treatment. Why will the minister not stand up, do the right thing, and support these soldiers?

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, no government has done more to support these soldiers than this government. I am very proud of that.

As I said before, we have been working with the Chief of the Defence Staff and the chief of military personnel to ensure that members of the Canadian Armed Forces are not released until they are prepared. I again remind the hon. member that every possible accommodation is made to ensure that soldiers are kept in the forces and provided with the best possible support before being considered for release. That is the way it should be.

• (1440)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Éloise Michaud (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this is shameful. Their old tired lines will do nothing to help our soldiers.

The minister's cavalier attitude is a slap in the face of all those who put their lives on the line to defend our country. Men and women have paid the price for their dedication and sacrificed their health in the process. However, the Conservatives, with this minister leading the way, have turned their backs on them.

Oral Questions

Would the minister show a little compassion and make sure that soldiers wounded in action are entitled to their full pension before returning to civilian life?

[English]

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Chief of the Defence Staff and the chief of military personnel work very closely with all issues related to soldiers and those being released. They are very accommodating to them in terms of making sure that they have all the resources they need. Nobody is released until they are ready for that.

What is shameful is that every time we come forward with any initiative to help support our men and women in uniform and veterans in this country, the NDP always votes against it.

* * *

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to veterans, Conservatives are speaking out of both sides of their mouths. Veterans deserve better.

Windsor is a community that responded to the call. It provided our nation's capital the Korean war memorial. Our men and women stepped up during the Great Wars, Korea, Afghanistan, and countless peacekeeping missions. Instead of honouring these contributions, Conservatives are closing our veterans office and others, forcing veterans to travel for hours to get help. Why will the government not protect those who have protected Canada?

Mr. Parm Gill (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government has made substantial investments to support Canada's veterans, including almost \$5 billion in new additional dollars since taking office. This funding has been put toward improved financial benefits, world-class rehabilitation, and tuition costs to help veterans transition to civilian life.

While our government is making improvements to veterans' benefits, the Liberals and the NDP have voted against new funding for mental health treatment, financial support, and home care services.

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP): What utter nonsense, Mr. Speaker. I can assure the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs that when the NDP forms government, we will re-open every single one of those offices. Veterans deserve better than that.

The reality is there is a big rally happening in Sydney, Cape Breton, this Saturday with all our citizens. All the Atlantic communities want to keep that office open. These veterans and their families deserve to have that one-on-one counselling that they have received for many years, and it is shameful to cut those offices.

We ask the government one last time. To the Prime Minister: will you stop these cuts and keep these offices open?

The Speaker: I remind the hon. member to address the question through the Chair and not directly at the Prime Minister.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs.

Mr. Parm Gill (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there are now 600 additional points of service across this country available to Canadian veterans. A critically injured veteran no longer has to drive to a district office. Our government now sends a registered nurse or a caseworker to meet with them in the comfort of their own homes.

I would like to point out the fact that it is the opposition parties and members that have voted against every single initiative we have introduced to help our veterans.

* * *

WESTERN ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION

Hon. Ron Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government recognizes that supporting innovation in the private sector is key to our continued economic success. While the Liberals and NDP spread fear and uncertainty, we have been encouraging the growth of our entrepreneurs and business leaders with the launch of the western innovation initiative, otherwise known as WINN.

Could the hard-working, intelligent Minister of State for Western Economic Diversification please outline how our government is creating new economic opportunities in the West?

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Minister of State (Western Economic Diversification), CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to introduce policy in an area that you have a background in.

Knowing how important it is to have access to capital for small and medium-size entrepreneurs when they are scaling up their products and trying to get them to market to bridge that innovation gap is something our government gets, which is why we have launched the WINN initiative. The first program intake date is November 8. This is a good thing for western Canadian businesses, and we do not need a pastel-coloured poster to tell about it.

* * *

● (1445)

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a broad coalition of over 75 organizations from seven different provinces, representing groups to help the unemployed, professional organizations, students, municipalities, community groups, and so on, have recently spoken out to vigorously reject the Conservatives' EI reform.

After stigmatizing EI recipients, penalizing thousands of workers, and weakening the economy of the regions, how far will the government go before admitting it should cancel its reform?

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. Candice Bergen (Minister of State (Social Development), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the opposition is purposely misleading Canadians about the facts. In fact, their fearmongering is trying to score cheap political points.

The fact is, our modest and reasonable changes have not changed the rules around applying for and qualifying for EI. In fact, EI remains strong for those Canadians who have paid into it and when, through no fault of their own, they need to count on it. That is our government's record.

In addition, we have created more than one million net new jobs. We have the lowest unemployment rate since 2008. We are on track to keep our country strong and prosperous—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine.

[Translation]

Mr. Philip Toone (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, NDP): Mr. Speaker, if the parliamentary secretary had taken the time to do a proper study on the impact of this EI reform, she would know that everything she said is completely false.

A recent survey showed that four out of five people in the Gaspé and the Magdalen Islands personally know someone who had to leave their area because there are no jobs and, contrary to what the Conservatives keep saying, it is just not true that people continue to have access to employment insurance if they lose their jobs for reasons beyond their control.

Does the minister realize that this EI reform will empty out my region? When will he discard this reform?

[English]

Hon. Candice Bergen (Minister of State (Social Development), CPC): Mr. Speaker, the fact is, EI recipients have always been required to look for work while they are receiving benefits.

What is disappointing is when the opposition continuously asks us to enable temporary foreign workers to come into areas where people are unemployed, where Canadians need work.

I want to talk about some of the great changes we have made to EI, including a job alert system, where 33 million alerts were sent out this year. We have a work-sharing program we have introduced. We also have introduced benefits for parents of critically ill children. Those are great changes we have made. We are empowering Canadians.

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*[Translation]***OFFICIAL LANGUAGES**

Mr. Jamie Nicholls (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Commissioner of Official Languages was very clear in his report. The Conservatives' record since 2006 has been catastrophic. People cannot get service in the language of their choice in airports. The government got rid of the census long form, closed the only bilingual rescue centre, appointed unilingual officers, and the list goes on.

What will the new minister do to get Canada moving forward instead of backward on official languages?

Hon. Shelly Glover (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the commissioner for his annual report. To set the record straight on what my colleague just said, I would like to quote from the commissioner's report:

The federal government supports official language communities through various initiatives.... These initiatives have enabled a number of English-speaking and French-speaking communities to gain momentum over the years, giving them reason to be optimistic about the future.

I am very proud of our government because we have made unprecedented investments in our national languages. We will continue to do just that.

[English]

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the reality is that funding for official languages is going down under the Conservatives. It is a bit rich that the minister forgot to mention that.

These service cuts have a dramatic impact on our minority communities, and bilingualism rates are dropping across the country. Our official languages are a critical part of who we are as a country. The minister must do better, so will she implement the commissioner's recommendations, yes or no?

Hon. Shelly Glover (Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, the commissioner was very clear about this government's moving forward on official languages. I would like to say that he noted several positive developments, including that there are now half a million more bilingual Canadians than there were 10 years ago, the majority of Canada's provincial premiers are bilingual, and French has actually become, as he states, the language of ambition. We believe it is ambitious.

I want to thank and congratulate all members of Parliament and senators who are presently taking official language training. Congratulations.

* * *

● (1450)

*[Translation]***CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION**

Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the past five years, on this Conservative government's watch, wait times for family reunification have skyrocketed, jumping from 13 months to 34 months. In some cases, wait times have increased by 400%.

People are having to wait two or three years to be reunited with their spouse. How many marriages can withstand such a test? When will the government do something to address this human tragedy?

Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what the member said is completely false.

Oral Questions

We are reducing the backlog created by the Liberals. We have been doing this work very efficiently for the past seven years for the families, spouses and children of the skilled workers who come here. We are providing impeccable service, which continues to improve.

If we had carried on with how the Liberals were doing things, wait times would be 10 years for skilled workers and their families. Now the wait time is only one year.

[*English*]

Hon. John McCallum (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my facts are right from his website. Liberals cannot be blamed for a tripling of waiting times in the last five years under the watch of Conservatives.

I say to members that they would not like it if their families were forced to remain overseas for two to three years, were not allowed to visit Canada, and did not have a clue when or whether they would be reunited with them.

I say to the minister, speak the truth and act to deal with this cruel reality facing so many new Canadians.

Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it would be great if the member opposite had a mastery of the facts on the same scale as his anger and confusion. This is the party, the Liberal Party of Canada, that cut family reunification by 40% in its first five years in power.

When we came into office, we increased family reunification by 4,000 per year, compared with the Liberals' last five years. This year, we are bringing 27,000 parents and grandparents to this country. We brought 25,000 last year. That is the largest number in Canadian history. We will bring 20,000 more next year.

No government in history has ever done that, and the Liberals had better get to know—

The Speaker: Order, please.

The hon. member for Brossard—La Prairie.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CHAMPLAIN BRIDGE

Mr. Hoang Mai (Brossard—La Prairie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Infrastructure continues to turn a deaf ear. He is too busy repeating “no toll, no bridge” to listen to the people in the Montreal metropolitan area, the business community, surveyed residents and elected officials.

The Champlain Bridge is in really bad shape and must be replaced quickly. However, all the minister wants to do is take money out of the pockets of the people in the Montreal metropolitan area.

Will the minister stop this blackmail?

Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Infrastructure, Communities and Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, of course we are working on building a new bridge, as we announced on October 5, 2011.

However, before building a new bridge, we must first ensure that the existing bridge can still remain open to traffic in the coming years.

This member and his party voted against an investment of \$380 million to maintain the existing bridge so that it is usable until the new bridge is built. I do not need any lectures from this member.

Mr. Hoang Mai (Brossard—La Prairie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the minister likes to change the subject.

The new Champlain Bridge will change the face of Montreal. It will cost billions of dollars and the minister is acting as though he is installing new floating flooring in his bungalow.

We could have a bridge with modern and magnificent architecture. He does not care. We could avoid killing the Montreal economy with a poorly planned toll. He does not care. We could ensure that we hold a tendering process to save taxpayers money. He does not care.

Will he start taking this issue seriously?

• (1455)

Hon. Denis Lebel (Minister of Infrastructure, Communities and Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on August 8, 2011, this member and another one of his colleagues said that it remained to be seen whether there would be a toll, that they were still open to the idea and that it had to be discussed.

Today, he is saying that he is against a toll. He changes his mind as often as he changes his shirt. We are building a bridge for the future. We have worked really hard. The recently published Buckland & Taylor report has led us to proceed with more caution. We need to accelerate the construction of the new bridge and ensure that the existing bridge can remain open to traffic in the meantime. We are going to do the work. This bridge is an economic issue, not a political one.

* * *

[*English*]

LABOUR

Mr. Mark Adler (York Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the President of the Treasury Board. Public sector salaries and benefits are the single largest operating expenditure of the government and vastly outstrip what Canadians can expect to receive in the private sector. We have also found that there is an extremely high rate of absenteeism in the public service.

Could the President of the Treasury Board please update the House on what he is doing to fix this issue and ensure that taxpayers are respected?

Oral Questions

Hon. Tony Clement (President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for a very important question. Did you know, Mr. Speaker, that currently, the absenteeism rate in the federal public service is 2.5 times private sector norms? This means that employees are home sick longer and are not getting the care they need. We want to have a system in place of more accountability and more responsibility, ensuring that those who are genuinely sick get the care they need and get back to work healthier.

This is good for the public service and it is good for the taxpayer to have that greater accountability. That is what I will be pursuing next year, when we get down to bargaining.

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VETERANS AFFAIRS

Hon. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in order to apply for benefits from Veterans Affairs, veterans need their complete medical files. Veterans Affairs has destroyed 27,381 boxes of medical records. I know of at least three veterans whose files were destroyed.

I have two questions for the Minister of Veterans Affairs. Has each veteran been advised that their file was destroyed? Can the minister guarantee that no veteran has been affected due to the destruction of their file, yes or no, or will he go and support Robert Ford?

Mr. Parm Gill (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, these files pertained to veterans from many years ago. Indeed, no active, living veteran's file was involved in this process. What is more, each and every Canadian Armed Forces member's and veteran's military files remain in the archive.

To that member, I am very disappointed that he would choose to misinform and try to spread fear during the week designed to remember those who gave their lives in sacrifice for Canada.

* * *

[Translation]

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Ms. Francine Raynault (Joliette, NDP): Mr. Speaker, children at the Simon P. Ottawa elementary school have been relocated to windowless storage units. A recent Health Canada report indicates that the moisture levels in the school's walls are between 96% and 100%, which leads to high levels of mould. The report makes mention of sick building syndrome and the presence of rodents.

I urge the minister to release emergency funds to fix the situation and to come visit the site on November 22. What is his response?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my answer is simple. The department is well aware of the situation at the school in question, and action is being taken to fix the problem.

* * *

[English]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, liquefied natural gas is an important resource to our

country, especially in my province of British Columbia. Canada is fifth in the world for production and fourth in exports of natural gas. This resource plays an important role as we transition from traditional coal plants and provides Canada with the opportunity to increase exports to new markets.

Can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources comment on new developments in the area of natural gas?

Mrs. Kelly Block (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Prince George—Peace River for that question. I look forward to working with him on committee.

Yesterday the National Energy Board, in conjunction with the provinces of British Columbia and Alberta, released a report estimating larger than expected reserves in the Montney basin, enough to supply Canada's needs for 145 years. This is fantastic news for our energy sector.

Our government understands the importance of accessing new markets for our energy products, especially natural gas. We will remain focused on jobs and economic growth for all Canadians.

* * *

● (1500)

[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the next Global Fund replenishment conference will take place in early December. The United States, the United Kingdom and Australia have already announced that they will be increasing their funding. They understand that we are at a turning point and that we can finally control AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis in developing countries. However, the Conservatives have remained silent.

Will Canada also increase its Global Fund commitment, and when will the government make the announcement?

[English]

Ms. Lois Brown (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada was a founding partner and continues to be a contributing partner to the Global Fund. We recognize the importance played by this organization in the fight against these three terrible diseases and we know that a replenishment conference is coming up in late 2013 for a replacement. As in the past, Canada will continue to determine its support in the lead-up to the conference.

Business of the House

[Translation]

JUSTICE

Mrs. Maria Mourani (Ahuntsic, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, the Conseil du statut de la femme du Québec recently released a report on forced marriages, which affect underage girls. They are forced by certain family members to marry someone they do not know, often overseas. Once married, these young girls are often raped and forced to remain overseas.

Does the Minister of Justice plan on criminalizing forced marriage, as Canada has done for other unacceptable practices such as female circumcision?

[English]

Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada is playing a leading role around the world in pushing for an end to early and forced marriage. This is an abhorrent practice, and Canada is taking the lead at the United Nations by tabling a stand-alone resolution this fall. The issue with respect to what we can do in Canada to prevent young girls from being taken out of this country and forced to marry is a serious one. I know colleagues will be considering it, and I am prepared to work with the member opposite on this important issue.

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POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTIONS

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during question period, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, in response a question from my colleague from Vancouver Quadra, began his answer with a personal attack, using language which in the past you have ruled unparliamentary.

I would ask if the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister might wish to withdraw those first words of his answer. If he does not, Mr. Speaker, maybe you could review the record and come back to the House with some clarification as to what an appropriate answer would be.

Mr. Paul Calandra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and for Intergovernmental Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, of course I will take advice from you on that, but I stand by the comments that I said to that question from that member. That was a despicable and disgraceful question that had no place in this chamber.

The Speaker: I will take a look at the record, as the hon. member for Beauséjour has suggested. I think it is important for members to make a distinction between actions that they may be critical of and members as individuals.

I will look to see exactly what phrase was used, and if need be will get back to the House.

* * *

[Translation]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Nathan Cullen (House Leader of the Official Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise on behalf of the official

opposition to ask the government what it has planned for the House for the remainder of this week and next week.

[English]

As MPs head back to our ridings to mark the solemn occasion of Remembrance Day, I want to take a moment to acknowledge the ultimate price that has been paid by countless men and women, affecting far too many families, in the name of all Canadians, to defend our most cherished rights and freedoms at home and abroad.

In this year, the Year of the Korean War Veteran, which marks the 60th anniversary of that war's armistice, we pay particular respect to those 517 Canadians who lost their lives in that war. We will never forget their sacrifice, particularly over the week of remembrance ceremonies.

What does the government House leader have planned for the House in the days following Veterans' Week?

● (1505)

[Translation]

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this afternoon we will finish debating today's motion from the New Democrats.

Tomorrow we will resume the second reading debate on Bill C-2, the Respect for Communities Act.

After Remembrance Day and a week of work in our constituencies, we will return here with a continued focus on protecting Canadians.

[English]

On Monday, November 18, I expect we will continue debating Bill C-2. If MPs discuss that bill with their constituents, I expect they will endorse the bill, which gives communities input on decisions on drug injection facilities that could have a real impact on those communities.

Before question period on Tuesday, we will resume the second reading debate on Bill C-3, safeguarding Canada's seas and skies act. Following question period, we will take up Bill C-5, offshore health and safety act at second reading.

On Wednesday, the House will start debating Bill C-11, priority hiring for injured veterans act, which the Minister of National Defence introduced this morning on behalf of the Minister of Veterans Affairs. This is a bill that both honours those who serve and advances employment opportunities for the disabled. It is a very fitting bill to be introduced this week, Veterans' Week, and I hope that all hon. members will join together in passing this bill quickly at second reading so it can be reviewed at committee and ultimately become the law of this land.

Finally, the hon. member for Papineau had a chance earlier this week to put forward a fresh new idea for governing Canada, any idea in fact, but he did not. However, do not worry, the Liberals are going to get another chance to give us an idea, some policy idea other than simply the legalization of marijuana, just one new idea. We might suggest an idea on continuing Canada's economic leadership. That will be on Thursday, November 21, which shall be the fourth allotted day set aside for a Liberal opposition day.

*Business of Supply***GOVERNMENT ORDERS***[English]***BUSINESS OF SUPPLY**

OPPOSITION MOTION—KEYSTONE XL PIPELINE

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Saskatoon—Humboldt.

It is an honour for me to stand and speak in the House today about Keystone XL pipeline and its vast benefits to Canadian families and our national interests. In my time today, I will touch on why Canada's oil sands and the approval of the Keystone XL pipeline is important to our energy relationship with our most important bilateral and economic partner and neighbour, the review process, and the current state of play.

Canada and the United States are more than just neighbours. Our two nations' shared commitment to democracy, free markets and rule of law underpin why Canada and the United States have the world's most successful relationship, in a number of respects. Our energy relationship remains the single most important bilateral energy relationship in the world, and we will continue to work to further strengthen this relationship to the benefit of both our nations.

Our energy partnership, based on our open market energy policies and energy trade relationship, underpinned by NAFTA, has served both of our countries well. Our energy infrastructure, including oil and gas pipeline networks and electricity grids, is highly integrated. Already we trade oil, natural gas and electricity safely across our shared border every day. Every day, Canada supplies the United States with approximately 1.9 million barrels of oil, nearly half of which is derived from the oil sands. The strategic value of Canada's 172 billion barrels of proven oil reserves, the third largest reserve in the world, cannot be overstated.

I have been to northern Alberta to see the oil sands first-hand and how the development of the resource is well managed right through to remediation of the land to its natural state. We are truly fortunate to have this incredible natural resource in our country.

With Canada as a strong and willing partner on environmental and energy security, we have an extraordinary opportunity to work with the United States to deal with the common challenges we face in moving toward low carbon economies. As the oil sands production increases, most of the increased production will go to U.S. markets, requiring new cross-border pipelines to be built. Approval of the Keystone XL pipeline will facilitate long-term access to secure oil supplies from a friend and ally, and thereby help reduce U.S. dependence on imports from less stable or declining foreign sources. This is important for all of us in terms of long-term continental security, and it matters to Canadian families from coast to coast to coast. Canada will continue to be the leading, most secure, reliable and competitive energy supplier to the United States.

The Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development has already undertaken extensive advocacy efforts and outreach to key U.S. decision-makers and influencers to ensure market access and

promote prosperity. In this regard, we have worked with the Government of Alberta and TransCanada. Along with these important partners, we will continue to watch the debate unfold in the U.S. and advocate on behalf of the project.

I would now like to spend some time explaining the extensive and important review process we have undertaken on this project, to help them understand just how thorough our government has been in terms of promoting responsible resource development.

TransCanada first filed its application with the U.S. department of state in September 2008. The department of state, which has delegated authority to issue presidential permits for cross-border pipelines, engaged in a lengthy review and consultation process for the Keystone XL pipeline permit application. Then, over the course of 2009 and 2010, as part of the presidential permit review process, the State Department prepared a draft environmental impact statement, or SEIS, consistent with the national environmental policy act.

In April 2010, the State Department released a draft SEIS for Keystone, which began an inter-agency consultation process and a 45-day public comments period, including 21 public meetings in communities along the proposed route. The public comment period was twice extended by an additional 15 days and additional public hearings were added. Congress, and various U.S. agencies, notably the Environmental Protection Agency and the State Department, decided to undertake a supplemental SEIS, which was released in April, 2011 and which initiated another 45-day public comment period.

On August 26, 2011, the State Department issued the final SEIS, which found that there would be no significant impacts to most resources along the proposed project corridor. I cannot emphasize the importance of these findings enough.

● (1510)

The final SEIS found there would be no significant impacts to most resources along the proposed project corridor. As well, TransCanada had agreed to incorporate 57 project-specific special conditions developed by the U.S. Department of Transportation Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration.

Business of Supply

The release of the final SEIS began a 90-day national interest determination. The broader evaluation of the application extended beyond the environmental impacts, and took into account economic considerations, energy security, foreign policy and other relevant issues. For the national interest determination, the State Department officials decided to hold additional public hearings in six pipeline states, including Montana, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, and in Washington D.C., and to receive additional public comments.

The September 2011 hearings in Nebraska highlighted a growing public concern about the proposed pipeline route that crossed the Sandhills and a desire to see the route moved off the Sandhills. In November 2011, the State Department announced that it could not make a national interest determination without further information and directed that a supplemental SEIS be done for alternate routes wholly within Nebraska but away from the Sandhills. We then supported the responsible decision and agreement between TransCanada and Nebraska to move Keystone XL off the Sandhills. They are now working together to agree on a new route. On January 18, 2012, the State Department recommended to the President that the Keystone XL application be turned down, citing a provision that forced the decision on the pipeline within 60 days as the reason. The department of state argued that the federal government could not assess a new and not-yet-announced route in Nebraska within such a short period of time.

It is extremely important to note that in his statement of concurrence, the President said:

This announcement is not a judgment on the merits of the pipeline, but on the arbitrary nature of a deadline that prevented the State Department from gathering the information necessary to approve the project and protect American people.

The State Department has stated that to the extent that the new application is the same as the previous application, both the National Environmental Policy Act and internal State Department procedures allow the State Department to access information from the previous application. However, it noted that a determination as to how much information may be accessed and how this information may shorten the assessment time cannot be made until an application is filed.

TransCanada officials then announced that the company would proceed with building the gulf coast segment of the Keystone XL pipeline, from Cushing, Oklahoma, to Port Arthur and Houston, Texas. Construction will begin as soon as remaining required permits from federal, state, and local entities are obtained, with a possible in-service date of mid-2013 to late 2013.

In May 2012, TransCanada filed a new Keystone XL presidential permit application to seek approval for the northern portion of the pipeline. Last year, the Nebraska department of environmental quality released its draft evaluation report on Keystone XL. The report does not make a recommendation but notes that TransCanada has been “responsive to concerns raised by the NDEQ, HDR Engineering, Inc., the state’s contractor for the evaluation process, and the public”.

A 36-day public comment period, ultimately extended to 39 days, took place between October 30 and December 7, 2012. A public hearing was held in Albion, Nebraska on December 4, 2012. Following a review of the public feedback received during this

period, as well as the hearing, the NDEQ submitted its final evaluation report on the Keystone Nebraska reroute to Governor Heineman on January 4.

On January 22, 2013, Nebraska’s Governor Heineman approved the revised Keystone XL route in Nebraska, based on the findings of NDEQ. This report concluded that if the pipeline is rerouted away from the environmentally sensitive Sandhills, the construction and operation of Keystone XL would result in minimal environmental impacts in Nebraska. As previously stated, we have supported the responsible decision and agreement between TransCanada and Nebraska to move the Keystone XL off the Sandhills, and they are now working together to agree on a new route.

On March 1, 2013, the U.S. State Department released the draft supplemental environmental impact statement for Keystone XL. The scope of the draft SEIS was to evaluate the new route in Nebraska and to include any new information since the August 2011 final SEIS for the first Keystone XL application was completed. Once the U.S. department of state issues the final impact statement, there will be up to a 90-day national interest determination period that will take place, including an additional public comment period.

• (1515)

I hope this overview has helped members understand just how thorough the review process has been. I also hope it has demonstrated to members just how committed this government is to responsible resource development.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened with a bit of dubious interest to my hon. colleague. The problem the Conservatives have is they have consistently stripped environmental protection and ridiculed issues of climate science, leaving themselves seen in the world as outliers. I refer to their Minister of Natural Resources, who attacked respected NASA scientist James Hansen while the minister was on a supposed diplomatic mission to Washington. He said that Dr. Hansen should be ashamed because of his work on climate science.

These comments might have played well with the Conservative back base, but they certainly did not play well in *The Guardian* and *The New York Times*, although I see my colleagues on the backbench and the Conservatives nodding in support of the Minister of Natural Resources’s comments.

I ask my hon. colleague this: does he support such attacks on credible climate scientists? Does he think that is a good way to promote trade with the United States?

Mr. David Sweet: Mr. Speaker, I will let the member know exactly what is going on in our stewardship of the environment.

Canada’s GHG regulations will significantly reduce emissions from cars, light trucks, heavy-duty vehicles, and coal-fired electricity. Canada is one of the few countries in the world to regulate and phase out traditional coal-fired electricity generation.

Business of Supply

Canada is improving its GHG performance in the oil sands. Between 1990 and 2011, GHG emissions per barrel were reduced by 26%. Canada is doing more in the future to reduce emissions as well.

If the hon. member goes to the air quality statistics at ec.gc.ca, he will find that every measurement—NO_x, SO_x, and particulate matter—has been reduced since this government took responsibility for the nation in 2006.

• (1520)

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I suppose we would not be having this debate and this problem if the hon. member were correct. However, no less a person than President Obama disagrees with him. The President drew a link between approval of XL and a lack of action on climate change, saying, “There is no doubt that Canada at the source of those tar sands could be potentially doing more to mitigate carbon release.”

He also mentioned that his administration has not seen “specific ideas or plans” from Canada that would offset concerns about the pipeline’s impact on emissions.

I would love to believe that the hon. member’s government has done something about emissions from the oil sands. The regrettable fact is that the world and President Obama have noticed that nothing has been done. That is why we are having this debate and why the XL pipeline is in trouble.

Mr. David Sweet: Mr. Speaker, I greatly respect the member from the Liberal Party, and it pains me to have to be so raw in my comments in retort, but I would remind him to go to ec.gc.ca. We have professionals in the government who put those statistics on the Internet, in beautiful living colour, by the way. There are several colours for all of the different measurements, which show that we have continued to take good action on—

Hon. John McKay: I’ve got them right here. I’ve got it.

Mr. David Sweet: Mr. Speaker, there we go. The member said he has printed them off.

It is also important to note that under the previous Liberal government, GHGs went up 130 megatonnes, but we are set to meet the Copenhagen targets of a reduction of 130 megatonnes by 2020.

Hon. Rob Moore (Minister of State (Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency), CPC): Mr. Speaker, in listening to the opposition members, I cringe to think of what they would do to our economy with their obvious disdain for our natural resources sector.

Where I come from in New Brunswick, natural resource exports play a huge role in our economy, whether it be potash, forestry, fisheries, or other natural resources exports. I am wondering if the hon. member can speak to the importance of the natural resource export sector to the Canadian economy and to all Canadians.

Mr. David Sweet: Mr. Speaker, energy is 10% of our GDP, and energy production is one of the major factors.

I come from Hamilton, which is a steel producing town. It just so happens that pipelines are built with steel, and the steel industry, as competitive as it is, could certainly use all the help it can get. Going ahead with the Keystone XL pipeline would certainly be the first endeavour to assist in increasing steel production not only in Canada but in North America.

Mr. Brad Trost (Saskatoon—Humboldt, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure, as a member of the natural resources committee, to be able to participate in this debate today. Before I get into the main body of my speech, I would like to start off with a quote:

I support the Keystone XL pipeline because of a triple bottom line assessment looking at environmental, economic, and social reasons. ... [The NDP leader] will make his comments. My job first and foremost is to stand up for Saskatchewan’s interests, to develop our resources in a sustainable and responsible manner, and that’s the approach that I’ll be taking and our caucus and party will be taking with me as leader.

Who said that? That was Cam Broten, leader of the Saskatchewan New Democratic Party.

Those who are observing this debate today who think that it is a debate between the Conservatives on one side and the New Democrats on the other should understand that New Democrats who live in areas of the country that are actually impacted by the development of our natural resources and the development of our oil, be it in the oil sands or in southern Saskatchewan in the Bakken oil play, or New Democrats who have held government for more than one term—including our ambassador, the former NDP leader in Manitoba—are also forcefully advocating on behalf of this pipeline. New Democrats who have had real responsibility and who come from areas of the country where they have been in government on a regular basis take a perspective very different from New Democrats who have not been in government or who are not in areas of the country where this issue would affect them economically.

I think it would behoove members of the opposition not to listen just to New Democrats like Mr. Broten and Mr. Doer down in Washington D.C. but also to members who are traditionally of their historic coalition.

Anyone who was a member of the natural resources committee would know this, but not all members of the House will: members of trade unions not particularly often tied in with the Conservatives, such as the AFL-CIO and some of the other building trades, have been strong proponents of the Keystone XL and of building pipelines from Canada to the United States to increase and enhance the economic development of western Canada and all of Canada.

The people watching on TV and people who will read this in *Hansard* need to understand that it is the federal New Democrats who are opposed to the development of these resources in western Canada. It is those New Democrats who are dead set opposed to the development of the economy based on natural resources. It is not fair to link all trade unions and all New Democrats with the policies of this opposition party. It is good to know that some of them actually understand partially how the economy functions.

Now that I have started with my introduction, let me get into the main body of my speech. It is a pleasure for me to stand in the House today and speak about the economic growth and improvements to North America’s energy security that North Americans will see as a result of the approval of the Keystone XL pipeline.

Business of Supply

The Conservative government's top priority remains the economy, creating jobs, and boosting investment. Canada has a market-based energy sector that is open to investment from around the world. Our history has shown that this is the best for all of Canada. While national approaches vary widely, history has shown that global energy security as a whole is greatly enhanced by open markets and transparent energy regimes.

The oil sands comprise approximately 98% of Canada's 172 billion barrels of proven oil reserves, and their responsible development will provide Canada with a secure economic development with a secure source of oil, as it will for all of North America. When we consider this project, it is important to recall that even under the International Energy Agency's most stringent low-carbon scenario, oil is still estimated to provide for 26% of the world's energy mix in 2035.

• (1525)

Oil will almost certainly remain part of the energy mix for Canada and the entire world for years to come.

Why is this pipeline important? It is important because of our existing trade relationships with the United States.

I should note here that Keystone XL will not just transport oil from the oil sands: oil from other places in North America, such as Saskatchewan, Montana, and North Dakota, will also be transported by this pipeline. However, oil from the oil sands currently accounts for about half of Canada's oil exports to the United States. This sector drives one-fifth of the country's economy, employing nearly one in 10 Canadians and representing over half our exports. This is one of the reasons Canada did not have some of the same economic difficulties other countries in the world did when the global financial crisis hit in 2008.

Resource revenues generate billions in annual taxes and royalties for governments to fund critical social programs, such as health care and education. These jobs, these programs, are things that matter to Canadians.

If I may take another small detour here from my main speaking notes, it was noted today by some of the opposition members that 40,000 jobs will supposedly be exported into other countries if we do not force the oil industry to develop refineries here in Canada. What would happen if we actually did force oil refineries to be built in Canada? What would happen? How would we have to do it?

There are a few ways to approach it. We could give big subsidies to the companies that would build oil refineries in Canada, if they are not market incentivized to do it. Therefore, we would have to take taxpayers' money. We would have to raise taxes, and raising taxes would kill jobs. Those 40,000 jobs that were discussed today are not new jobs, but transfers from taxpayers.

Maybe we would not give them subsidies. There are other ways we could do it. We could restrict the export of the oil. That has been suggested. That then makes the assets already invested in less profitable, makes the future incentives for investing in the oil sands and other oil development in Canada again less profitable, and encourages people not to put their capital into Canada but to put it somewhere else.

People who say investors have to put their capital there because they cannot get the oil from anywhere else need to understand that capital has an infinite number of options. If we do not encourage investment in our oil sands, that same money could go into lumber in other parts of the world or a copper mine in Chile or Mongolia or some other place in the world.

This 40,000-job myth that is being put out there is not some sort of free lunch. Either we lose those jobs because we have to raise taxes to build something that is inefficient and that the market does not want, or we have to have restrictions, thus lowering the profits on other industries to subsidize.

One way or the other, when we subsidize to get jobs, these mythical 40,000 jobs, we lose as many jobs or, almost always, more jobs in other sectors. That is why the market works best.

When people are prepared to put their own dollars down for something, we end up with a better result. When Canada follows a free market approach, not a single Canadian job is lost. When we intervene in the energy market with the government, as was proven with the NEP, we lose jobs and we lose revenue. That is bad for all Canadians from sea to sea.

With only one minute left, I do not think I will be able to finish everything here today.

Let me say this: I agree with Mr. Broten. Keystone XL has met the triple bottom line. It is good for social development, for people all the way along there. It creates jobs and employment. It is good for the economy, again reiterating what I just said. It is good for the environment.

The argument that oil sands oil is somehow worse for the environment than other oil forgets what it is replacing and the fact that most emissions from oil products occur when the consumer uses the oil.

Development of the oil sands and of oil in southern Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Alberta is important to the Canadian economy. Keystone XL is a free market solution to help develop that resource. It does not take government money. It does not take subsidies.

Let us encourage people to invest. Let us encourage all Canada to grow and develop together.

• (1530)

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I always find it interesting to hear my colleagues in the Conservative Party talk about the free market and say there are no subsidies. The subsidy that we are dealing with is the environment.

The current government has stripped environmental regulations. It stripped the fundamental costs of running this production in a manner that makes the environment carry that cost, so it is subsidizing it to an extraordinary degree. I would refer my colleague to the November 5 report of the interim Commissioner of Environment and Sustainable Development that says that the government has not met the targets. It has not even come close.

Business of Supply

I would also refer the member to what we are seeing in Reuters, that we have just reached a historic and very dismal mark in terms of greenhouse gas production around the world, and we are set to reach the two-degree world increase very soon.

I know a number of my colleagues on the other side do not believe the science of climate change. They think it is irrelevant. They just want to grab and ship and rip as fast as they can.

Does my hon. colleague believe the science of climate change?

Mr. Brad Trost: Mr. Speaker, I do not want to overemphasize my qualifications, but I think I am one of the few members of the House who has a science degree in the geosciences.

If the hon. member wants to have a learned discussion about climate change, my sedimentology professor at the University of Saskatchewan would be a very good person to educate him. I tend to take similar views as my sedimentology professor.

However, I would note something with regard to his criticism of the government's environmental position. There are two approaches to environmental regulation. One is to emphasize outcomes and protection. The other is to use environmental regulation legislation as a means to socially engineer economic and/or social results. That is the difference between their approach and ours. We are interested in environmental results. They are interested in using environmental regulations for social and economic reasons.

• (1535)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, done properly Keystone would generate thousands of jobs and would generate hundreds of millions of dollars. Western Canada, in fact, all of Canada would benefit from the the progressive development of our natural resources. It is something that we as a party have been very strong in terms of supporting, always being cautious with regard to our environment.

It is interesting to contrast the different styles of leadership on the issue. On the one hand, we have the New Democrats who go down to Washington and are down on the oil sands, down in terms of the Keystone pipeline. They do not want it. They want a moratorium put on the oil sands and so forth.

Then we have the Prime Minister, who bypasses Washington and goes to New York, with his line being that we just will not accept no for an answer.

Can the member indicate to the House what the Prime Minister meant when said to President Obama that we just will not accept no for an answer?

Mr. Brad Trost: Mr. Speaker, my understanding of what the Prime Minister meant when he said that we will not take no for an answer is that he will be absolutely resolved and totally engaged in defending the interests of Canada.

When it comes to standing up for Canada, this Prime Minister does not take no for an answer. He says yes to Canadians from sea to sea. He says yes to Canadians for a growing economy. He will not take no for an answer from anyone in this country or abroad when it comes to stopping the development of Canada.

Mr. Dean Del Mastro (Peterborough, Cons. Ind.): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to enter into this debate to ask the member a question.

One of the things that strikes me so profoundly is that the first oil pipeline in North America was built in southwestern Ontario. That has a remarkable safety record. In fact, 99.9999% of all fluid put into a pipeline since 2006, and even predating that, has in fact reached its end terminus without any incident whatsoever. It is the most environmentally friendly way to transport oil. It is the most productive way to transport oil. It is the most cost-effective way to transport oil. Unless one is a supporter of the horse-and-buggy caucus, our constituents need to buy gas at a reasonable cost.

Would the member please speak to the efficiency of pipelines and the absolute hypocrisy of a party whose members burn gas in their cars then stand and rail against pipelines?

Mr. Brad Trost: Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member has made the point. If we are going to move oil, we have to move it somehow. We have options. One of them is rail; one of them is pipelines.

Engineers, scientists, et cetera, helps—

Mr. Jamie Nicholls: And the market.

Mr. Brad Trost: And the market, as the hon. member across the aisle says, helps to make those decisions.

We should let those decisions be made by technical professionals, and not try to impose socially engineered outcomes to try to skew results in political ways that may favour us.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to this motion I am seconding. I want to point out that I am sharing my time with the member for Timmins—James Bay. Indeed I share my time with him quite often, even in my riding, for various activities. Therefore, it is my pleasure to do the same to speak in the House.

Our motion will actually help Canadians understand the differences between the various parties, especially between the NDP and other parties that are sometimes beholden to certain interests, so to speak.

In Canada, as in the United States, the proposed Keystone XL pipeline has raised serious concerns, not only about its environmental impact, for example, but also about job creation.

The NDP believes in a sustainable economy that serves the interests of Canadians and Canada. What did this government do when Suncor decided to cancel its proposed \$11.6-billion project to optimize Canada's refining capacity after realizing that it was more profitable to simply export bitumen rather than develop Canadian refining? It did nothing.

While jobs are disappearing, the government is only too happy to swap Canadian jobs for higher dividends for certain companies. Without this upgrade to Canada's refining capacity, we will lose an important opportunity to increase our GDP and create jobs in the oil sector.

Business of Supply

When we talk about jobs in the oil industry, we are also talking about many jobs in other areas. There is a system when it comes to the economy. Creating more jobs often creates a need for more nurses and teachers. The corner grocery store may get more customers and could need two more clerks. A hairdresser could have more clients and hire another hairdresser for her salon. Obviously, this does not just involve jobs in the oil industry, but also everything else that is related to these jobs. When jobs are created here, people invest part of their wages in their communities. I wanted to emphasize this.

I would now like to talk about the problem with fulfilling our international environmental commitments. I come from a region where natural resources abound. My riding's economy essentially relies on the development of natural resources. When we talk about developing these resources, we must always keep the final cost in mind. Sure, we can look at what it brings in money-wise, but at the end of the day, if we destroy our environment, the government is often the one that will end up paying the price. If public health starts being affected, the government will be on the hook for those costs as well.

When we develop a natural resource, we must always strike a balance between the concrete financial returns and the risks we are taking when it comes to the environment or safety. By maintaining that balance, we can acknowledge that there are certain risks, but we will try to mitigate them as best we can in order to maximize the development of this resource. However, at the very least, we must be maintaining jobs and ensuring that our people can work. At the very least that must happen. It just makes sense. If we cannot do that, then we must protect our natural resources for future generations, keeping the principle of intergenerational equality in mind. That is important.

Some members have very young children. I imagine that both members of Parliament and all Canadians who have young children would like to know that there will be something left for the next generation. We must not leave them with an environmental mess to clean up and a lack of resources because they were non-renewable and we depleted them all with no plan for the future. We must be fair to the next generation.

Canada is struggling right now, much like a patient who is presenting with multiple symptoms.

- (1540)

More and more Canadian jobs are unstable. People are having a hard time finding work, and the environment is not being protected. Canada is the only country to have withdrawn from the Kyoto protocol, the only one unable to achieve its targets even though the Conservative government lowered them.

Transporting unrefined oil means importing 200,000 chemical tank cars. The Keystone XL pipeline project will release about as much CO₂ as 625,000 automobiles do in a year.

By eliminating the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy and failing to consult the public on this major project, the Conservatives have demonstrated a shocking lack of respect for the fundamental principles of sustainable development. Natural resource development should always go hand in hand with the term "sustainable development". When it does not, that suggests the

strategy for energy and the economy underpinning development of those resources really lacks vision.

Our goods transportation systems are poorly regulated. Management is reactive instead of proactive. We do not react until trains derail or pipelines break.

Abitibi-Témiscamingue has an unfortunate history of being the kind of region that exports raw materials without benefiting from processing them. Those jobs were not in our region. However, people in the region worked on that, and universities, such as UQAT, got involved. That is how we started processing our resources more and more locally. Now we are not just developing resources, we are also benefiting from that development. That is what the government should do with the oil sands industry.

If Keystone XL goes ahead, the Liberals and the Conservatives will be breaking the chain in Canada. We will be just one link in the chain. It will be like back when Canada was first colonized. That does not seem like the best we can do. That is a short-sighted vision for Canadian youth.

It is important to add value to our non-renewable oil resources by developing them here and refining them here. It was revealed that the steel pipes for the pipeline will be produced by Indian and Russian companies. Talk about rubbing salt in the wound. Do we not have the resources to produce those pipes? I am sure we do. Once again, those jobs could have benefited Ontario's manufacturing sector, but instead, the company chose Indian and Russian steel pipes.

Supposing that the Conservatives and their Liberal buddies go ahead and turn on the tap to the Keystone XL pipeline, which would move 84,000 barrels a day, what happens to the energy security in Canada? People already find gas too expensive, and with this, we lose all control. We would be sending all our crude oil away, only to have it come back to us refined.

This shows a lack of vision. People are starting to realize more and more that it is a non-renewable resource, and eventually there will be a shortage, yet this government's vision involves sending 40,000 good jobs out of the country, when those jobs could have stayed here in Canada.

A real Canadian strategy should give preference to Canadian refiners when it comes to providing energy in order to serve Canadians and our interests first, and all at the best price on the international market.

We have the capacity to provide global markets with products refined here, instead of offering products with no value added. The pipeline is a symbol of a Canadian government that does not trust Canadians to do this processing and to offer value-added products.

In closing, it is unacceptable that this government is depriving Canadians of 40,000 jobs that could have been filled by young people of my generation, including some who have moved to Alberta. It is unacceptable that these jobs are being sent outside the country.

Points of Order

• (1545)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, part of this is trying to understand basic economics, the economic impact that generates thousands of jobs, literally millions of dollars, which provide a lifestyle for virtually every Canadian from coast to coast through the export of many of our natural resources. Not every country wants the final product. They are looking for natural resources.

I listened to the member's speech, and I am thinking that the NDP would oppose the export of natural resources. When I listen to the NDP's comments in regard to Keystone XL, I can only draw the conclusion that it wants to shut down the oil sands. If we listen to the leader of the New Democratic Party when he talks about Dutch elm disease and the devastating impact that he tried to portray western Canada having on all of Canada—

• (1550)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay on a point of order.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, the member made reference to a Dutch elm disease. That is about a tree. This is about the Dutch economy.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): I do not really think that was a point of order. Perhaps the hon. member might have the opportunity to have some say on that at a future point in time.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, obviously the member understood the message that is being sent, and he and his party should be more sensitive to not only all Canadians but the Prairies in particular, from my perspective. I represent a prairie riding, and natural resource development is very important to the Prairies.

My question for the member is this. Why does the NDP refuse to acknowledge the important role that the export of natural resources can play for all of Canada, for Canada's economy? Yes, we diversify and add value where we can, but let us remember how important the export of natural resources really is for all of us.

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Moore: Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, my region's economy is based on natural resource development, but I want it to be done intelligently.

I am going to take the time to tell my Liberal colleague something. On a trip to Washington last spring, the Conservative Minister of Finance was proud to say that the project was going to create jobs in the United States. He pointed out that the State Department report showed that this project was important to the economies of both countries, particularly because it would create over 40,000 well-paying jobs in the United States.

My Liberal colleague seems to be just as concerned about job creation in the United States. I, on the other hand, am concerned about job creation in Canada. I want young people to have jobs here. I want us to do more with our natural resources. I want us to develop them, not sell them at bargain prices. I want us to do something intelligent.

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP):

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her passion and for her enlightening views on job creation in Canada.

She also spoke about young people. I believe that she cares about creating sustainable jobs to pass on to future generations and young people, and about a healthy environment where we can work and keep the economy going while adding value to green jobs.

Ms. Christine Moore: Mr. Speaker, youth employment is of great concern to me.

I come from a resource region where many skilled workers have decided for one reason or another to try their luck in western Canada. It does not make any sense to me when I see the government choosing to send jobs generated by projects such as this one to the United States—jobs that could represent rather incredible economic potential.

I took a welding and fitting course with people who can weld piping and who have the skills to work on the pipeline. Now, we are telling them to go to the United States where the 40,000 jobs will be created. This does not make any sense to me. Where is the logic? The government wants young people to work but it is not trying to find a solution to keep them here. It does not make any sense.

If there were really no other way, then maybe it would be different. However, I think that we could do much better for our youth and our economy, and this pipeline project is not doing that.

* * *

[English]

POINTS OF ORDER

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (B)

Hon. John Duncan (Minister of State and Chief Government Whip, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Earlier today, the President of the Treasury Board tabled the supplementary estimates (B) for 2013-14.

On behalf of the President of the Treasury Board, I wish to inform the House that there was an error in schedule 1 concerning the vote amount for vote 25b under Treasury Board. The correct amount of \$275 million is reflected in the French annexe 1. The English schedule contains a typographical error in the amount of vote 25b. I am, therefore, tabling on behalf of the President of the Treasury Board a revised English schedule concerning vote 25b, along with the correct version of the French, which was tabled earlier today.

• (1555)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): I am sure the House appreciates the update in respect of the supplementary estimates (B), as tabled.

*Business of Supply***ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Hon. John Duncan (Minister of State and Chief Government Whip, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think if you seek it you would find agreement for the following motion. I move:

That, in relation to its study on Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), twelve members of the Standing Committee on International Trade be authorized to travel to Halifax, Nova Scotia, in the Fall of 2013, and that the necessary staff accompany the Committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Does the Chief Government Whip have the unanimous consent of the House to propose the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): 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)

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Hon. John Duncan (Minister of State and Chief Government Whip, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think if you seek it you would find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That, in relation to its study on the changes to the U.S. Rule on Country of Origin Labeling (COOL), six members of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-food be authorized to travel to Washington, D.C., United States of America, in the Fall of 2013, and that the necessary staff accompany the Committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Does the Chief Government Whip have the unanimous consent of the House to propose the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): 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)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—KEYSTONE XL PIPELINE

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is a great honour to rise in the House; and this debate on the Keystone XL pipeline is an example of what the House should be doing in its work and the role of parliamentarians. The issues of development of resources, sustainability and the economy are

worthy of debate. I do not think it is any surprise that I do not agree very much with the Conservative side of the floor. However, they show up. We have a different vision. What we need to do in the House, which is the Westminster party system, is to show up and debate so that Canadians can make choices, and that is what we are here to do today.

My colleagues in the Liberal Party do not bother to show up. Their leader would rather go to Washington to promote the Keystone XL pipeline. He would rather go to Calgary to glad-hand oil executives, but he does not want to bother showing up in the House of Commons to say where he stands. That is a fundamental difference.

The issue here—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Order, please. The hon. member for Scarborough—Guildwood is rising on a point of order.

Hon. John McKay: Mr. Speaker, it has been a long-standing convention in the House not to point out the presence or absence of other members, directly or indirectly. If the hon. member would proceed with his speech and offer his own commentary, we can ask him questions later. Who is here and who is not is a matter of entire irrelevance to this debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): I thank the hon. member for Scarborough—Guildwood for his intervention. I am glad he has pointed this out. Indeed, members will know that the reference to members' presence or absence with respect to the House is something that members should avoid incorporating into their comments.

The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I would like to clarify, so the people back home know I am very respectful of the rules. There is a difference between saying whether someone is here and whether someone is actually willing to participate in a debate. It is the lack of willingness of the Liberal leader to participate in key debates that is an issue that needs to be discussed, because this is about policy, about vision and where we are going.

For example, two weeks ago at the height of the scandal in the Senate, the Liberal leader was in Washington promoting the Keystone XL.

Last week, during one of the largest weeks in memory in terms of scandal, the Liberal leader asked a mere three questions on the scandal but was meeting with Calgary oil executives. It is about priorities. Is that not the slogan of the Liberals? It is about the priorities that matter.

The priority that matters within this House is debating; that is, the fact that the Liberal leader may or may not participate in this debate. The fact is that these are issues that need to be brought to the Canadian people. We are not shy at all, as New Democrats, to talk about our economic vision for the country, because we believe it is the right vision for the country.

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Our colleagues on the Conservative side are not afraid to stand up on their vision, and we know their vision is the wrong one, but within the democratic tradition, at least we will debate each other and Canadians will not be fooled. There are no games here. They will not use slick slogans. It is about debate. This is where we are today.

I come from Coleman township, which was in its time the richest township in Canada. Most people do not know that. It is a fact. Coleman township, in the rich silver boom in the early years of the 20th century, was considered the richest township in Canada and we never had a paved road in Coleman township in all those years. A lot of cyanide has been dumped in the lakes. We have arsenic beaches. We call them the green beaches of Cobalt. At that time, the idea of a boom was that people got what they could get and they got out.

All across northern Canada there is a history of boom and bust. I come from the boom-bust economy of gold mining. My grandfather Charlie Angus died on the shop floor of the Hollinger Mine. My grandfather MacNeil broke his back underground. My uncles worked in the mines. We understand what the mining economy is about.

We have been extremely blessed in Canada with enormous resources. Even though I do not think we have handled our resources with the grace and sustainable vision that we should, we continue to find more resources. We are the envy of the world in that.

However, when I compare the mining industry with what is happening now with the plan for the Keystone XL, I see how the government allowed Inco and Falconbridge, two of the greatest world-class mining companies in the world, to be bought out by corporate raiders, and within a year we lost all the copper refining capacity in Ontario.

The member for Parry Sound—Muskoka shrugged, as though that was no big deal. At the time we were told there would never be another copper refinery built in Ontario if we let this one go down.

It was about the exporting out of Ontario of raw resources. This is the issue. It is the same when we talk to people about the Ring of Fire. I have yet to meet a miner or a miner's family anywhere in northern Ontario who says their idea of mining is to get it fast, get it out of the ground, dump what we want behind and ship it out without refining it. I have never heard a miner say that. In fact miners say that if the Ring of Fire is not to be done properly, we should leave it in the ground because it is the capital for the next generation. That is what I hear about sustainability.

I hear a lot of talk from the Conservatives about how Keystone and the oil sands are not subsidized in any way, but of course that is false, because the fundamental subsidy of the rip and ship philosophy is stripping the environmental protections, so it is shifting the cost of these operations and making them seem cheaper than they are, but that is because they are allowed to get away with the stripping of basic environmental standards across this country.

I refer to a November 5 Reuters article, which goes out internationally, on Canada's poor environment record, which could hit our energy exports. That is what Reuters is saying, based on the report of the interim commissioner of the environment and sustainable development, which said that the Conservative govern-

ment's record on the environment is so bad that it is being noticed internationally and will affect the government's ability to negotiate projects like Keystone. The report says, "...the wide and persistent gap between what the government commits to do and what it is achieving" has missed the mark on "key deadlines to protect migratory birds, failed to protect wildlife habitat" and does "nowhere near enough to protect species at risk".

• (1600)

We saw that in the interest of helping their friends get the oil pipelines through as quickly as possible, the Conservatives stripped the Navigable Waters Protection Act of this country so that they could push pipelines through without proper review.

This is not, as the Conservatives hysterically say, about stopping development. Development has to be based on sustainable resources with a sustainable plan. If one is going to ship bitumen, one has to know that it can be done safely. That is why we have had environmental standards over the years, and that is why the Conservative government is stripping them across this country. It is to get it out as fast as possible.

On the Keystone issue, the Conservatives are talking about shipping raw bitumen to Texas and shipping 40,000 jobs to Texas.

The new word my colleagues in the Liberal Party have discovered is "middle class". The Liberal leader is saying that he is going to create middle-class jobs in the resource sector. Certainly they are in the resource sector, but if we are going to export 40,000 of them, it is not really that much of a plan.

There he was, down in Washington, calling out the people who have been raising legitimate questions about greenhouse gases rising out of the oil sands. He was saying that they were just "sound-bites". Well, President Obama does not think they are sound bites.

The question Canada is facing is the fundamental question of a lack of credibility. The Conservatives would rather try to ship bitumen to the United States, where even the Americans are saying that Canada's record on the environment is atrocious and that unless Canada can show that it can develop these resources in a sustainable manner, America is going to look elsewhere.

We have an enormous ability to transition this economy by putting the investments in the right way. Simply shipping raw resources out of the country as fast as possible is not a vision for the long term.

As I said, the New Democrats are not afraid to talk about this. We represent the resource regions of northern Canada. We understand the need to reflect, in the 21st century, as we pass yet another dismal target in terms of increasing greenhouse gas emissions around the world, on the fact that we are entering a period when the abuse of the earth is no longer something we can just take for granted.

It was the Conservatives and the Liberals who stood up in this House and voted against the motion brought forward in this House heeding the climate scientists' warning that if we pass that two degree centigrade mark in the increase in global temperature, we will be in an unstable climate. Both the Conservatives and Liberals stood together, because they will not deal with this issue of climate change. It has to be dealt with. It is going to be the fundamental cost of doing business in the 21st century.

My colleagues on the other side, who believe in the free market, as they call it, need to factor that in, which is what our leader has said. Whenever we factor in the development of resources, we cannot do it on the backs of the next generation. We cannot do it by simply assuming that greenhouse gas emissions have no impact. They are having a significant impact.

Until the government comes forward with a credible environmental plan, it will continue to be seen as an outlier around the world, regardless of whether its friends in the Liberal Party are out there trying to shill for them.

• (1605)

Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague for Timmins—James Bay talks about shipping 40,000 jobs to Texas.

On the Keystone XL pipeline, there is one decision left to make, and that is in the hands of President Obama in the United States. When the NDP tells the Americans that there are 40,000 jobs going to the United States, what is going to happen? Americans are going to tell President Obama to approve the pipeline. The consequence of the NDP's argument today is actually to increase the chance that President Obama will approve the Keystone XL pipeline, which contradicts the NDP's intent in putting this motion forward.

I think members of the NDP need to go back and think about the economics of the motion they are proposing today. It contradicts itself. The effect of this motion is the opposite of what they want it to be. I think they need to think a little more clearly about what they want to do and what we are spending taxpayers' dollars doing here today.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I was quite amused by that. It seems that my colleagues in the Liberal Party once again cannot just stand up and say that, yes, they are going to support Keystone XL. Yes, they support the sell-off of oil sands resources to state-owned companies like China. Yes, they support the secretive China free trade deal, regardless of whether they see it. Yes, this is their position. They should just say it and not try to bend themselves into pretzels trying to use first-year philosophy logic.

We say this is a bad deal for Canada. Canadians are speaking up, and we are not afraid to stand up to do it. I would like to see the unplugged members of the Liberal Party actually plug themselves in and get a little bit of energy on this issue.

[Translation]

Mr. Marc-André Morin (Laurentides—Labelle, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am not surprised by the Liberals' attitude. They would like to forget about all of the scars the current leader's father left on Alberta. I do not think that Albertans are willing to amputate just to

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get rid of those scars. It is a bit late for the Liberals to be standing up for Alberta.

The NDP feels it is important that the resources belonging to Albertans last as long as possible for future generations.

• (1610)

[English]

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, in the 1970s, my relatives worked in the oil patch. They are from Alberta. They remember when Mr. Trudeau thought Alberta's resources were Mr. Trudeau's resources, and they rejected that. They also recognized that if we are going to develop these resources, Canadians and Albertans have a right to benefit from them. That is why we do not just ship raw bitumen.

I would like to quote former Alberta Premier Ed Stelmach who said, "Shipping raw bitumen is like scraping off the topsoil, selling it, and then passing the farm on to the next generation". We certainly agree with him.

Mr. Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay—Superior North, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay is right on. Good for him. Good for the NDP for standing up for Canadian autonomy, Canadian jobs, and the processing of Canadian resources in Canada. I am really disappointed in the Liberals' stance. I just do not see their logic at all.

Building on what the member said, is he aware that Mark Carney, when he was the governor of the Bank of Canada, said that buying high from Brent crude oil and selling low, at a 20% to 30% discount, Western Canada Select to the U.S., was a really dumb thing to do?

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for participating in this debate with these kinds of interventions, because this is about an economic vision. It is about an economic strategy.

As I said, I very rarely agree with Conservatives on the other side, but there have been occasions. At least they are willing to stand and say what their vision is, unlike the Liberal Party, the third party. Their leader will go to Washington. He will go glad-handing in Calgary, but when it comes to Ottawa, he unplugs himself all the time and does not seem to think that participating in debates in the House of Commons is the role of a leader.

The role of a leader is to stand in the House, show a vision, argue that vision, be challenged on that vision, and if he is right, beat us at the end of the day. However, simply offering cocktails at a ladies' night event, when he should be in the House of Commons debating, is a disgrace. That is a failure of vision, and we will take them on any day over that.

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to participate in this debate. As a Liberal participating in the debate, it is kind of amusing to listen to my NDP colleague, who does not seem to be able to walk and chew gum at the same time.

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The issue is that Keystone starts out as a no-brainer. The Prime Minister rightly describes the project as a no-brainer. It has huge economic significance. It is a significant economic driver for both Alberta and the Canadian economy, yet at this point, it has gone from no-brainer to cliffhanger. How did we get from no-brainer to cliffhanger? It was by not paying attention to the environmental impact of oil sands development.

The world has noticed. We did not win those Kyoto fossil awards for nothing. The government worked at it. The world has noticed. The United States, the anti-Keystone folks, and President Obama have noticed. Because Canada, for the last six or seven years, has done nothing about getting control over the ever-escalating emissions from oil sands development out in Alberta, both in intensity and in quantity, we now have a significant issue on our hands.

My colleague has reminded me that I am splitting my time with the member for Kingston and the Islands. I apologize to my friend.

The issue here is gross mismanagement of a fundamental economic issue. Now we have moved it from no-brainer to cliffhanger. Now we see the Prime Minister going down to New York saying that he will not take no for an answer. Well, I am sure President Obama woke up in the middle of the night and said, "Michelle, the Prime Minister will not take no for an answer. My goodness gracious me, what am I going to do?" I am sure Michelle said, "Just go back to sleep, Barak, and stop snoring".

For goodness' sake, one does not go down to the most powerful country in the world and say to the President of the United States of America, who controls whether or not Keystone proceeds, that we are not going to take no for an answer, then line up with the nutters in the Tea Party, President Obama's most difficult constituency, who brought the United States' government to a situation of near paralysis.

It is quite bizarre that the Prime Minister should actually be flummoxed as to why Keystone has become a cliffhanger. He is flummoxed that this no-brainer is apparently not going to proceed without some pretty significant intervention. It has an enormous economic cost for our country. Not only is it economic mismanagement, it is environmental mismanagement and political mismanagement. We are talking about potentially one of the most significant economic developments this country has seen, yet we are in a situation now where we have no regulatory environment for those who create GHG emissions, except for the Government of Alberta, which is doing all the heavy lifting in terms of emissions into both the air and the water.

The chickens are coming home to roost. We ignore the environment at our peril, and the Prime Minister has ignored the environment. It is quite clear from actions such as limiting the budget of the ministry of the environment and Bill C-38, which basically gutted many of the environmental protections.

For goodness' sake, all of the new development in the oil sands is in situ.

• (1615)

There are two ways in which they can take the bitumen out of the ground. They either do it in open-pit mining or in situ. The

Conservatives, last week, said that the federal government will no longer do environmental reviews on in situ mining. What message did that send to President Obama? Does that reinforce the notion that Canada could do potentially more to mitigate carbon release, or that he has not seen any specific ideas or plans from Canada that would help offset concerns? Or is it just that the Prime Minister has, through his actions and his inept handling of this file, handed a huge two-by-four to those who wish to oppose this pipeline issue so they can whack him over the head with it, but also whack President Obama over the head? President Obama does not appreciate it when a significant ally, an important economic partner, makes it very difficult for him to approve this particular initiative.

Shipping bitumen is not the issue here. Bitumen gets shipped by pipelines and creates no more and no less GHGs than shipping by truck or by rail. In fact, it is arguably safer. The issue is in the production. It is not in the tailpipe, not in getting there, but in the production. In the number of years that the current government has been in office, it has not been able to or willing to regulate emissions. As a consequence, industry has a cheerleader. It does not have a regulator, it has a cheerleader. Therefore, anything that the oil sands industry does is good and anything that a regulator does is bad. The government has absented itself from the regulation of the oil sands, and as I say, left the heavy lifting to the Government of Alberta and to a lesser extent the Government of Saskatchewan.

Hence, we have Premier Redford making regular trips down to Washington to sell the idea of Keystone because it is extremely important to her province. That has led to other issues. When they do not pay attention to environmental issues and legitimate concerns that come up in the shipping of bitumen or "dilbit", as it is known, they create difficulties for themselves.

A little example is in the neighbourhood where the Speaker and I live, namely Line 9. The City of Toronto submitted some pretty important concerns to the NEB a few weeks ago. Many of them are very reasonable, but people have lost trust in the current government to stand up for them in terms of protecting their environment. Many of the concerns are simple things such as more valves, where the line is located, et cetera. The Government of Canada can issue permits, but it is only the people who can give the social licence to allow these kinds of projects to go ahead.

Hence, my leader is down in Washington. He does not trash-talk what happens in Canada. He tries to promote important projects. When he does that, we are all better off. Indeed we have to recognize that this industry is important.

There is no government, whether Green, NDP, Conservative or Liberal, that is going to leave that multi-trillion-dollar asset in the ground, nobody. The only question here is this. How do we get it out of the ground, minimize GHG emissions and be a leader in regulating this kind of activity, as opposed to a laggard? That is what gets us from here to there. That is what gets us from no-brainer to cliffhanger.

• (1620)

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from the Liberal Party, particularly for his colourful cliffhanger no-brainer coupling there. It was good and worth repeating several times for the home audience.

I have a question for him. We are talking about pipelines, pipeline investment and Keystone XL. I agree with him, of course, on the debacle of the Prime Minister of Canada going into the United States and suggesting that Canada will not take no for an answer.

If there was ever a reverse scenario in which an American president came to Canada and suggested to a Canadian audience that on a controversial project here, the Americans were not willing to take no for an answer, I would hope that any government worth its salt would turn back to our American friends and say, “Thanks. You take care of your affairs but don't challenge and threaten us”, which is exactly what the Canadian Prime Minister did when he was in New York.

There has only been a couple of policies uttered by the new Liberal leader but one of them struck me as quite curious. The Liberal leader suggested that there should be no limits on ownership of the Canadian resource sector by state-owned enterprises in China. It seems like a pretty extremist view. Even the Conservatives have some caution about that.

I am wondering if my friend, who has advocated for responsible mining overseas and responsible development, also advocates that the Chinese government should own whatever resource they see fit in Canada.

Hon. John McKay: Mr. Speaker, if my leader said that, then that is news to me. I think I would know. I would appreciate it if the member could be a little more specific.

The issue is access to capital, which is what this is ultimately all about. I just came back from Fort McMurray, Calgary and Edmonton. I met with some of the people there. I met with the Suncor people. They just committed to a \$13-billion investment.

Those investments are massively capital intensive. These are difficult investments. There was a reference earlier to the discount that Alberta bitumen sells for on the market. If members had read the ROB this morning, they will know that it is upwards of \$40 on a barrel. Half of that discount is because of jamming in the pipelines.

We have the worst of all possible worlds. We have a government that pays no attention to GHG emissions, and we sell our resource at a massive discount. A file could not be mismanaged more than that.

• (1625)

Mr. Ted Opitz (Etobicoke Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend's speech was a little rich coming from a party that signed a protocol that was unrealistic and unachievable in the first place.

I would remind him that this country is at the top of the G7 right now. We have signed a world-leading CETA agreement that is going to help Canadians get jobs and grow our economy by billions. It is an economy that has grown the job base by over a million since the recession hit.

Routine Proceedings

In his comment about GHGs, I would remind him as well that a new study released by IHS CERA confirmed that the Keystone XL pipeline will not have any impact on GHG emissions.

However, I am going to give my hon. friend an opportunity to comment on what Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall said about the NDP leader, about his betraying Canadian interests, and about how what the NDP is doing is quite destructive in terms of getting the important pipeline approved.

Hon. John McKay: Mr. Speaker, I think my colleague asked about 15 questions there, so let me just go through them.

On the CETA, we support the Canada-Europe trade agreement. We would like to see a few more details.

I thought I made my point in my speech that Keystone XL does not add, in any significant way, to GHGs as compared to other forms of transportation, so on that point we agree.

I think he missed the core point of my speech. Because we withdrew from the Kyoto protocol, as a consequence, we are not treated seriously with respect to GHG emissions. His party is the one that basically killed the whole idea of pricing carbon. As a consequence, that discussion is dead in this country and the rest of the world has noticed. The only thing that will move the odometer on GHG emissions is pricing carbon. That, unfortunately, because of his party is pretty well dead in the water.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON VIOLENCE AGAINST INDIGENOUS WOMEN

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I understand that there have been discussions among the parties and if you seek it, I think you will find unanimous consent for the following motion:

That, notwithstanding the Order adopted by the House on Monday, October 21, 2013, the Special Committee on Violence Against Indigenous Women be permitted to report its recommendations no later than Friday, March 7, 2014.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Business of Supply

(Motion agreed to)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS*[English]***BUSINESS OF SUPPLY**

OPPOSITION MOTION—KEYSTONE XL PIPELINE

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. Ted Hsu (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start out by strongly agreeing with my colleague from Scarborough—Guildwood that if the current government had taken a more serious and much stronger environmental policy in dealing with the environmental effects of developing the oil sands, we would not be debating the Keystone pipeline today.

I think it is very important to note that if the Conservatives and the NDP had the courage of the Government of Alberta, the Government of British Columbia, and the Liberal member of Parliament for Saint-Laurent—Cartierville to talk about putting a price on carbon pollution that would deal with the environmental consequences of developing the oil sands, the greenhouse emissions, we would not be having this debate about Keystone today.

I would also like to say that it is okay to disagree inside a party, for people in the same party to have different views. It shows that people are thoughtful. However, at the end of the day, the party has to have a position that makes sense. What I would like to talk about in my time today is the contradictions in the thinking of the NDP as it puts forward the motion today.

I would like to note that the upgrading of bitumen in Alberta, which members of the NDP have talked about, is really a separate question from pipelines. Because if we upgrade the bitumen and turn it into synthetic crude, we still have to ship it somewhere by pipeline. These are really two different questions. In fact, two-thirds of the petroleum that will go through the Keystone XL apparently is upgraded synthetic crude.

That is why today when the NDP talks about shipping 40,000 jobs to the United States and brings forth the motion, unions have spoken out against the NDP motion, saying they want the jobs that this Keystone pipeline would create. What is happening here is that the jobs from upgrading bitumen depend upon the price difference between bitumen and synthetic crude. If we could ship away the synthetic crude, we would increase that price difference and make the upgrading more economically viable. That is where the jobs come from. That is why the unions are opposed to the NDP motion today.

There are good people on both sides of the argument about the Keystone pipeline. What I want to talk about today is the contradiction in the NDP position.

Second, I want to talk about the effect of what we are demanding. What is the point of this debate?

With regard to the Keystone XL pipeline, there is one decision left to make, one relevant thing to address. That is the decision by President Obama, in Washington, D.C.

The NDP talks about exporting 40,000 jobs to the United States. What would be the effect of passing the motion on the one thing that is left to decide: the decision of President Obama? It is simply that the passage of the motion would encourage President Obama, increase the pressure on President Obama, to approve the Keystone XL pipeline.

Some members are laughing at this statement, but really, what they are saying is that this debate is even less relevant than I am trying to make it out to be.

Here is the contradiction. The NDP says it is opposed to the Keystone XL pipeline, yet if we tell Americans that we do want them to have those 40,000 jobs and that we want to keep the 40,000 jobs, we would only be encouraging the Americans to approve the Keystone XL pipeline. Therefore, what is the NDP trying to accomplish today and what is the economic thinking behind us spending time debating the motion?

First, a bit of background information before I talk about the fourth contradiction.

The New Democratic Party is one party across the country. The provincial NDP and the federal NDP are the same party. Canadians may not know that this is a bit different from, for example, the Liberal Party, where the Liberal Party in Quebec, in B.C., in Ontario and in Alberta are very different parties. They are totally separate organizations.

The point is that the Saskatchewan NDP and the federal NDP, which are the same party, disagree on Keystone XL. The Saskatchewan NDP says that Keystone XL is a good thing for Saskatchewan. The federal NDP is now opposed to Keystone.

• (1630)

What exactly is the NDP's position on this? Why is it that smart people in the federal and Saskatchewan NDP disagree? I am not saying that one side is right or wrong. However, if the New Democrats want to talk about economics, they have to sort things out first. They have to sit down, close the door and figure out what their party's position is and put some sense into it.

Lastly, I would say that even though the NDP opposes the Keystone XL pipeline, it supports the energy east pipeline, which will transport about 30% more petroleum than the Keystone XL pipeline. Today, it is also talking about these 40,000 value-added jobs with respect to upgrading the bitumen into synthetic crude. At the same time, the NDP candidate in Toronto Centre is saying that she would like to see a moratorium on oil sands development. There are good, smart people on both sides of this argument. However, if they want to bring a motion to the House about the Canadian economy, they have to sit down and sort out the contradictions in their economic thinking.

The point of my intervention today is that I believe there are too many contradictions linked to this motion, and it is important to point them out.

Business of Supply

•(1635)

Mr. Jamie Nicholls (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, NDP): Mr. Speaker, why would the U.S. be saying no to Keystone XL? It is perhaps that Barack Obama knows what most Canadians know, that the Conservatives are stupid on the economy. However, after the Liberal leader's visit, the President also knows that the Liberals are stupid on the economy.

The members have claimed that the economics is not in getting it there, not in taking it out, but in production. This member seems to imply that our motion is somehow influential on the American—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Order, please. The hon. member for Edmonton Centre is rising on a point of order.

Hon. Laurie Hawn: Mr. Speaker, I know everybody is having fun with this and so on, but there are certain words that are considered parliamentary, and some that are considered unparliamentary. I believe that calling somebody, or a party, stupid, is probably unparliamentary. I leave it to you to make that judgment.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): I thank the hon. member for Edmonton Centre for his intervention.

There is no doubt that when members begin to characterize other members in a certain fashion, whatever party they may be from, it gets us into a different area that does not help the civility of our discussions in the House. I would caution hon. members on that. I would not say that in the context that the member for Vaudreuil—Soulanges used the term. Rather, it was borderline in terms of creating disorder, which is one of the measures we use to determine whether a term is unparliamentary. As I heard, it was not unparliamentary, but we are getting into risky territory. Therefore, I would encourage the hon. member to perhaps consider that in the course of his words.

The hon. member for Vaudreuil—Soulanges.

Mr. Jamie Nicholls: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I should have said “uninformed on the economy”. Nowhere has it been mentioned by the Liberals and Conservatives in this debate about the role of netbacks in transport options, which shows a lack of understanding of economics. Some analysts have mentioned that the netbacks are one of the reasons the Keystone XL project is stalled. Therefore, can the member illuminate why commodity prices and netbacks may play a role behind the project going forward or not? If it does not make economic sense, why would the U.S. want the project to go forward? The member seems to think that the motion will make the U.S. say yes to the project because it would mean the export of 40,000 jobs. However, I think he should look more at the argument of netbacks and transport options.

Could he illuminate the House about the role of netbacks in the oil industry?

Mr. Ted Hsu: Mr. Speaker, the NDP is saying that the debate here will not be relevant to President Obama's decision. My response is that if it is not relevant to the only thing left to decide on Keystone, why are we spending a million dollars a day of taxpayers' money on this NDP motion today? It has to be relevant to something that really matters, that being the decision by President Obama. If we do not address that, we are wasting our time and the time of the Canadian people who sent us here.

On the question of commodity prices, the reason the unions are saying they want the jobs that are coming from this pipeline is that two-thirds of the product that would be shipped through the pipeline is upgraded synthetic crude. That increases the price difference between synthetic crude and bitumen, which makes these jobs in Alberta that the unions are talking about possible.

•(1640)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, here is one of the things I found out regarding the benefit. My colleague made reference to why the NDP has chosen this, and some inconsistencies in the motion itself, which makes the NDP look as if it does not understand how the Canadian economy works.

One of the things I do appreciate, and I understand, is that the NDP has a consistent pattern with regard to the oil sands or the natural resources in the prairie provinces. That pattern seems to be to oppose the exportation of natural resources.

I wonder if my colleague would be able to provide his thoughts on the value, not only to the prairie provinces, but to all Canadians, from coast to coast to coast?

If we treat our environment well and we look at using our natural resources, all of Canadian society benefits, both economically and through jobs and social programming. This is something I believe the NDP has overlooked when it says to shut down the oil sands, which it consistently seems they want to see happen.

Mr. Ted Hsu: Mr. Speaker, let me start by re-emphasizing what my colleague from Winnipeg North said. The important thing is that we have to look at the fact that the federal government has not paid attention to the environmental costs. We have to be absolutely clear that it is very important to make sure we have those environmental costs covered and that we are mitigating any damage and extracting real value.

However, we have to also remember that there is a lot of value in energy. We are going to be using energy. If we can extract that energy and protect the natural environment in a sustainable way, and we have a lot of work to do in that area, we should be doing that. It will benefit the whole country. For example, my colleague from Nova Scotia said that he went to visit Fort McMurray and the tires there were made in Nova Scotia. This is an example of the fact that the entire country will benefit from this.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Caron (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, NDP): Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I would like to correct two of the statements made by the member for Kingston and the Islands.

For one, he said that the NDP supports TransCanada's energy east pipeline project. We are waiting for the environmental assessment before deciding whether we support the project or not. We support the idea of a pipeline from west to east, but we have yet to come to a decision. I know what I am talking about because the project runs through my riding. We are taking a responsible stance: we need to wait at least until the project and environmental assessments have been tabled.

Business of Supply

Second, he talked about union support. When I was elected, I was an economist for the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada. The study conducted by Infometrica, which mentions the 40,000 jobs, was commissioned by the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada.

I will begin my speech now, and I will be sharing my time with the member for Thunder Bay—Rainy River.

I am pleased to rise in the House to talk about a very important issue. There is a lot of talk about the 40,000 jobs. I am the official opposition's deputy critic for both international trade and finance. Financial issues are of particular concern to me. We need to broaden the debate beyond that one aspect.

There are a number of issues, including economic diversification and job creation, particularly in the petrochemical industry, although we often talk about refineries. Our friends on both sides of the House generally skirt the issues of the environment and sustainable development. However, they are an important part of the debate.

Let us talk about the environment. In my opinion, President Obama's position is extremely responsible. As a number of my colleagues have mentioned, President Obama is well aware of the jobs that will be created in the United States. His objection is based on the fact that the Conservative government, with various measures—including the gutting of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act—and considering its lack of planning with respect to fighting climate change and the effects of the hasty development of the oil sands on climate change, has no other choice but to be extremely prudent when analyzing the Keystone file and building the Keystone XL pipeline in the United States. President Obama's decision does not hinge on the 40,000 jobs so much as the lack of responsibility on the part of the federal Conservative government, which the Liberal Party of Canada seems to be backing.

The issue of climate change is clear: scientists agree that the current development of the oil sands does not represent sustainable development. That is a very serious problem because we have a golden opportunity to make good use of this resource, Canada's wealth, and to do so in a way that will benefit all Canadians. It would result in the transition from fossil fuels to renewable, green energy.

In that sense, the Conservative government is missing the mark, and the Liberal Party is absolutely blind to the repercussions of its unconditional support for the extension and development of the Keystone XL pipeline.

The environmental issue is important, as is the issue of sustainable development. In developing the oil sands, Canada has discovered a new way of creating energy by developing the oil and gas contained therein. However, setting aside the additional pollution created by a barrel of bitumen compared to a barrel of conventional oil, Canada has a major transportation problem, which is causing a backlog and a refining capacity problem.

Canada must develop infrastructure for transporting crude oil from the oil sands in order to sell and export it. Currently, we export it for processing because our facilities are inadequate. The Conservatives' reasoning is therefore as follows: first, they discover the potential of the oil sands and develop this resource as quickly as possible, which is far from the definition of sustainable development. After that, they

remove the irritants blocking the development of this resource such as environmental laws, public consultations, aboriginal claims and international commitments. Then they realize that they do not have what they need to create the promised wealth.

● (1645)

Infrastructure is lacking both locally and nationwide. This causes the price of Canadian oil to drop in relation to American oil. The Americans are equipped to deal with this situation.

Therefore, when there is an oil glut, revenues go down. The government then decides to build the infrastructure. This makes no sense.

We have heard some very enlightening speeches in the House. In terms of sustainable development, we must really get away from the idea that any existing resources must be developed as quickly as possible and any perceived barriers must be removed. In fact, it takes solid environmental assessments or structures to ensure smart development.

The Conservatives are definitely headed in the wrong direction. The response of civil society and a large number of Canadians to their policies clearly reflects the government's lack of transparency and lack of vision concerning the responsible development of the oil sands, one of our richest resources.

This issue is extremely important to sustainable development, but as we know, the motion is specifically about economic diversification. Obviously, we condemn the fact that the project will end up creating jobs in the United States because processing will happen there. This is at a time when several refineries have closed their doors in Montreal, Alberta and across Canada.

We should not focus just on refineries because Canada's entire petrochemical industry is waning despite the assets we have. Many industries that produce petroleum products can no longer function. There is no support from the federal government. We are not talking about subsidies to help them stay open if they are having a hard time competing. However, there is a major problem when it comes to economic diversification because now the government wants to export crude oil to the United States.

I heard something interesting today. I was at a meeting of the Standing Committee on Finance, where the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance made some remarks not about oil but about raw logs being exported without being processed. There were some concerns about the fact that a lot of those raw logs are being sent to Asia. Some are being sent to the United States, but we have a reciprocity agreement with them. That is a problem, because we are not adding value to the resource before exporting it, which would benefit us more.

The same logic applies to the oil sands. They want to export the raw material, and they are not even asking how we might diversify our processing industries to add value to that resource before exporting it.

Business of Supply

These are all reasons why the NDP's position has always been clear. Our position is responsible.

The Liberal Party leader's position is clear too, but it is far less responsible. In October 2013, which was not that long ago, he expressed his steadfast support for the Keystone XL project, saying that it would create lots of jobs in the United States and would be an excellent opportunity for the Americans.

The NDP's position, as stated by our leader, the hon. member for Outremont, is more responsible:

As a matter of priority, we should be bringing our petroleum products from west to east, always subject to a rigorous environmental review. [The Prime Minister] has completely gutted all environmental laws and environmental assessment legislation. With no credible, comprehensive process in place, the public cannot believe anything they are told about any projects.

That is a very responsible position. We are in favour of development from west to east. Some projects are being examined at this time. We are far less keen about some of them, such as the Enbridge plan, particularly regarding the use and reversal of line 9, which, we believe, poses a very serious risk to the environment. However, we remain very open-minded.

As the member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, I am very open to TransCanada's Energy East Pipeline project, which will go through Témiscouata in my riding. People are cautious right now; there is neither fierce opposition nor strong support. People want to know more. That is what a good environmental assessment process, an assessment of the environmental impact, can provide. That is what people want, but that is not what they are getting.

I invite the government members to use the motion currently before the House to really examine their conscience and think about whether their way of developing the oil sands is really the most responsible way for Canada.

•(1650)

I also invite my Liberal colleagues to examine their conscience, too, and decide whether they really want to jump on the Conservative bandwagon. I would be more than happy to take questions from my colleagues in the House.

[English]

Mrs. Kelly Block (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I hold in my hands a press release from the International Union of Operating Engineers that expresses its objection to this NDP motion. International Union of Operating Engineers international vice-president Michael Gallagher said:

The Keystone XL project would be a net benefit to workers across Canada who depend on the resource sector and construction for their livelihoods. This hasty action by the NDP without consulting major stakeholders will jeopardize our economic recovery and jobs we had been hoping for.

In the face of such criticism, how can that member continue to assert that his party's ideological position is about job creation?

[Translation]

Mr. Guy Caron: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure if the parliamentary secretary was there when I mentioned this, but before the election I worked as an economist for the Communications, Energy and

Paperworkers Union of Canada, which represents a large number of oil sands workers.

The Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada is not adamantly opposed to the development, use or transfer of our resources. It wants this to be done responsibly. I accept that the quote she read was from a union. That is part of the debate.

There is a debate going on in Canada right now about whether the oil sands are being developed responsibly. She has her argument and I have another. This is an ongoing debate.

The NDP's position is the most responsible one. As the leader of the NDP in Saskatchewan said, we want to look at the economics of the situation, but we also want to look at the environment and at social development.

We are very proud to support this motion, and we hope that the other parties will start looking at the consequences of the decisions being made.

•(1655)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no debate within the federal New Democratic Party. The leader of the party has been very clear. Not only does he tell it to his own caucus colleagues, but he also goes down to Washington to dump all over Canada and talk negatively about the oil sands, conveying the impression that the oil sands, from the perspective of the New Democratic Party, should be non-existent. The New Democrats do not support using natural resources in order to generate the type of economic and social activity that occurs as a direct result.

Yes, the key is the environment, and we too are concerned about the environment. However, when we enter the debate, we are talking not only about the environmental benefits but also the economic benefits.

Now we know that the New Democrats are very clear about the Keystone, but the member made reference to the Energy East connection. What is the NDP's official position on that particular pipeline?

[Translation]

Mr. Guy Caron: Mr. Speaker, I think it is pretty clear. There are just two opposing views in this debate.

Should we export our unprocessed resources south of the border, which will have a minimal impact on jobs in Canada but more of an impact in the United States, without taking into account our responsibility toward the environment and sustainable development or should we look at the possibility of exporting or transporting oil so that it can be processed here?

Refineries in New Brunswick are currently waiting for that oil as part of the energy east project. We are trying to determine whether the project is viable and whether it meets environmental and sustainable development criteria. We will have to wait for the National Energy Board review and the environmental assessments, which have not yet been done.

Business of Supply

We are prepared to support this project if it proves to be safe for the environment and if it will benefit Canadians, not only economically but also with regard to resource availability.

[*English*]

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, first I have to mention that I have never heard Conservatives so supportive of unions in my entire life. Suddenly, they have just discovered the union movement today, and attacking working families and the union movement has been forgotten this one day. That is a remarkable change. I wonder if it is going to be the same way when unions are facing a lockout, as they were under Canada Post, and if the Conservatives will find anything good to say about unions again. I have never seen it from Conservatives so much as today.

However, I would like to quote a friend of mine from Alberta, from the Conservative side. This is what he said earlier today. I got this from *Hansard*. He said, "...the real jobs in the whole oil production and processing industry are in building pipelines and producing the oil. That is where the vast number of jobs are."

He also said that refining is not where the real jobs are. What a fascinating view of the oil and gas sector from somebody who represents a riding with oil refineries and upgraders in it.

We believe that adding value to our natural resources would be a good idea, not shipping 40,000 well-paying jobs south. Is that not good, basic, simple Canadian economics?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Caron: Mr. Speaker, I could not agree more.

Many Conservative members are quite confused.

I mentioned the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance, who was concerned today about the export of raw logs. We share his concern in this regard. The same logic applies to oil.

Why are the Conservatives worried about exporting one raw resource that could be processed here for added value; yet, they do not think it is worth having the same debate about our oil resources, particularly our oil sands resources.

This double standard shows that there is confusion about the intent and the effects of the government's policies.

[*English*]

Mr. John Rafferty (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today. This has been a very interesting debate in many respects, not just with the exchange of information, but I have figured out over the course of this afternoon that Liberals are becoming more like Conservatives every day.

This is a good example, with the Keystone XL pipeline. Conservatives and Liberals have joined together to promote it, despite the fact that it is going to export tens of thousands of Canadian jobs to the United States, along with our raw resources. I hear some guffaws from the other side and I will talk about that in one second.

This is a good day because this opposition motion day is a good opportunity for us to show Canadians that not only are the Liberals and Conservatives working together on this, but that we are the party

that is looking out for our resources, for Canadian workers, and for any sort of action on the environment. Even the Minister of Finance admits that the Keystone XL pipeline will ship tens of thousands of quality well-paid Canadian jobs south of the border.

Unlike Conservatives and Liberals, New Democrats do not believe that promoting massive export of our raw and unprocessed resources is a good economic policy for Canada. Conservatives and Liberals think the same on this.

Let me use another example. Someone was speaking earlier about the Canada-European trade agreement. There is a reason that it is not going to be approved for a couple of years, maybe not even before the next election, because there are so many things to work out.

One of the things that needs to be worked out is the shipping of raw logs from Canada to the European Union. That has not been sorted out yet. We know the Conservatives like that idea. We know the Liberals like that idea. It seems to me that the Conservatives and Liberals are quite happy to ship raw logs to the European Union or to the United States and buy back the chairs. They think that is a good idea. They are not interested in secondary processing of our natural resources in this country, or any other tertiary processing. They are happy cut the tree down, pull the minerals out of the ground, whatever the case may be, and ship them outside of the country. That is why we are losing the jobs.

Those secondary tertiary processing jobs should be right here in this country. They are our resources. They are Canadian resources, and Canadian workers ought to be processing those resources.

Contrary to the questions I will probably get when I finish speaking, we do believe in pipeline projects when they are done properly so that they can benefit Canada and Canadian workers, but not when the raw resources are shipped away, and not when our jobs are shipped south of the border. Worse still, it is leaving the environmental risks as liabilities on the shoulders of our children and grandchildren.

New Democrats want development in this country to serve Canada's long-term environmental and economic prosperity, not short-sighted projects that leave Canadians behind.

I am hoping that someone with the Liberals or the Conservatives is going to stand when I am finished and ask me a question. They will ask why I think secondary processing in Canada, with Canadian workers, is a good idea. We have heard all afternoon that neither of the parties believe that is important. In fact, the up-processing that is done with our bitumen now will be reduced considerably, if the pipeline is built.

Business of Supply

•(1700)

Even the little bit of processing Canada does now of our raw bitumen before it goes anywhere will be even less. We will be shipping rarer resources out of the country.

Worse still, instead of holding Conservatives to account for shipping these tens of thousands of jobs south of the border by refusing to process our own resources here in our country, the Liberal leader is cheering them on, before he even knows any details. It is like the Canada-European trade agreement. He said that they are with the Conservatives on it. I think that is deplorable. It is particularly deplorable, because the Liberals and their leader know full well that the Conservatives have a very poor record in managing the environmental impact of the oil sands. It is not responsible to cheer on this pipeline.

It turns out that it is the same old Liberal Party. The Liberal leader needs to explain why he is putting the interests of oil lobbyists ahead of Canadian jobs and our environment. Canadians deserve better. They deserve a real choice, not another party telling them that they have to settle for less protection of their jobs and the environment.

Keystone has gone from a no-brainer to a major irritant in Canada's relationship with our closest trading partner. It is all because the Conservatives refuse to address the environmental impact of oil sands development. I can understand why. President Obama is in a very difficult position right now because of the Conservatives' failure to address the environmental issues. There are very serious concerns in the United States, as there are in Canada, about the environmental impact of this pipeline.

I want to say something about TransCanada at this point. TransCanada Pipeline has a number of projects in northwestern Ontario. I know that company, or at least some people who work for that company, to be very diligent. They believe in what they are doing. TransCanada, from what I can see in my riding and in northwestern Ontario, is a pretty good corporate citizen, so I am not talking about TransCanada here. When I talk about the impact of the pipeline, I am really talking about the lack of environmental standards.

In the last couple of minutes I have left I would like to talk about the two aspects I have been talking about. One is jobs and the other is the environment.

Based on an independent study, the export of unprocessed bitumen envisioned by the Keystone XL project could result in the loss of over 40,000 potential jobs in Canada: direct, indirect, and induced. An analysis by the U.S. State Department found that Keystone XL would support 42,100 jobs during the one- to two-year construction period, with total wages of about \$2 billion. That would all be in the United States. I do not know exactly when the Minister of Finance was in the United States, but he was actually trying to sell Keystone XL by telling the Americans that they would get 40,000 jobs there. If members opposite want me to find out exactly when it was he said that, I can find it.

I was talking a moment ago about upgrading the bitumen in Alberta. I actually do have the figures here. Traditionally, Alberta upgrades about two-thirds of its bitumen. That will drop to less than

half, 47%, by 2017, according to Alberta's Energy Resources Conservation Board.

As for the environment, emissions from the oil sands accounted for 7% of Canada's emissions in 2010. That is forecast to double to 14% by 2020. To not talk about the environmental aspect of the oil sands and shipping raw bitumen is a serious issue.

I look forward to any questions members might have.

•(1705)

Hon. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to my colleague. He talked about the 42,100 jobs for building the American part of Keystone.

I have a couple of questions. The first one is this. If Keystone were not approved, would those 42,100 jobs suddenly come to Canada for a project that is not happening, or would it simply eliminate the thousands of jobs that are already happening in Canada?

I am not finished.

He talked about wanting to upgrade Canadian product before it gets shipped overseas. There is a project, not on the books yet but being proposed, for an extremely high tech, advanced, environmentally friendly refinery in Kitimat to upgrade Canadian raw products before they are shipped overseas. Would the NDP support that?

•(1710)

Mr. John Rafferty: While we are talking about those jobs, Mr. Speaker, I am talking about jobs in Canada with a pipeline that perhaps runs from west to east. All these jobs would be in Canada then.

The blueprint is already there and much of the pipeline is already there. It just simply makes sense. This goes back to my comment about secondary processing in Canada.

Without any real discussion about a west-east pipeline or about anything else happening in Canada, any secondary processing happening in Canada, Conservatives and Liberals say we should just ship it all south. We could have those jobs in Canada. That is the answer to the first question.

My colleague knows full well that we can process our natural resources at a secondary or tertiary level in Canada, and on the east coast we certainly have the ability to do that.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when we talk about natural resources, there is no doubt a certain argument that can and should be made in terms of those secondary jobs, trying to take it to another level of processing. I can appreciate that. I understand it. I want to fight for those jobs too.

Then there are natural resources that will leave our country in a raw form. We would argue ultimately that in an economy that is functioning well, both have their place in the world market.

If we try to follow the logic that has been presented by many of the speakers from the New Democratic Party, we would think it would be wrong to export a raw natural resource.

Private Members' Business

The province of Manitoba mines nickel and copper, among many other things, most of which do not have secondary processing that ultimately allows more value jobs, and Manitoba has a New Democratic government.

What is the NDP position on the overall approach to natural resources? Can we not export a raw natural resource, and if the answer to that is yes, then why not this one?

Mr. John Rafferty: Mr. Speaker, the answer to that question is of course we can, but let us try to keep the jobs in Canada; let us try to process in Canada.

My own personal opinion, not necessarily the opinion of the NDP, is that it does not matter what the resource is, whether it is trees, minerals, copper, as my colleague says, or oil and gas. We can process all that in Canada. There just has to be a will.

However, there is no will from the Conservatives or the Liberals to do that, and that is the problem.

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague from Thunder Bay—Rainy River for his excellent remarks.

My question to him would be based on his reaction to the following: Would he agree that the Conservative policy has been to subsidize the fossil fuel industry by \$1.3 billion, and that discourages the investment in renewable energy?

Second, does he think that the Liberals' support of the Keystone XL project would do anything to help diversify our economy?

Mr. John Rafferty: Mr. Speaker, let me answer the second question first. Of course, the Liberal policy on Keystone XL would do nothing to help our economy. It would certainly bring in money from sending raw resources out, but there is so much more that could be made for all Canadians, if the Liberal leader had not been so quick to jump on the Keystone XL wagon.

Certainly, the reliance on fossil fuels, gas and oil does discourage. When we are going to help them with billions of dollars in subsidies, it is pretty tough to get a green energy strategy going that makes sense to Canadians and allows them to take advantage of it in each and every home right across the country.

• (1715)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): It being 5:15 p.m., pursuant to an order made earlier today, all questions necessary to dispose of the opposition motion are deemed put and a recorded division deemed requested and deferred until Tuesday, November 19, at the expiry of the time provided for government orders.

I see the Minister of State and Chief Government Whip is rising on a point.

Hon. John Duncan: Mr. Speaker, I would ask that you see the clock at 5:30 p.m.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Is it agreed to see the clock at 5:30 p.m.?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): It being 5:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[Translation]

SUPPORT FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS ACT

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP) moved that Bill C-504, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code (volunteer firefighters) be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am obviously very pleased to once again be able to speak to my bill, Bill C-504, which would provide support for volunteer firefighters. Before I speak to the bill itself, I would like to talk about fire departments, since they are directly related to my bill.

Fire departments do not only respond to fires, but they also respond to calls to extricate car-accident victims from cars or to help people who might have medical problems in an area not accessible by a regular ambulance, such as a hunter who has fallen in an area that is difficult to access. They do much more than simply respond to fire calls, and I think that is important to note.

Fire departments are organized differently in rural and urban areas. In urban areas, there are enough calls to warrant having fully trained professional firefighters.

However, in rural areas, there are not enough calls to justify a full-time staff. Although firefighters are sometimes permanent and hold administrative or other jobs, we can obviously not have a full staff of firefighters at a fire station in a village of 1,000 people that serves other communities in the area with 300 or 400 people. That would make no sense and would not be cost-effective. Therefore, in the regions there is no choice but to use volunteer firefighters.

It is important to understand that the term "voluntary" does not necessarily mean "unpaid." It does not mean that they will not be paid for their work. Rather, the term refers to their goodwill. When they decide to be volunteer firefighters, it is not because someone twisted their arm or told them what to do. This decision comes from an inner willingness to help and serve their community. What motivates people to become volunteer firefighters is their desire to save lives, to keep neighbours or friends from losing their homes or to save property accumulated over the years. It really is their goodwill that motivates volunteer firefighters to serve their community.

When answering a call, firefighters must gather the minimum number of firefighters required before intervening. This number may vary depending on the fire. Volunteer firefighters cannot enter a building or carry out any effective operations before this team is assembled. Often, they will pour water on the fire for as long as it takes until they assemble the team they need. Each additional minute they need to gather this team may mean they cannot save lives, or recover property, or prevent greater damage.

We all agree that life is precious. The value of property damage is very real as well. I think it is important to consider the millions of dollars in claims submitted to insurance companies every year. Acting more quickly can save lives, in addition to saving belongings that are often irreplaceable because of their sentimental value. It can also mean thousands of dollars in savings.

One of my constituents wrote me after I introduced my bill to point out how difficult it is to assemble the necessary team of firefighters. He had been a volunteer firefighter for over twenty years and he knew that when fighting a fire, the first few minutes are the most important. According to him, firefighters should not be criticized, because they often save lives even though it is not always easy to do when it is -30°C or -35°C or when it is dark. It is not fun.

Someone who has been a volunteer firefighter for 24 years in Rouyn-Noranda also wrote me to say that his employer cannot let him leave to answer a call if there is no one else to replace him. He can let him go at the second alarm if there is someone else to replace him.

● (1720)

It is important that we make employers understand the importance of the work firefighters do and recognize it by entrenching it in law. Roger Rousseau, of La Sarre, also wrote to me saying that a firefighter's performance depends on the employer's co-operation.

The key factor for effectiveness and quick response is availability. The more firefighters are available on a 24/7 basis, 365 days a year, the more effective they will be. Fire services have difficulty bringing together an adequate team during the day, between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. It is increasingly difficult to gather these people during those hours.

I would also like to say that many companies with operations across the country rely on volunteer firefighters to implement their emergency plans. We need only think of Enbridge, CN, CP and TransCanada. All these companies rely on volunteer firefighters to respond to catastrophes that could happen in rural areas, which also require a quick response in the event of potential accidents. Volunteer firefighter services are essential for the Canadian economy across the country.

We cannot predict when a catastrophe will happen, but we can be prepared and make sure that the odds are in our favour. This bill will help Canada be ready to respond to catastrophes. The Insurance Bureau of Canada recently released a study showing that we are not prepared. We have to wake up and stop thinking that everything is fine. We have to tell ourselves that we can take concrete action to help us be better prepared.

The goal of my bill is to give a volunteer or part-time firefighter who works in a federally regulated entity the right to be away from his work if called to intervene and if the employer was informed of

Private Members' Business

his employee's obligations. The bill allows people to respond to calls if employed by a federally regulated business. All the firefighters have to do is inform their employers. Of course, they would not just take out their pager and tell their employers that they are volunteer firefighters and that they have to go. The employer must be informed in advance and must be warned that it could happen. The employer would then be required to let the firefighter leave.

It is important to specify that the employer is obligated to let him leave, unless there are valid reasons not to. There could be times when that obligation would not apply. That is important to understand, and there is some logic behind it. Obviously, if a plant stops working because the individual controls an essential piece of machinery, the employer has a valid reason to ask him to wait until a replacement can be found. If there is only one security guard at a bank, for example, it makes sense that he cannot just up and leave. There are security risks. There are logical reasons that could allow an employer to require the employee to stay, if the employer has valid reasons not to allow him to leave. However, if there are no such reasons, he needs to let the employee leave to answer the call.

This bill also prohibits reprisals against volunteer or part-time firefighters who must be absent from their work place or fail to appear at work in order to act in that capacity. That includes, for example, disciplinary measures because someone responded to a fire alarm or because someone telephones in the morning to say that he fought a fire from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. so he cannot come to work because he did not sleep. That protects firefighters from disciplinary measures that the employer may wish to impose because he telephoned at the last minute. It is very concrete.

● (1725)

This prohibits employers from refusing to hire a volunteer or part-time firefighter. For example, if I were a part-time firefighter and an employer under federal jurisdiction refused to hire me because he did not want to deal with me having to leave to respond to fires, it would be illegal.

Most of the time, there is good co-operation, but sometimes that is not the case. I would like to take the time to provide a concrete example so that people understand this problem a little better.

In Quebec, a similar law exists for employees under provincial jurisdiction. It affects only provincially regulated employees. My bill will protect all employees under federal jurisdiction. It will therefore go beyond the two laws that separate federal and provincial jurisdictions. It would protect all firefighters in Quebec.

There is no similar legislation in the other provinces and territories, but this bill could reasonably open the debate and encourage the other provinces and territories to follow suit.

Here is a specific example. Right now, if a mortgage adviser who works in a *caisse populaire* in Quebec has to leave his job to respond to a fire, his employer is obligated to let him leave because these financial institutions fall under provincial jurisdiction. However, if the same person, who is trained by the fire department, leaves his job at the *caisse populaire* to go do the same job at a bank, his employer is no longer obligated to let him leave to respond to a fire because banks fall under federal jurisdiction.

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It does not make sense for a firefighter to no longer be protected because he changed jurisdictions. It is important to correct the imbalance. Municipalities are having more and more trouble recruiting firefighters because the training is much longer than before and people prefer to devote more time to their families for various reasons.

If the people the fire department does succeed in recruiting cannot respond to fires because their employer will not let them leave work, the fire department cannot risk hiring them and spending thousand of dollars training them. The fire department needs to know whether they will be able to respond to calls. It is very simple.

It is about enhancing the role of firefighters in our communities. With this bill, the Parliament of Canada would be sending a clear message that we believe in the work of firefighters and that it is worth freeing them up to allow them to fulfill their obligations. That is why this bill should be sent to committee.

A few legal corrections may need to be made. I never claimed to be perfect, but it would be really unfortunate if, for partisan reasons, we do not take the time to send this bill to committee and find ways to improve it, if there are things that need to be corrected from a legal standpoint.

It is well worth sending this bill to committee, to enhance the role of firefighters in our communities and ensure that they are protected. Thus, even if it needs improvement, the bill could enable firefighters to act more quickly and save lives. Eighty-five per cent of firefighters in this country are volunteer firefighters. This means about 127,000 people. I would also like to point out that this bill would not cost the government a cent.

In the throne speech, the government talked about the ability to respond and intervene when natural disasters strike. Accordingly, having firefighters that can respond when a natural disaster strikes fits into what was said.

It is important to strengthen the resilience of our communities and ensure that we can meet their needs. We can do that simply by sending this bill to committee, then passing it for the well-being of our communities and our firefighters.

• (1730)

[English]

Mr. Ted Opitz (Etobicoke Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her speech on her private member's bill. She is a hard-working member with whom I have had the privilege of working on the defence committee. She spent several years in the Canadian Armed Forces, and I would like to thank her for her dedication. I know that when she talks about volunteer firefighters, she is sincere in demonstrating goodwill. However, I would remind her that when we gave a tax break to volunteer firefighters, no one in her party supported this government in doing so.

The relationship between volunteer firefighters and their employers is generally quite strong. By convention, the relationship is very good between employers and volunteer firefighters, so there has not really been a need for this kind of legislation, because employers are very receptive to the great work volunteer firefighters do, which I think all members in the House will agree on.

I would like to ask the hon. member if she thinks that perhaps what she is proposing may damage the relationship between firefighters and their employers.

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Moore: Mr. Speaker, I would first like to clarify that if the tax credit for volunteer firefighters had been introduced alone, not together with many other measures, I would have been happy to vote in favour of it. Given the opportunity to vote only on that measure, I would not have hesitated to support it.

The member knows how things work in Parliament: the government bundles good measures with plenty of bad ones. That is the problem.

Just to be clear, there is no way to get statistics on which employers do not let their employees respond to fires, but we know it happens.

A bill forcing employers to let volunteer firefighters respond has a specific goal: if there is a law, people will not hesitate to release an employee who has to respond to a fire. Employers will understand that legally, they are required to let the employee respond. They will therefore find a solution and work things out. Without that legal obligation, employers are less willing to find a solution, to find a way to let the employee respond.

That is all there is to it. In Quebec, there have been no complaints since the law came into force, or very few anyway. The legal obligation has made employers realize that they have to come up with a solution so they can let their employees respond.

• (1735)

Ms. Lise St-Denis (Saint-Maurice—Champlain, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of volunteer firefighters in my riding.

I thought that volunteer firefighters were under municipal, not federal, jurisdiction. That is why I do not really understand how the federal government can interfere in something that is pretty much solely under municipal jurisdiction.

Ms. Christine Moore: Mr. Speaker, I thought it was simple, but I will try to give my colleague a clear explanation.

Volunteer firefighters have another job in addition to being a firefighter. For some, their other job is federally regulated. For example, they may work for a bank or the postal service. At present, the provincial law requires employers under provincial jurisdiction to release firefighters. However, if the other job is under federal jurisdiction, the employer does not have to release the employee to allow him to respond to a fire call.

What we are doing is amending the Canada Labour Code so that employers under federal jurisdiction are required to release employees who are also volunteer firefighters. That is what will happen.

A number of other aspects concerning firefighters are under provincial or municipal jurisdiction. For that reason, they are not included in this bill. I chose to include only aspects under federal jurisdiction. That is what we do at the federal level.

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[English]

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour and for Western Economic Diversification, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak on the second reading of Bill C-504, an act to amend the Canada Labour Code.

First of all, I, too, like many people in this House, want to not only salute our volunteer firefighters, but our search and rescue folks, and the many people throughout our country who work in our rural and remote communities and ensure that we have a sense of safety. We know that when we have trouble they will be there for us. Again, I think all of us agree, and we salute the very important work that they do.

The bill claims to protect the employment of volunteer firefighters working in a federally regulated business. I think it is important to note that according to the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs an estimated 4.9%, or 4,200, of the 85,000 volunteer firefighters in Canada are hired by federally regulated businesses. We are talking about a very small portion of the workforce.

There are 3,200 volunteer fire departments throughout Canada, with most of them serving small communities with less than 10,000 residents. In many communities, they are often the only local emergency first responders. As I said, if one has ever travelled through a community that is rural or remote, knowing they are there is critically important.

I know that the hon. member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue tabled this private member's bill with the best of intentions. That said, I do have a number of concerns that I would like to raise.

First of all, I think the changes proposed in the bill would actually create more problems than solutions. The sponsor of the bill claims it would help volunteer fire departments with recruitment and retention in smaller-sized communities. However, according to a survey conducted by the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs, the biggest challenge that fire departments face is a lack of employment rather than unsupportive employers.

Having a strong rural Canada and natural resource development is what we spent all day talking about. We talked about it impeding the ability for our rural and remote communities to enjoy the resources that would provide them with employment opportunities and the prosperity they deserve and want.

It is also important to note that in the Red Tape Reduction Commission it was clear that in imposing additional regulations on employers, such as this bill would do, it would not only be counterproductive, but harmful. The costs of red tape and regulations have gone into the billions of dollars. It is a very onerous burden on our communities. Of course, that is why we are working to reduce the regulatory burden on Canadian businesses and provide them with the required flexibility to grow, create jobs and contribute to our recovering economy.

Many may recall, in 2008, that we amended the Canada Labour Code to provide an unpaid leave for members of the reserve force. Some people might ask why we are not willing to do the same for the volunteer firefighter. However, I think there is an important distinction.

Reservists are deployed for a longer but determined period of time, which makes a formal approach to managing their absences from work the best policy decision. Having the time to recruit, train and allow reservists to go for six months, a year, or whatever time of deployment, is a lot different from saying that someone must be allowed to walk out the door immediately, which is what is needed for our emergency response.

Volunteer firefighters are frequently absent from work for short, but indeterminate periods of time. As such, the goodwill agreement between the volunteer firefighters and their employers is best suited to meet the needs.

I noted a question earlier about the relationship with municipalities. As a former mayor, we had a volunteer firefighter department. There was generosity by the employers in terms of letting their employees go on these responses because they knew it could be them or a family member. The communities and the employers were incredibly generous, especially when it did not unduly disrupt what was happening.

In some ways, Bill C-504 is a proposed legislative fix to a non-existent problem. Across Canada, only two provinces have adopted this legislation, and they are Quebec and Nova Scotia. Collective agreements are telling us the same story. When reviewing a sample of more than 3,000 collective agreements, only two contained provisions related to volunteer firefighter duties.

Therefore, in the absence of a problem, the right approach to this is the status quo. We can trust employers and employees to come to an agreement which satisfies both the call of duty and local business needs.

● (1740)

Furthermore, there are many questions that have been left unanswered with this proposed legislation. It fails to clearly define certain concepts and conditions. For example, when would an employer have good cause to prevent an employee from leaving work? It is very unclear. Does that mean that with good cause, an employer could dismiss, suspend, lay off, demote, or discipline an employee for serving as a volunteer firefighter?

Also, when and how would an employee be required to inform the employer of his or her obligations as a volunteer firefighter?

Bill C-504 also fails to specify for which volunteer tasks an employee could leave work. There are a large number of responsibilities for volunteer firefighters.

My son is currently a volunteer firefighter, but they know he has to work it around his work schedule. He is a nurse in the intensive care unit and would have to travel 30 minutes to respond, so it would be very impractical in that case to have legislation that would compel his employer to allow him to go.

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We know that there are a variety of tasks. Our volunteer firefighters have emergency responses, of course, but there is training, equipment and fire hall maintenance, fire prevention and education, inspections, fundraising, administration, and so on. There are many tasks, and we have not really clarified what they could respond to.

In conclusion, Bill C-504 is far too ambiguous. For these reasons, the government simply cannot support it.

I ask members to please not get me wrong. We recognize the very crucial role that our volunteer firefighters play in our communities and have taken action through such things as the provision of the volunteer firefighter tax credit. As the House may remember, that provision is available for firefighters who provide at least 200 hours of eligible service per calendar year at one or more fire departments. I am very proud to say that it benefited more than 30,000 firefighters in 2011.

The chiefs, firefighters, and volunteer firefighters in my communities have been asking for this volunteer firefighter tax credit for many years, but I have never had one of them approach me with the suggestion that there was any issue with their ability to come and go from work, especially in terms of the goodwill relationship.

In short, we have taken measurable action to support the men and women who bravely serve as our volunteer firefighters. They absolutely deserve our respect. They respond to emergency calls. They rescue people in distress and often save lives. Bill C-504 would not provide genuine protection, but would create confusion and inequity while putting an unnecessary burden on businesses across Canada.

We are certainly committed to ensuring that workplaces remain safe and productive and contribute to a prosperous Canadian economy. We will continue to work towards this commitment, but for all the reasons I mentioned earlier, our Conservative government cannot support this legislation.

Again, I do appreciate the member's reasons for bringing this bill forward. Her intentions were very honourable, but the best thing to say in summary is that this is a legislative solution in search of a non-existent problem.

● (1745)

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to get up and speak to this particular bill on behalf of the party. I want to commend the member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue for bringing this forward for debate. She has brought it forward as a well-intentioned bill; but certainly, as my colleague from Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo has indicated, there are aspects of this bill that remain unaddressed or vague or somewhat strange in the number of ways it could be applied. I am just not certain as to where the problem was that precipitated the bill's coming forward, so I was surprised to see it coming from a member who represents a rural constituency.

I have 50 volunteer fire departments in my riding. They go from Dominion to Donkin to Guysborough, Cheticamp and Port Hawkesbury. Every community has a volunteer fire department. We all stand and offer respect and gratitude to those who offer themselves up to help look over their family and friends in those rural communities. I

have done a fair amount of work with the volunteer firefighters, not just in my riding, but nationally I was able to bring a private member's bill forward in the 37th Parliament. The essence of it was a tax deduction for those who put in 200 hours. The Conservatives took that and put it in a bigger omnibus bill. It was probably a rose among many thorns, so we were not able to support it at that time, but had it been broken free I know that my colleagues in my party would have supported it.

At that time, I was able to speak with a great number of volunteer fire department chiefs from across the country and a great number of volunteer firefighters. Never over the course of those discussions did this ever come out as an issue. Certainly in my consultations with the fire chiefs, they have been consistent year after year. Brent Denny from Cape Breton regional fire services has been a strong advocate for the fire chiefs. He is on the national executive and continues to do great work for that organization and for firefighters. They have been consistent year after year in identifying their key concerns, asking for government to designate 10 MHz of spectrum on the public safety broadband, which would provide volunteer fire services and first responders with state-of-the-art communications. This is something they have been advocating for over the last number of years. Improvement to fire services on first nations communities is another issue. They have banded together and are trying to rally for the creation of an independent national fire marshal for first nations communities.

We are very much aware of those initiatives, but this particular one was never heard coming from those whom it would most impact. Since receiving the private member's bill, I have communicated with those people and they still do not see it as being something that is, pardon the pun, a burning issue.

With regard to my party, I want to recognize the work by the member for Wascana who succeeded in passing Motion No. 388. This motion introduces a one-time \$300,000 benefit for firefighters who were killed or disabled in the line of duty. It also provides firefighters with priority access to vaccines and medications, very similar to what front-line health care workers have to their avail now.

● (1750)

It calls for the inclusion of firefighter safety in the National Building Code. Again, that motion that was presented by the member for Wascana reflected issues and concerns that have been brought forward by firefighters and representatives over the years.

The other thing that concerns me, and I would think it should concern the members of the NDP as well, is that what we are doing is we are asking the government to change the Canada Labour Code. We know the Canada Labour Code is the bedrock, the foundation, for the relationship between employers and employees. We know it is fundamental.

We have seen the government put forward legislation in this chamber that has been an outright offence to that relationship. We saw the changes that it wanted to undertake in moving from a card check system to a system with a secret preferred ballot. That is a complete change to the relationship between employer and employee.

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We have heard from unions that said if the government were to change the Canada Labour Code, it should be done through consultation and consensus. It should not be one-offing. The Sims report that was tabled in the late 1990s said we should not be political with this. The government of the day should not be involved in this. The relationship between employer and employee should be one that is built through consultation and consensus.

If we are going to attack the government for their wrong-minded approach on those changes to the labour code, then I think there has been a certain degree of consistency on the part of the opposition.

I do not know enough about the bill, and I was hoping to learn more through this debate this evening. I have not seen anything in the debate to make me say, "Oh, I get it now. I see where the problem was." I would hope that over the course of this debate the member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue can bring forward some actual fact, some research, some position papers or voluntary positions put forward by those most impacted. Maybe she could give us some cases where hardship has been met by volunteer firefighters.

In the time that we have had to look at this issue, we just have not seen that. If that comes out over the course of the debate, then we will certainly take that into consideration. Making a change to the Canada Labour Code is something we should not take lightly as legislators.

I think my time is winding down. Each of us in rural communities, whether you are a paid firefighter or a volunteer first responder, know that probably the volunteer firefighters have it even tougher because they are expected to be trained. They have a full-time day job but are expected to be trained just as well as full-time firefighters. They are expected to deal with the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual impacts of being a first responder, of rushing into that house while everyone else is running out, showing up at the scene of a head-on collision on a highway, using the jaws of life or scraping an 18-year-old kid off the dash of a car. When those volunteer first responders do that type of thing, they then have to go back to the hall, change their gear and go back to work.

We believe what they do is important, what they do is noble. We appreciate their efforts. If we believe that in some way this helps those firefighters, then we will support the bill.

• (1755)

Mr. Matthew Kellway (Beaches—East York, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am rising today to voice my support for Bill C-504, and to thank my colleague from Abitibi—Témiscamingue for bringing forward such a practical and important bill.

I can only express profound disappointment at the twisted arguments, I have no other word for it, that have come forward from both the Conservatives and Liberals. On the one hand, the bill is criticized by the Conservatives for intervening in this relationship that we should just trust, but then the criticism goes on to say it is not prescriptive enough in its terms. They are ignoring that the very virtue of the bill is the fact that it touches on these things so lightly and leaves to the employer and the volunteer firefighter the opportunity to work out and inform the terms of good cause, et cetera, among themselves. Then we have the Liberals who come in and somehow draw this comparison between the desecrations visited on the Canada Labour Code by that government and the offences

they caused to working people with this bill. It is absolutely beyond me how the member from the Liberal Party even dares make such a comparison.

Let me say that this bill puts forward for our consideration, and hopefully ultimately supports, a very concrete and realistic proposal, at no cost to government or employers, to keep our communities safer. The bill proposes to amend the Canada Labour Code to prohibit reprisals against volunteer or, in the terminology of the province of Quebec, part-time firefighters, who must either leave work or fail to appear at work to act in their capacity as firefighters.

Coming from the riding I come from, which is in the big city of Toronto, I have to put a bit of an urban twist on this one. In Toronto, we have a paid professional firefighting force. However, the implicit assumption I am making is that volunteers are volunteers and firefighters are firefighters, wherever they are found. There is implicit in this bill a clear statement about the critical importance of professional firefighters, whether volunteer or paid, to our own safety, the safety of our families and the safety of our communities.

I am happy to say that I live in a community that recognizes the important place of firefighters in our community and the risks they take, and are always prepared to take, for the safety of others.

Thanks in large part to Bob Murdoch and Gene Domagala, two long-standing, unfaltering and irrepressible pillars of the Beach community in my riding, and to the Centre 55 Community Centre, every year our community commemorates the tragic events of September 11, 2001. Present, and explicitly honoured at the commemoration every year, are firefighters, because 341 of the nearly 3,000 people who died on that day were firefighters. These were men and women who were not caught up in those tragic events on that day, but men and women who, as a matter of duty and incredible bravery, walked into an inferno for the sole purpose of saving others. The firefighters who perished on that day were members of the fire department of New York. However, those deaths and the bravery exhibited that day stand as a representation of all firefighters, in all places, every day. If members care to look, they would find on the website of the Canadian Fallen Firefighters Foundation, a list of nearly 1,200 names, all fallen firefighters, all fallen in the discharge of their duty, and all Canadian.

It is an inherently dangerous job. I know it through 9/11 and the events of that day. I know it through the list of fallen firefighters. I say in all due modesty, and much is due, that I know this through my very brief experience not so long ago at the fire academy, in Toronto, on Eastern Avenue. Every year, the Toronto fire department and the Toronto firefighters' association invite Toronto's elected officials to participate in some firefighter training and take some time to walk in the boots of a firefighter.

• (1800)

I had the opportunity to participate, and, specifically, to enter a building with a mock fire and a burning bed and attempt the rescue of occupants in the house.

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I want to thank the Toronto fire department and the Toronto firefighters' association for that experience. It confirmed for me that the job is dangerous. It is both physically and psychologically challenging. It is, in a word, scary. I suppose the firefighters who work together develop a means of communicating and working together as a team, but I was surprised, and indeed shocked, by how incredibly difficult it is in the circumstances of smoke, fire, and darkness to communicate with others.

The foregoing is to suggest that there is critically important and dangerous work firefighters, paid professionals or volunteers, do.

On the volunteer side of the equation, we know that the provision of volunteer firefighting services is built into the emergency response plans of some very large and economically significant corporations: Enbridge, Canadian National Railway, Canadian Pacific Railway, and TransCanada. These companies represent a large and important part of the infrastructure of our economy.

Sometimes, regrettably, tragically, this is not just about plans but is about what might transpire. It is about actual catastrophes. Over the past year, volunteer firefighters have been there to assist in two Canadian catastrophes that caught all our attention, no matter where we live in this country, catastrophes that will never be forgotten.

When fireballs and explosions from a train derailment rocked Lac-Mégantic this past summer, killing almost 50 people and razing the small town, it was volunteer firefighters who were first called to action, and there they stayed, on the front lines of recovery efforts in that town, for weeks.

Of course, it is not just in the event of fire that we find volunteer firefighters. They are there to respond to natural disasters, as was the case this past summer with the floods in Alberta. With the assistance of corporate partners, volunteer firefighters provided portable charging machines and batteries and distributed much-needed funding to flood victims, among the many other important tasks that were required to restore normalcy in flood affected areas.

It is in this context of the stuff firefighters are made of, their courage and their dedication to our safety, and the critical work they do in times of disaster, that I want to return to this bill and its modest but critically important proposal.

It would give volunteer part-time firefighters who work for a company under federal jurisdiction the right to be absent from work if they are responding to a fire call and if the employer has been informed of this obligation ahead of time. It would prohibit reprisals against volunteer part-time firefighters who, to act in that capacity, must be absent from their workplaces, either by leaving work suddenly or by failing to appear at work. Also, it would prevent employers from refusing to hire people because they are volunteer or part-time firefighters.

In all of this, the legitimate concerns of employers of volunteer firefighters have been taken into consideration by my colleague in the drafting of this bill. The amendments to the Canada Labour Code would not allow for the departure of a volunteer firefighter if the result was endangerment of his or her co-workers.

However, at the beginning and end of the day, the fact remains that in rural and remote areas of this country and in small towns,

Canadians depend on volunteer firefighters to protect, in part, their safety. Across this country, there are over 100,000 volunteer firefighters. That means that 85% of all firefighters in this country are protecting 80% of our communities.

Here in the House of Commons we should be doing what we need to do to ensure that Canadians are safe. That is, in part, at least, our responsibility. My colleague from Abitibi—Témiscamingue has made our job a bit easier today by putting forward this bill. I will be supporting it, and I encourage all members of this House to do the same.

• (1805)

Mr. Scott Armstrong (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment and Social Development, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is great to be here tonight to talk about our volunteer firefighters across this country and this current legislation before us.

Like the previous Liberal speaker, my good friend from Cape Breton—Canso, I am from a very large rural riding. We have over 33 fire departments, 30 of which are staffed solely by volunteers. There are over 650 volunteer firefighters in my riding.

I know many of them. We have worked with them. We have worked very hard to push the volunteer firefighters tax credit, which gave those volunteer firefighters a few dollars off their taxes so that they could better represent their communities as volunteers and get the training and put in the hours they need to protect those communities. That was a great initiative by this government. I was pleased to support the volunteer firefighters tax credit with the rest of my colleagues on this side of the House. In 2011, over 37,000 volunteer firefighters engaged in the volunteer firefighters tax credit.

The basis of that tax credit was the fact that each volunteer spends about \$3,000 if they put in 200 hours a year. The rationale behind that tax credit was that we really should not benefit as a federal government from the taxes paid by people doing such a tremendous volunteer service to their community.

As a result, we instituted a \$3,000 tax credit. It put about \$450 into the pocket of each and every volunteer firefighter who served his or her community for 200 hours a year. That was a great initiative. I want to give credit to the Minister of Finance, the greatest finance minister in the G7, for doing that, and credit to the Prime Minister for supporting our caucus in pushing that piece of legislation through.

In my own family we have a great legacy of service as volunteer firefighters. My grandfather served as a volunteer firefighter for over 40 years, from 1925 to 1965. When he came back from World War I, he immediately joined the fire department. He had several Dalmatian dogs throughout his life. I grew up with those dogs. Many times he would take me to the local fire department, so I spent a lot of hours of my youth in the fire department, not only sliding down the pole but learning a lot of things that my mother probably did not want me to learn, because as we know, those volunteer fire departments are made up of a lot of young fellows, and they tend to sometimes get out of hand and have a lot of fun and build camaraderie that is very valuable in any volunteer organization.

It is that camaraderie that we have to support, because these people are donating their time. They are away from their families and they are ready to go out at a moment's call to protect their community. As part of a volunteer fire department with people like my grandfather, they know what a valuable contribution they are making, and it is a contribution that communities value.

With regard to this legislation, the question is this: what problem is this legislation actually trying to solve? The bill proposes to amend the Canada Labour Code in order to provide employment protection for volunteer firefighters in a federally regulated workplace. It would only affect about 4.9% of volunteer firefighters, or 4,200 volunteer firefighters across the country.

The bill proposes to offer volunteer firefighters protection from employer reprisals, based on the premise that a lack of protection when it comes to volunteer absences is discouraging people from volunteering as firefighters.

In my riding and in many communities, that is absolutely not the case. Employers and other people in the communities support the volunteer fire department, bar none. Small businesses and medium-sized businesses want volunteer firefighters working in their establishments because they are community leaders. They actually bring people into those businesses, because people know that the business supports valuable volunteer hours that are being dedicated from the volunteer firefighters who work in their businesses. In fact, volunteer firefighters are probably some of the employees most sought after by small and medium-sized businesses in my riding and in many other ridings across the country.

Over the past 18 years, the labour program has not received any complaints of a reprisal related to volunteer firefighter duties, not one complaint. Out of 3,000 collective agreements, only two include provisions on volunteer firefighter duties. According to these numbers, it is fair to claim that this is not a significant issue to volunteer firefighters themselves.

● (1810)

Lastly, during a recent review of part III of the Canada Labour Code, the issue of volunteer firefighter protection was not raised once by stakeholders. The lack of complaints on this issue suggests there is no real issue to be addressed. For those reasons, we will not be supporting the bill, but that does not mean we do not appreciate and support those who generously and courageously volunteer their time to keep our communities safe.

Our government recognizes that volunteer firefighters play an invaluable role. To put that in perspective, in 2012 there were over 3,000 volunteer fire departments in Canada, the majority of which served small and medium-sized communities. For many of these communities, the fire department, the only emergency service available, is provided by volunteers. It goes without saying that these courageous volunteers are deserving of the federal government's support and that is why we introduced the volunteer firefighter tax credit.

The second issue brought up by the bill is the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters. This remains a challenge, particularly for small communities. On the east coast, where I live, a lot of younger people have moved to the cities because of

Private Members' Business

employment troubles in some areas on the east coast, which we are addressing through the job grant, the shipbuilding contract, the west-east pipeline and the Muskrat Falls project. Our government is standing behind the east coast when it comes to jobs.

Recruitment is still a challenge, but that is being addressed within the communities and departments themselves. Based on a survey, less than 20% of respondents said that a lack of employer support was the problem with recruitment. That is a small percentage. If the lack of employer support is not a significant factor in recruiting volunteers, then why would we pass the legislation? If anything, it would only create cumbersome regulations and red tape, which may actually throw a wrench into a program that is already working.

From my own experience as a school principal in a small community with a robust volunteer firefighter department, I actually had a volunteer firefighter serve on the staff of the school where I served as principal. He was a physical education teacher named Brad Smith. We had an agreement that if a fire took place during school hours when he was teaching a class, a staff member would immediately cover his class while he hustled out the door to go fight the fire and save the community. Many times he went to fight a fire that was taking place at the home of one of the students in the school.

That is the type of arrangement and flexibility that exists among employers, staff, volunteer firefighters and the places they work. It is a system that works because communities support this initiative. They know how valuable it is. If we start messing around with a system that works and throw a bunch of regulations and bureaucratic red tape into this, we are going to disrupt a system that is currently very effective for volunteer firefighters and employers across the country.

Some people say they are like reservists and reservists need protection from employer reprisals. We know that. For those in the military who have to serve on weekends, during the week or are required to go away when our country calls them, there is protection for them. I totally agree that protection is absolutely necessary. The difference between reservists and volunteer firefighters is that, although reservists get pulled away and need protection, we can plan for that because it is on a defined basis. It is known when they are going to be gone, how long they are going to be gone, and employers can plan around that.

Volunteer firefighters are gone for indeterminate amounts of time. We do not know if they are going to be gone for four hours or 20 minutes, depending on the call. We do not know if they are going to be gone for two or three days if it is a large fire. That flexibility has to be in the system and in the negotiations between volunteer firefighters and their employers or supervisors, and that is what currently exists. It is because of this uncertainty that we need to keep the system the way it is. It is a system that works and deals with the flexibility needed to support firefighters.

This predictability makes the formal approach to managing absences from work more acceptable. We can deal with it because employers know they might be gone at a moment's call, but we have a system in place to deal with it when it happens. We have a system in place because we have negotiated that beforehand and that is the way it works across the country.

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●(1815)

All kinds of volunteers across this country offer their time and energy to help others in need. I believe volunteers are the backbone of their communities. They are certainly a force of good in small towns. In my opinion, volunteer firefighters are at the top of the heap when it comes to volunteers. They are our most necessary volunteers. They are the ones we need because they protect our property and our lives, and they have to risk their own lives to do it.

Canadians can count on our government to always support volunteer firefighters and to put regulations in place that help them and solve problems that actually exist. We stand behind volunteer firefighters, but this is not legislation we can support.

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: The time provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired, and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:17 p.m.)

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