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(HANSARD)

Wednesday, November 19, 2014

—

Speaker: The Honourable Andrew Scheer

CONTENTS

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

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, November 19, 2014

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

• (1405)

[*English*]

The Speaker: It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem, led by the hon. member for Westmount—Ville-Marie.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

ST. ALBERT SMALL BUSINESS WEEK

Mr. Brent Rathgeber (Edmonton—St. Albert, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, last month the St. Albert and District Chamber of Commerce held its annual Small Business Week, highlighting and celebrating the nearly 1,000 small and medium-sized businesses that generate economic growth and create jobs in and around St. Albert.

The highlight of the annual week was the small business awards of distinction. At this formal awards ceremony, nominees were recognized and awards presented in numerous categories, including marketing, outstanding customer service, young entrepreneur, and community leadership.

The highlight of the evening was the Chairman's Award, chosen by the chairman of the Chamber of Commerce based on overall excellence in business operations plus exemplary community engagement. The winner of the 2014 Chairman's Award was Team Chiasson, from McDonald's Restaurants of St. Albert. Rob and Karen Chiasson were recognized for their tireless advocacy on behalf of employers who are experiencing acute labour shortages as a result of Alberta's hot economy and tight labour market.

I would like to personally congratulate all St. Albert and area businesses for the economic activity and jobs they create and the St. Albert Chamber of Commerce for recognizing them through a very successful Small Business Week.

RETIREMENT CONGRATULATIONS

Mr. Richard Harris (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, imagine the dedication needed to remain employed with one company for 39 years. Imagine how lucky that company would be to have someone who is both dedicated and success-driven for that length of time. Such is my friend George Roache, who has just retired after 39 years with the Royal Bank. George served in many divisions of the bank and is well recognized for leaving the achievement bar far higher than when he arrived.

George Roach was a born banker and a leader. He was continually recognized by the bank for his successes, greatly admired by everyone who worked for him, and trusted and respected by his clients.

May George and Margie enjoy every moment of their well-earned retirement and spend lots of time with their family and friends. May all of their shots end up on the short grass, and may they always keep a really good Scotch well within reach. Enjoy, my friend.

* * *

[*Translation*]

WORLD DAY FOR PREVENTION OF CHILD ABUSE

Ms. Rosane Doré Lefebvre (Alfred-Pellan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, November 19 is World Day for Prevention of Child Abuse.

The objective of this day is to be a rallying point around the issue of child abuse and the urgent need for prevention programs. The day was established in 2000 by the Women's World Summit Foundation in order to persuade governments and civil society organizations to play a more active role in the promotion of and respect for the rights of the child.

Violence affects everyone, not just in homes and families but also in schools, institutions, work environments, and communities.

Children and youth are the most likely to be victims of violence, be it physical, psychological, or sexual.

Increasing prevention measures, improving protection, and raising public awareness are effective ways of addressing the problem.

I invite my colleagues on both sides of the House to mark this important day and ensure that we are doing everything in our power to prevent child abuse.

Statements by Members

[English]

RED FM RADIOTHON

Mr. Devinder Shory (Calgary Northeast, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge and commend the stellar fundraising efforts of RED FM radio station in Calgary Northeast and Surrey this November 6, which raised \$1.6 million in one day.

During the fundraising radiothon, the Indo-Canadian community of Calgary Northeast and other Calgaryians donated over \$870,000 to Peter Lougheed Hospital for premature babies and neonatal care. The Surrey radiothon raised around \$725,000 for acute stroke care at the Surrey Memorial Hospital.

A big thanks to the donors for their open-hearted generosity. The entire staff and management at RED FM radio did a fantastic job reaching out to donors. Congratulations go specifically to president Kulwinder Sanghera; vice-president and general manager Bijoy Samuel; Calgary news director Rishi Nagar; and the Surrey news director, Harjinder Thind.

Well done, RED FM radio. Keep up the good work.

* * *

HOLODOMOR

Ms. Chrystia Freeland (Toronto Centre, Lib.):

When I awoke
Before the dawn, amid their sleep I heard
My sons ...weep and ask
For bread.

Mr. Speaker, that is Dante's description of hell. That hell of starving children is what Stalin and his regime created in Ukraine in 1932 and 1933. This Holodomor was a deliberate genocide, designed to break the Ukrainian nation and to impose collectivization on a farming society renowned for its industriousness and powerful sense of community. One of the horrors of the Holodomor was that Moscow flatly denied its murderous campaign. Far too many people, for far too long, believed that lie.

Walter Duranty, *The New York Times* journalist who won a Pulitzer prize for his reporting from the Soviet Union, wrote:

Conditions are bad, but there is no famine.... But—to put it brutally—you can't make an omelet without breaking eggs.

Today, we are again hearing Orwellian doublespeak from a Kremlin that has invaded Ukraine. That makes it doubly important for the House to recognize the Holodomor as an act of genocide and to remember its victims. *Vichna im pamiat.*

* * *

JERUSALEM

Mr. Mark Adler (York Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday in Jerusalem, during the morning prayer service, five Israelis were killed and eight others were injured, including a Canadian dual citizen, in a brazen terrorist attack at a synagogue in Jerusalem. According to witnesses, the terrorists attacked the synagogue with knives, meat cleavers, and guns, and attacked worshippers. The attackers were subsequently killed in a shootout with police. The terrorists were identified as members of the Popular Front for Liberation of Palestine.

This incident is the latest in a series of terrorist attacks perpetrated against Israelis in recent weeks. Cars have been used as weapons, and some people have been stabbed on street corners. In total, six people have been murdered in these cowardly attacks in Israel.

Canada has condemned these terrorist acts in the strongest possible terms. As our Minister of Foreign Affairs stated:

Attacks on innocent worshippers, in what is supposed to be a place of peace and tranquility, are cowardly and must never be tolerated.

On behalf of all Canadians, our government offers our deepest, heartfelt condolences to the families and friends of the victims. Let me be clear. Canada stands with the people of Israel.

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● (1410)

PANCREATIC CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remind the House that November is Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month. I want all of us to applaud the important ongoing work done by the National Pancreatic Cancer Canada Foundation in raising public awareness and in supporting vital research efforts to end the scourge of Canada's most lethal of cancers.

Pancreatic cancer claims 4,300 Canadian lives every year. Sadly, its mortality rate is three out of four, with a five-year survival rate of only 6%. In spite of these tragic statistics, pancreatic cancer research receives less than 1% of all cancer research dollars.

One of the truly devastating aspects of this disease is that fewer than 15% of patients are diagnosed early enough to save lives. We need to tell all Canadians, especially our families and friends, that early detection saves lives.

I urge all members to support the good work of the foundation by raising awareness in their ridings. We can become advocates for more significant and sustained government investment in research to find an early detection test and more effective treatment methodologies.

* * *

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS 2014

Hon. Ron Cannan (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, local governments across the province of B.C. held elections this past weekend. I would like to thank all individuals who put their names forward to run for public office.

In Lake Country, congratulations to Mayor James Baker on his re-election and to his new council. In the city of Kelowna, congratulations to new Mayor Colin Basran and the four incumbent and four new councillors. I look forward to working with all of them to make the communities of Kelowna and Lake Country safer, better, and stronger places for all.

I say a special thanks to Sharon Shepherd, Gerry Zimmerman, Andre Blanleil, and Robert Hobson for their years of service.

Statements by Members

Last, but not least, I wish to pay special tribute to retiring mayor Walter Gray, a two-term councillor and a four-term mayor of Kelowna. He is a true believer in co-operation and partnership. His infectious energy and enthusiasm and great sense of humour brought people together and brought out the best in all of us. He saw the great potential in our city and the value in investing in its future, and he never failed to give credit to his staff and council for a job well done. May he now find the time to enjoy his number one priority: his family. I wish him and his wonderful wife, Doreen, and of course his dog, Snowball, nothing but the best. Enjoy the journey ahead, my friend. God bless.

* * *

ALS ICE BUCKET CHALLENGE

Ms. Eve Adams (Mississauga—Brampton South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, ALS is a deadly and degenerative disease. The summer of 2014 will be known as the summer of the ALS ice bucket challenge.

ALS societies across Canada are pleased to announce that the ice bucket challenge in Canada raised \$16.2 million, thanks to the generosity of more than a quarter of a million Canadians. This represents a record amount of ALS donations. ALS societies will invest \$10 million in research and \$6 million in programs to support those living with ALS.

I was pleased this morning to announce that through Brain Canada, we will be matching dollar for dollar the research partnership dollars, bringing the total amount invested in ALS research to \$20 million. On behalf of the Government of Canada, I would like to thank all Canadians who participated in the ice bucket challenge this year.

* * *

ALS ICE BUCKET CHALLENGE

Mr. Glenn Thibeault (Sudbury, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this summer, over 260,000 Canadians participated in the ALS Canada ice bucket challenge, raising an astonishing \$16 million. The icy plunge was taken by many politicians, including the leader of the NDP, while I had to endure a marathon ice water dumping to help raise funds that was supported by New Hot 93.5 in Sudbury.

However, ALS remains incurable. Around 3,000 Canadians live with the disease. Sadly, thousands will die of it, while thousands more will be diagnosed.

●(1415)

[Translation]

Initiatives such as this one have a clear impact on funding for research and treatment. Tens of thousands of Canadians participated, and that is the first step towards the ultimate goal of curing this disease.

[English]

On behalf of the NDP, thanks to all Canadian participants, and we applaud those at ALS Canada for raising awareness and money in hope of one day finding a cure.

TAXATION

Mr. Brad Butt (Mississauga—Streetsville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our new family tax cut will benefit every parent with children in Canada, including thousands of families in my riding of Mississauga—Streetsville. Our plan gives mom and dad up to \$2,000 per child and it benefits 100% of families with children.

The NDP's plan would only help 10% of families. The Liberals have even said that they would prioritize money in the hands of Ottawa bureaucrats, not Canadian families with children. Canadian parents will reject the Liberal Party's money grab.

After all, there are only two people who know what is best for their kids, and that is mom and dad. It is not the leader of the Liberal Party.

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*[Translation]***PAY EQUITY**

Ms. Laurin Liu (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a new Statistics Canada study confirms that we are still a long way from achieving pay equity. The study followed women who began working in 1991, and 20 years later, those women were earning between 36% and 48% less than men with similar levels of education.

For women with undergraduate degrees, that adds up to half a million dollars less in earnings during that period. This disturbing study reminds us that we do not yet live in a fair society.

I would therefore ask my colleagues to support the NDP bill to implement the recommendations of the pay equity task force. I should point out that these recommendations were made in 2004, but the Conservatives have let them gather dust. Enough is enough. It is time for action.

* * *

*[English]***TAXATION**

Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians know that the Liberal leader will raise taxes and make life more difficult for families. Whether through a job-killing carbon tax or clawing back our Conservative government's new tax breaks for families, the Liberal leader promises a high-tax, high-debt agenda.

Just yesterday, prospective Liberal candidate Bill Casey confirmed on CTV news that his new party will both raise taxes and cut programs. Voters will see past Casey's stunt to further his own political agenda.

Statements by Members

Indeed, the people of Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley know that a Liberal government would resurrect the wasteful and ineffective long gun registry, introduce a carbon tax that will raise the price on everything, and add more debt that will destabilize our economy.

Cumberland—Colchester—Musquodoboit Valley can count on our Conservative member of Parliament and this Prime Minister to lower taxes, protect law-abiding hunters, and stand up for all Canadian families.

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ALS ICE BUCKET CHALLENGE

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every day, more than three Canadians will die from amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, more commonly known as ALS or Lou Gherig's disease.

Many of its victims are in the prime of their life, such as Bill Corbett, the former Clerk of the House, and my former chief of staff, Richard Wackid, from the Liberal whip's office. We miss them dearly, as do many Canadians whose loved ones have succumbed to this disease.

Today, ALS Canada is in Ottawa to announce the result of the ice bucket challenge fundraiser in support of research.

We have seen television personalities, politicians, athletes, and many other Canadians take up the challenge, including my own leader, the member for Papineau, who was very helpful in dumping a bucket of water over my head and my colleague's head, the member for Charlottetown.

I know many MPs in this House have also had water dumped over their heads to raise awareness and funds to fight this disease.

On behalf of my Liberal colleagues, and indeed all of us in the House, I congratulate ALS Canada for a job well done, and Mr. Speaker, I congratulate you for hosting this dedicated group of Canadians today.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Bob Dechert (Mississauga—Erindale, CPC): Mr. Speaker, did you know that our Conservative government has cut taxes not once, not twice, but a whopping 180 times? We are now in a position to deliver even further tax relief to Canadian families.

Thanks to our family tax cut, every family with children in Canada will stand to benefit. That includes the increase and expansion of the enhanced universal child care benefit to nearly \$2,000 per year for every child under six and \$720 per year for every child between 6 and 17, as well as the family tax cut.

The vast majority of benefits will flow to low- and middle-income families.

While we are giving back relief directly to families, the Liberals want to take that money away.

Canadians can trust our Conservative government to lower their taxes. We will not hike taxes like the tax-and-spend Liberals.

● (1420)

CHILD CARE

Ms. Chris Charlton (Hamilton Mountain, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last night Canada's largest province endorsed the NDP's affordable child care plan.

We congratulate Andrea Horwath and the Ontario NDP for getting the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to endorse our plan to create affordable and accessible child care spaces at a cost of no more than \$15 a day.

Sadly, in the nine years since the Prime Minister first promised to create 125,000 child care spaces, the Conservatives not only broke that promise, but under their watch parents have also seen child care costs skyrocket. Meanwhile, the federal Liberals spent 13 years in government making and breaking promises on child care.

The leader of the NDP is ready to work with the provinces to make affordable, accessible child care a reality, because only the NDP believes it is time to give parents a break.

Affordable child care is just one election away.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Blake Richards (Wild Rose, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the House knows, our Conservative government recently fulfilled a promise to Canadian families by creating the family tax cut. Under this plan the average Canadian family will save \$1,200 per year.

However, it seems the Liberal candidate for Banff-Airdrie does not trust Canadian families to spend their own money properly. He believes that reducing taxes and allowing people to keep more of their own hard-earned money is some sort of handout.

Apparently, in his world, all money rightly belongs to the government, not to taxpayers. He goes on to complain that if people are allowed to make their own decisions about how to spend their own hard-earned money, they will waste it.

We all remember the previously insulting and condescending comments about "beer and popcorn" from the Liberals.

This clearly reflects the typical arrogant Liberal sentiment that Liberals know better than parents on how to raise their own children and that Ottawa bureaucrats know better than hard-working Canadian taxpayers how to spend their own hard-earned money.

Canadians have a message for the Liberals. They are to get their hands off their wallets and let them make their own decisions about how to raise their children.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

CHILD CARE

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Ontario provincial parliament voted overwhelmingly in favour of the NDP's plan for quality, affordable \$15-a-day child care.

What concrete action will the Prime Minister take to deliver on his solemn promise, made nine years ago, to parents in Ontario and across Canada to create 125,000 child care spaces?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think the other night in Ontario, some Ontarians voted pretty overwhelmingly against the NDP.

We have put forward, over the past nine years, plans to make life more affordable for all Canadian families. That has had a very good effect across the board.

We are continuing to move forward on that and we are pleased to see Canadians responding so positively.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Premier of Ontario has said that she would like to meet with the Prime Minister to discuss how the provinces and territories can work with the federal government to deliver child care spaces.

Will the Prime Minister meet with the Premier of Ontario to discuss child care?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have regular meetings with provinces and territories across the country, in fact some 300 since I have become Prime Minister.

We understand the province of Ontario has pretty significant challenges. In the approach we are taking at our level, we have been able to balance the budget by lowering taxes and providing benefits to families. That is what the people of Ontario need.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, what the Prime Minister promised was 125,000 child care spaces. He has delivered none.

• (1425)

[Translation]

Quebec has gone ahead, Manitoba has gone ahead, and now Ontario is ready to go ahead with a plan. This means that 65% of Canadians live in a province that is ready to work on creating affordable child care spaces.

When will the federal government do its part? When will the Prime Minister actually do something to keep the solemn promise he made to Canadians to deliver 125,000 child care spaces? He has not delivered any so far. When will he get to work?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the leader of the NDP is absolutely wrong. We promised and we have delivered benefits and tax cuts, putting more money in the pockets of taxpayers across Quebec and throughout Canada. The NDP wants to take those benefits away from Quebeckers. Our

Oral Questions

government will make sure that the money makes its way into the pockets of Quebeckers.

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[English]

HEALTH

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister made another specific formal promise during the 2011 election campaign. He stated:

We are planning on a 6% ongoing increase for health transfers. We have been very consistent on this.

Contrary to his promise, he is reducing it from 6% to 3%.

Why has the Prime Minister broken his promise to Canadians? They want to know.

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this government is transferring record amounts of money to the provinces for health care. Those 6% increases are continuing exactly as scheduled.

In the future, they will continue to increase by a minimum of 3%. Frankly, most years they will be much more than that. This government's record is unparalleled when it comes to supporting our health care system.

[Translation]

Hon. Thomas Mulcair (Leader of the Opposition, NDP): Mr. Speaker, he cannot deny what he said. During the last election campaign, he promised to keep the increase at 6%, and he broke that promise too. In fact, just after the election, true to form, he unilaterally announced, without discussion or debate, up to \$36 billion in cuts to health transfers in Canada.

Now that the Prime Minister claims to have a budgetary surplus, why not use it first and foremost to avoid making cuts to our free, public health insurance? Does he want to go back to the days when the size of parents' paycheques determined whether a sick child was seen by a doctor?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government's record is clear. It is quite different from that of the previous Liberal government, supported by the NDP, which cut transfers to the provincial health care systems.

On the contrary, we have increased these transfers every year, and they will continue to increase in the future.

Our record is unparalleled and quite different from that of the party across the way.

* * *

[English]

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last night the government said that it would vote against transparency, citing the administrative burden. The transparency act would actually cut red tape and simplify the process. It would ensure that government information would be available faster, in a less costly way, and in digital, not paper, formats.

Oral Questions

Why does the Prime Minister oppose the modernization of our access to information system?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it was this government that modernized the system by bringing some 70 agencies and organizations under access to information that were previously not under it, something opposed by the Liberal Party. The Liberal Party not only opposed that Accountability Act, it opposed union transparency and it opposed transparency for people living on first nations reserves.

We have nothing to learn on transparency from the Liberals.

* * *

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government promised Canadian municipalities that the Building Canada infrastructure fund projects would begin in time for the 2014 summer construction season. That promise was broken, and the fund had its funding cut by 90%.

Why borrow money for income-splitting tax breaks for the rich, but not invest in job-creating infrastructure?

• (1430)

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the facts laid out in that question are completely wrong. The government announced in the last two budgets the largest infrastructure program in Canadian history, some \$70 billion over the next decade. The unfortunate reality is the Liberal Party voted against those infrastructure plans.

That is the difference. On this side we are investing in infrastructure. On the other hand, all the Liberals want is tax hikes to pay bureaucracy.

* * *

[Translation]

INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Mr. Justin Trudeau (Papineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over 1,300 people participated in the Je vois Montréal forum, where more than 200 projects to revitalize the city were presented.

Premier Couillard and Minister Poëti were in attendance, but this Conservative government once again failed to be there for Quebecers.

Can the Prime Minister tell us why his government refuses to keep an open mind about Montrealers' ideas?

Right Hon. Stephen Harper (Prime Minister, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was told that the Government of Canada was represented at that conference. What is more, we are always interested in hearing people's ideas, not only about Montreal but about all regions of Canada.

* * *

POVERTY

Ms. Nicole Turmel (Hull—Aylmer, NDP): Mr. Speaker, 25 years ago, on the initiative of Ed Broadbent, the Canadian government promised to put an end to child poverty by 2000.

Twenty-five years have passed, and both Liberal and Conservative governments have failed to meet that goal. In Canada, one in five children is living in poverty. We need to take immediate action here at home.

Rather than implementing tax policies that will benefit only the wealthy, will the government finally take practical measures to eliminate child poverty?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, obviously all Canadians and all parties want to continue to alleviate child poverty, and we hope to one day eliminate it.

However, there is good news. The low-income rate for children has declined significantly from a peak of over 18% under the Liberal government to 8.5% currently. That means that there are over 700,000 fewer children living in poverty.

Here is what UNICEF had to say on the subject:

If Canada is faring better than other western countries in this regard, it is due to measures that are favourable to families, like tax credits, fiscal measures and benefits that are maintained or put in place to counter the effects of [poverty].

[English]

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan (Scarborough—Rouge River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, 25 years ago the House unanimously adopted Ed Broadbent's motion to end child poverty in Canada by the year 2000, yet child poverty levels have remained tragically high. That is an entire generation of children who have needlessly grown up in poverty. One in five Canadian children lives in poverty today. There is no excuse for such a wealthy country like ours not to look after our most vulnerable members, our children.

Will the government commit to taking immediate action to eliminate poverty in Canada?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yes, we will. We have already done so.

While we all continue to hope for the elimination of child poverty one day, the NDP refuses to recognize that there has been progress made. In fact, the low-income rate for children has declined significantly from a peak of over 18% under the Liberal government to 8.5% currently, with over 700,000 fewer Canadian children living in low-income families.

This is in part because of the enormous benefits created by the government for low-income families, which led UNICEF recently to say that if Canada was faring better than other western countries in this regard, it was due to measures that were favourable to families, like tax credits, fiscal measures and benefits that were maintained or put in place to counter the effects of the global crisis.

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan (Scarborough—Rouge River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, giving a huge tax break to the wealthiest families, while completely ignoring the poorest families, is not an answer to poverty.

Oral Questions

That same UNICEF report is the one that is saying that one in five Canadian children lives in poverty today. Those children deserve better. Poverty impacts their ability to learn, to develop, to be healthy, to be fully integrated in their communities, and they need real action.

Will the government support NDP Motion No. 534 to create a national plan to eliminate child poverty?

• (1435)

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yes, we will. However, unlike the NDP, we will take more than just rhetorical measures. We are taking real, concrete action. This is the government that cut the GST by two points while maintaining the low-income GST rebate at 7%, meaning a \$1.1 billion benefit for low-income families.

This is the government that has lifted a million low-income families off the tax rolls altogether. This is the government that introduced the universal child care benefit, which provides now and next year over \$1,900 for each family. That means a single mom with two kids under the age of six will be receiving \$3,800 in cash benefit that the NDP would take away.

* * *

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday the chair of the Social Security Tribunal confirmed that there are significant delays in the processing of cases: 14,677 cases are languishing on her desk.

At this rate it will take 11 years to clear the backlog just for the income security section. That is shameful. For over a year, Ms. Brazeau has been in regular contact with the minister about the lack of staff at the tribunal, but the minister is asleep at the switch.

How can the minister allow such an administrative nightmare?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, thanks to my department's efficiency, we have seen a 90% decrease in employment insurance appeals. That means that almost 90% of cases are handled by public servants, without appeal. The service is quicker.

In the case of Quebeckers, the Government of Quebec has its own appeal process for benefits paid by the Quebec pension plan, which does not fall under the Social Security Tribunal.

[English]

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the chair of the Social Security Tribunal told the human resources committee that she had been in continuous contact with the minister regarding the backlog, yet for 18 months now, that backlog has continued to grow, while the tribunal has been understaffed and working without performance standards. More than 14,600 Canadians are now waiting for a hearing.

Why did the minister not take action sooner to address the enormous mess at the Social Security Tribunal?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, again, in fact our ministry did take action by introducing a new approach toward reconsideration of EI refusals. That now happens quickly, by a public servant who, remarkably, actually picks up a phone and calls the person who has asked for a reconsideration, and sorts it out, often getting additional documentation.

This means that we are now resolving about 90% of those refusals at a reconsideration stage in a matter of weeks, without having to go through a lengthy multi-month quasi-judicial process.

In terms of the CPP cases before the tribunal, we are adding additional decision-makers and taking other administrative measures to speed up the process.

Mr. Mike Sullivan (York South—Weston, NDP): Mr. Speaker, behind every one of those numbers is a person who needs to put food on the table and pay the bills.

People cannot wait years for the government to get its act together. Nearly 10,000 Canadians still waiting for an appeal are living with a disability. In many cases the uncertainty and stress of financial insecurity makes their medical conditions worse.

Will the minister commit to eliminate the backlog and finally give these Canadians the justice they need and deserve?

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Yes, I will, Mr. Speaker. That is, in part, why we have legislation before the House in the budget implementation act, which we hope the NDP will support. This would allow us to hire up to an additional 22 decision-makers at the tribunal.

I am very pleased to highlight that the faster informal reconsideration process for refused EI applications means a 90% reduction in the caseload for EI, meaning we can reallocate those decision-makers over to the income security division. This means we will get at that backlog of cases so we can provide the kind of service that Canadians expect and deserve.

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[Translation]

HOUSING

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this week about 100 municipal officials with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities are in Ottawa to remind the government that a strong Canada is built on strong communities. They are calling for significant investment to deal with the housing crisis in Canada. There are more than 1.5 million families living in inadequate housing in Canada. That is unacceptable. Will the Conservatives finally listen to the NDP and our municipal officials and protect federal investments in social housing?

Oral Questions

●(1440)

[English]

Hon. Candice Bergen (Minister of State (Social Development), CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have been working together with the provinces and the municipalities. We have made unprecedented investments in housing. In fact, our investments have helped over one million families and individuals with affordable housing.

As well, we have our homelessness partnering strategy, with the focus on Housing First, so we can help people who are chronically and episodically homeless, actually solving the problem, working together with our partners in cities, municipalities, and the provinces.

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INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, representatives of municipalities from across Canada are in Ottawa today, calling on the Conservatives to stop ignoring the infrastructure deficit.

Decades of downloading and underfunding have left our cities struggling, with crumbling roads and bridges, inadequate water supplies, and an affordable housing crisis. The New Democrats are ready to work as partners with municipalities and provide the support they need to build livable communities for Canadians.

When will Conservatives stop shortchanging our cities and commit to investing, now, in infrastructure and affordable housing?

[Translation]

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, never in the history of this country has a government supported municipalities as much as we have. I realize that my colleagues do not like this, because they always vote against infrastructure plans. We are providing \$70 billion over the next 10 years. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities has been involved in this process from the beginning. We will continue to work with the federation.

[English]

Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP): Mr. Speaker, despite their claims, the Conservatives do not support the Ring of Fire. Their actions speak louder than their words.

The minister has flatly refused to invest in the infrastructure required to unlock the jobs and economic potential of our region, saying that we must fight for scraps of a fund the Conservatives already slashed by billions of dollars.

Why do the Conservatives continue to nickel-and-dime northern Ontarians and play the blame game with the province?

Where is the federal leadership this project so badly needs?

Hon. Greg Rickford (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC): It is right here, Mr. Speaker. We met with Mattawa communities just a couple of days ago. We remain very optimistic that once the province has submitted its list of priorities

for infrastructure projects, which should include infrastructure projects to support the Ring of Fire, we will be there.

Mr. Adam Vaughan (Trinity—Spadina, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a bridge collapses in Montreal, and the government offers a tax break. Public housing built in Toronto by the federal government starts to fall apart, and it cuts the program. In Calgary, the city gets flooded, roads are washed away, and the government says, “Wait until the budget is balanced before we help.” Vancouver needs transit, Halifax needs a water system, Iqaluit needs housing, and the list is getting longer and longer.

When will the government finally answer the calls of cities and towns across the country? When will it fund the programs now? When will it deliver the money now? Why will it not stand up for Canada's cities and towns?

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, I remember the years I was mayor. We had no money from the Liberal government.

Under the leadership of the Prime Minister, we have tripled the investment in infrastructure. We will continue to do so.

Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the western premiers have called on the federal government to be a partner in building the critical infrastructure they need for getting their products to markets. The government is spending billions on extra tax breaks for the rich by way of income splitting, but refuses to invest in the roads, rail, and bridges that will make our export markets stronger and help all Canadians and the economy.

Do the Conservatives not realize that their 90% cut to the Building Canada fund will have a devastating effect out west?

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, the preamble to this question is totally false. On the gas tax fund, all municipalities in the country already have the money available, which was announced all across the country, and municipalities know it. We will continue to support the development of our economy in supporting the development of infrastructure all across the country in core support and to help the economy of this country.

•(1445)

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, here is what is at stake for Canada in the Ring of Fire: 5,500 jobs; \$25 billion in economic activity for our financial services, wholesale, retail, utilities, infrastructure, and manufacturing sectors; full participation of first nation communities. Ontario has brought \$1 billion to the table. An independent development corporation has been set up. Corporate investors are on standby.

Time is of the essence. Will the Prime Minister meet with Ontario's premier by the end of this year, do his job, and support this project of national significance?

Hon. Greg Rickford (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Ontario has not committed a red cent and has set up a development corporation that is not supported by first nation communities the private sector, and it is not a policy option for this government in its current form. We have made significant investments in the Ring of Fire and will continue to demonstrate our commitment by working with first nation communities and the provincial government should it identify the Ring of Fire as an actual priority.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Robert Chisholm (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NDP): Mr. Speaker, because of Conservative mismanagement, our navy now faces a seven-year period with no resupply capacity. The minister's original plan has clearly fallen through. His promises that the navy's capabilities would be unaffected are in doubt. The minister will soon have before him a number of options to deal with this service gap. Could he share with us how much the Conservative government's mismanagement will cost Canadians?

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will share this with the hon. member. Every cent that we have committed to the military and to the navy has been opposed by the NDP, which the member would of course know, but our national shipbuilding project represents a \$36.6 billion investment that will contribute to our surface fleet for decades. The joint supply ships will replace the navy's current *Protecteur*-class vessels and, of course, we are considering options that will ensure that our navy can be resupplied in the medium term.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Éline Michaud (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are incapable of following through on their military procurement plan. It is failure after failure.

As a result of the Conservatives' mismanagement, the Canadian navy now faces a seven-year period with no re-supply capacity. The new ships will not arrive until 2021.

How much will the government's failure to renew its supply capacity on time cost Canadians?

[*English*]

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to be clear again. Every cent that has ever been

Oral Questions

committed to our military has consistently been opposed by the NDP. They do not want us to spend anything on our armed forces and our navy. We have undergone the *Halifax* class modernization program to give our frigates new equipment, sensors, and weapons. These will have world-class, multi-role capabilities. The program is on track, on schedule, and we are considering options that will ensure that our ships are resupplied in the medium term.

* * *

[*Translation*]

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Sylvain Chicoine (Châteauguay—Saint-Constant, NDP): Mr. Speaker, for the first time in months, the Minister of Veterans Affairs will be going to Quebec City to meet with groups of former soldiers.

However, those who have criticized the new veterans charter will be excluded from the discussions. Furthermore, not a single disabled veteran is expected to attend this meeting.

Does the Minister of Veterans Affairs realize that so many veterans are angry and are boycotting his photo ops because of his failure to listen and his belligerent behaviour?

[*English*]

Mr. Parm Gill (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this week we look forward to meeting with representatives from Canada's major veterans' groups. Our government is proud to say that we have had the privilege of meeting with thousands of veterans, including the very people mentioned by the member opposite.

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to publicly thank the Department of Veterans Affairs for tweaking the benefit package of the late Corporal Nathan Cirillo so that his family will receive all of the benefits of a regular force person, as he was a reservist. The problem is that many other reservists who become injured or die in the line of duty will not get the same benefits as those of a regular force person who is injured or dies in the line of service. The major veterans' groups, all veterans' advocacy groups, the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs, and the ombudsman have asked repeatedly that reservists who are injured or die in the line of duty get the same benefits as regular force members.

When will the government honour those recommendations and do the right thing for the reservists of our country?

Oral Questions

•(1450)

Mr. Parm Gill (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government has directed Veterans Affairs and National Defence officials to provide the complete benefits and programs available to regular force members to the dependent family members of those two remarkable Canadian veterans.

Our government is working to fix the discrepancy for the other reservists killed in the line of duty as well.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mrs. Stella Ambler (Mississauga South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada continues to make a significant contribution to the coalition campaign against ISIL. I understand that our planes have flown at least 80 sorties and, along with our coalition allies, have significantly degraded the military capacity of this terrorist group.

Can the Minister of National Defence please update the House as to the latest activities of the Canadian Armed Forces as a part of Operation Impact?

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in addition to Monday's successful air strike on a warehouse being used to manufacture improvised explosives, late last night two CF-18 Hornets, in a pre-planned mission, dropped four 2,000-pound bombs on an ISIL fighting position in the desert near Kirkuk, Iraq. These significant strikes have denied the enemy the use of this position and has further extended the security buffer between ISIL and Iraqi security forces.

As always, I congratulate the members of our armed forces for another successful mission. Needless to say, Canada will continue to do its part in the fight against terrorism.

* * *

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative government's attack on the Access to Information Act continues. First it denied the Information Commissioner the order-making tools she requires to keep the government honest. Now it is cutting the resources she needs to handle investigations. Her budget has been cut by 9%, while complaints against government obstruction are up a whopping 31% just this year. She has said that without adequate funding, she will not be able to do her job. Maybe that is what the minister wants. Could he clarify if he is going to continue undermining her work or going to give her the resources she needs so that she can keep the government on the straight and narrow?

Mr. Dan Albas (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the independent commissioners of Parliament are responsible for managing the funds in their offices, and we expect this to be done in a way that is fair to the taxpayer. If agents of Parliament believe they need extra funding, they should respect the process and make a formal request through a Treasury Board submission. The Treasury Board gives fair consideration to all submissions for additional funding in the supplementary estimates. Currently, the President of the Treasury

Board has not received a formal request for additional funds from the Information Commissioner.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives cut the budget of the Information Commissioner as a way of muzzling her. As of last year she had already spent 99.8% of her budget, and there are more and more requests. They are piling up.

The Conservatives probably like hiding the truth, but the public has a right to obtain information without having to wait an eternity.

Will the minister keep his word and respect the wishes of Parliament? Will he stop stifling the Office of the Information Commissioner of Canada and will he give the office the tools it needs to serve the public?

Mr. Dan Albas (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, CPC): Mr. Speaker, commissioners are independent of Parliament and are responsible for managing their own offices' budgets. We expect them to do so in a way that is fair to taxpayers. If parliamentary agencies feel that they need more money, they should respect the process and make a formal request to the Treasury Board.

[*English*]

The Treasury Board gives fair consideration to all submissions for additional funding in the supplementary estimates, and currently the President of the Treasury Board has not received a formal request for additional funds for the Information Commissioner.

The government will not negotiate a request—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Saint-Lambert.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mrs. Sadia Groguhé (Saint-Lambert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, some 100 social groups are condemning the Conservatives' underhanded attack on refugee protection claimants.

Denying refugees social assistance based on their immigration status is like denying a lifeline to the most vulnerable members of our society. That is particularly true for those who do not immediately obtain a work visa.

Is the minister not ashamed of using a budget bill to backstab the most vulnerable members of our society?

•(1455)

Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, no, we are not ashamed of exercising our responsibility to taxpayers, of providing quality health care to refugees, and of appealing the court's ruling. That ruling means that people whose refugee protection claims have been found to be fraudulent could receive better health care than Canadians receive. That would be irresponsible, and this government will continue to protect refugees and taxpayers.

Oral Questions

[English]

Mr. Andrew Cash (Davenport, NDP): Mr. Speaker, talk about responsibility. The UN has called the flood of refugees in Syria “a mega crisis”. Just to put it in perspective, if Canada were Syria, it would mean that the entire population of Toronto right now was internally displaced.

The minister was told by his own department that Canada could accept thousands more Syrian refugees. Instead, the minister has accepted just 200. His inaction is inexplicable. It is unacceptable.

Canada should and could be saving lives right now. Why is the minister not acting?

Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Franz Kafka rides again. He has clearly taken out a membership card in the NDP.

Today, the number of Syrian refugees that have arrived in this country has risen to 1,857. We have surpassed our commitment to government-assisted refugees and we have met our commitment to bring 20,000 Iraqis to this country more than a year in advance. That is all good news for refugees. That is something Canadians can be proud of.

In a crisis where there are millions of internally displaced, millions of refugees fleeing terrorist violence, the NDP needs to explain why it is not prepared to do a single thing to face up to ISIS and other terrorist groups.

* * *

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Ms. Judy Foote (Random—Burin—St. George's, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the small craft harbours program has seen drastic cuts in recent budgets, but the latest action by DFO brings into question the very existence of the program.

Without consultation, DFO is cutting by half the number of area managers in Newfoundland and Labrador, leaving eight people in total responsible for 335 harbours and 205 harbour authorities. Volunteers run harbour authorities. They apply for funding to fix aging federal infrastructure and should receive a timely response.

Why is the government willing to risk the safety of those who earn a living at sea?

Hon. Gail Shea (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our government recognizes the important role that small craft harbours play in many coastal communities. We do recognize the valuable role that small craft harbour volunteers play in their communities and we thank them for that.

In recent years we have made unprecedented investments in small craft harbours across this country. In fact, we are investing in Newfoundland and Labrador alone this year over \$30 million in small craft harbours.

The region has proposed making some organizational changes to its area office, which will see less being spent on administration and more being spent on actual harbours.

[Translation]

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Richibucto harbour, on Principale Street, is in serious need of repairs and a long-term plan.

At the request of the mayor, Roger Doiron, who is in Ottawa today, I have often asked the minister for funding and a long-term plan. I recently met with Cyril Polchies, a Mi'kmaq fisherman with the harbour authority, who also reiterated how important this harbour is to the community.

When will the minister finally take action to help the people of Richibucto and repair the harbour on Main Street?

[English]

Hon. Gail Shea (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I cannot speak specifically to the plans for Richibucto, but I want to be clear that we have made unprecedented investments in the small craft harbours program. We have increased the base budget by \$10 million and we have invested an additional \$40 million over the last two years alone.

We are committed to working with the harbour authority associations and the volunteers, because I believe that they play a big role in their communities.

Those increased investments have allowed us to invest half a million dollars in dredging in the riding of Beauséjour alone.

* * *

● (1500)

[Translation]

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. Jamie Nicholls (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canada's and Ontario's official languages commissioners say that francophone minority communities are not reaping the benefits of francophone immigration. Barely 2% of francophone newcomers settle outside of Quebec.

Will the minister implement the commissioners' recommendations to ensure that our francophone minority communities reap the benefits of welcoming francophone newcomers?

Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is something we work on every day. Last week, I met with the Commissioner of Official Languages for New Brunswick. The goal is for 4.4% of immigration outside Quebec to be francophone by 2018. We are making progress. As part of the new immigration system, express entry, we want to mobilize all of our francophone immigration networks and all employers across Canada to get thousands of francophone immigrants in all of our provinces and territories.

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we need tools to support francophone immigration to minority communities. The Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada wants the express entry program to include a francophone component. We need to speed up processing of applications from francophones who want to settle in communities where French is the minority language.

Oral Questions

Will the minister implement the recommendations of the Commissioner of Official Languages and the FCFA's proposal or not?

Hon. Chris Alexander (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our immigration system does not just have a francophone component. All immigration to Canada is francophone and anglophone. We are proud to welcome francophones to communities across the country. Actually, 30% of Yukon's population is now francophone. We offer services to new immigrants across Canada. We have made a lot of progress on that, and we have worked closely with the ACFA.

We are proud of the francophone immigration networks we have across Canada thanks to the roadmap.

* * *

[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. John Carmichael (Don Valley West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the terrorist group ISIL has largely funded its military activities by refining and selling crude oil on the black market. ISIL has profited by millions of dollars every day in this way.

Yesterday the U.S. State Department confirmed that air strikes have eliminated much of ISIL's oil refining capacity and have clearly reduced its revenue. This is clear evidence that despite what the NDP and Liberals have said, air strikes are reducing the capacity of ISIL to continue committing mass atrocities.

Can the Minister of National Defence please update the House on the efforts our armed forces are making in the fight against these extremists?

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Minister of National Defence, CPC): Mr. Speaker, illicit oil sales are a substantial source of revenue for ISIL. That is why we are pleased to hear that the United States State Department said that at least 22 of ISIL's refineries have been destroyed. This means that since the air campaign began, ISIL's refining capacity has been reduced by at least 11,000 barrels a day.

Let there be no doubt that air strikes have significantly diminished the capacity of ISIL to fund its military operations. The RCAF has now conducted over 80 sorties during Operation Impact. As always, Canada will continue to do its part in fighting tyranny and oppression.

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[Translation]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we have already said, Bill C-10 is an ineffective, ideological grab bag that will simply inflate prison costs and prison populations, especially in provincial prisons, despite falling crime rates. A study conducted by *Le Devoir* confirms it: in two years, the prison population rose by 10% in Saskatchewan, 11% in Quebec and 18% in Manitoba.

Will the federal government compensate the provinces, which should not have to pay for the Conservatives' bad decisions, and will

it remove the ridiculous six-month minimum sentence for possession of marijuana?

[English]

Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the member knows, I am sure, there is shared jurisdiction with respect to prisons, but let us be frank: it was our government that took the necessary steps to respond to the outcry from the public that we were hearing over very serious offences, including violent sexual offences. That resulted in some mandatory minimum penalties.

I remind the member opposite that contrary to the public view, his leader and his party have pledged to do away with mandatory minimum sentences when it comes to some serious offences, such as distribution of date rape drugs and child pornography.

* * *

• (1505)

HEALTH

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusksing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the mobile ultrasound program has dramatically improved maternal health outcomes for the Nishnawbe Aski Nation in northwestern Ontario. The current sonographer will retire soon. Any replacement will cost hundreds of pounds of equipment to 16 remote communities. This rules out many qualified women.

One option is to equip these communities with cart-based scanners at a one-time cost of \$15,000 each. Another option spends hundreds of thousands of dollars bringing people to a central location for scans. Will the Minister of Health decide to save money and buy the scanners?

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister of Health, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the member knows, we invest very heavily in aboriginal health on first nations, but also specifically in the area of maternal health. I am happy to look into her specific issue and get back to her.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Chris Warkentin (Peace River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it was not long ago that Liberals were attacking the idea of providing support for families, saying that parents would simply spend the money on "beer and popcorn." The candidate for Banff—Airdrie has shown that Liberals have not changed their ways. He recently said that tax cuts are a bad idea because Canadians will spend the money on the wrong things.

Can the Minister of Employment and Social Development update the House on the meaningful tax cuts that this government is providing hard-working Canadian families?

Routine Proceedings

Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Employment and Social Development and Minister for Multiculturalism, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was disturbed but not surprised to hear the Liberal candidate in Banff say that he was opposed to tax cuts for families because it is “handing people money for what? Arguably nothing.” That is an echo of the Liberals saying that parents would spend money on “beer and popcorn”.

We believe that parents of kids will invest in their children, not in “beer and popcorn”, not in nothing. This is why the Liberals were opposed to the GST cut, it is why they want to take back the choice in child care benefit, it is why they want to eliminate the family tax cut. It is because they think Liberals know how to spend money better than families. We—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Terrebonne—Blainville.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CANADA POST

Ms. Charmaine Borg (Terrebonne—Blainville, NDP): Mr. Speaker, pretty soon the people of Blainville will be the ones to lose their home mail delivery service. I have held public consultations on the matter and I know for a fact that the people of my riding will not accept this loss.

Furthermore, now private companies are offering to take over home mail delivery from Canada Post for \$30 a month. It makes no sense.

Did the Conservatives put an end to home mail delivery as part of a scheme to privatize Canada Post?

[*English*]

Mr. Jeff Watson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is nonsense. Canada Post, in its five-point action plan, in order to turn around its finances, has not proposed privatization. Instead, it proposed a number of other measures, but it is only that party opposite that seems to suggest there is no crisis at Canada Post and therefore no need for action by Canada Post. We disagree. It has its five-point plan and it will carry that out.

* * *

[*Translation*]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. André Bellavance (Richmond—Arthabaska, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, after stopping in Victoriaville, the president of the Union des municipalités du Québec will be continuing his tour today in the Centre-du-Québec region.

One of the concerns of the UMQ is TransCanada's energy east pipeline project and the impact it will have on safety, environmental protection and land use.

Today the UMQ discovered that the techniques used and the route that TransCanada proposed to the National Energy Board were not up to date and did not reflect the negotiations that took place between the municipalities and the company.

Can the Minister of Natural Resources guarantee that TransCanada will have to provide all the proper documentation so the National Energy Board can do its job?

[*English*]

Hon. Greg Rickford (Minister of Natural Resources and Minister for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the proponent's communication strategy does not play a role in our decision-making process. The project will undergo a rigorous science- and fact-based review to determine if it is safe for Canadians, safe for communities, and safe for the environment. We have been clear that projects will only proceed if they are safe for Canadians and safe for the environment.

* * *

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I would like to draw to the attention of hon. members the presence in the gallery of the Honourable Jackson Lafferty, Deputy Premier and Minister of Education, Culture and Employment of the Northwest Territories.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Deepak Obhrai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and for International Human Rights, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the treaties entitled “Exchange of Notes Between the Government of Canada and the Multinational Force and Observers Constituting an Agreement Further Amending the Agreement on the Participation of Canada in the Sinai Multinational Force and Observers”, done at Rome on November 12 and November 14, 2014, and “A Second Protocol to the Convention between New Zealand and Canada for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income”, done at Wellington on September 12, 2014.

An explanatory memorandum is included with each treaty.

* * *

● (1510)

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 54 petitions.

*Routine Proceedings***COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Orders 104 and 114, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 24th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding memberships of the committees of this House.

If the House gives its consent, I intend to move concurrence on the 24th report later today.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the following reports of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts: the 7th report, on Chapter 7—Oversight of Rail Safety—Transport Canada of the 2013 Fall Report of the Auditor General of Canada; the 8th report, on Chapter 8—Disaster Relief for Producers—Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada of the 2013 Fall Report of the Auditor General of Canada; the 9th report, on Chapter 1—Public Sector Pension Plans of the 2014 Spring Report of the Auditor General of Canada; and last, the 10th report, on Chapter 8—Meeting Needs for Key Statistical Data—Statistics Canada of the 2014 Spring Report of the Auditor General of Canada.

Pursuant to Standing Order 109 of the House of Commons, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response for all of these reports.

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I move:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, the 24th Report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs presented earlier today be concurred in; that there be no further proceedings in relation to the 18th Report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs; and accordingly, that notices of motions to concur in the 18th Report be dropped from the Order Paper.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND ASSOCIATION IN HONG KONG

Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, if you seek it you will find unanimous consent for the following motion.

I move:

That this House reiterates Canada's continued support for freedom of expression and association in Hong Kong, including the right to peaceful protest; affirms Canada's support for the democratic aspirations of Hong Kong residents for genuine universal suffrage in the election of political leaders; stands with the people of Hong Kong who aspire for democracy, peace and the protection of human rights; and calls on all sides to exercise restraint during demonstrations, fully respect existing agreements in respect to the "One Country, Two Systems" principle, and open a

meaningful and constructive dialogue to seek a mutually acceptable plan for electoral reform.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

• (1515)

PETITIONS

SEX SELECTION

Mr. Rod Bruinooge (Winnipeg South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition from my riding and citizens across Canada asking that the House of Commons condemn discrimination against females through gendercide.

This is an important petition. We have witnessed this reported in Canada by the CBC, and last year, Environics released a poll that indicated 92% of Canadians felt this practice of discriminating against girls should cease.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to table.

The first petition is from Albertans in support of the climate change accountability act. It is an act that calls on basing government policy on science and holding the government accountable for the actions it takes on reducing greenhouse gases.

IRAQ

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is from Albertans who call upon the Government of Canada to take action to support Christians in Iraq and include the provision of humanitarian aid in co-operation with other nations.

CANADIAN ARMED FORCES

Mr. Frank Valeriotte (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present this petition on behalf of some of the many Canadians who point out that not only does Canada have a social covenant with those who have served or are currently serving in the Canadian Armed Forces but that this sacred obligation has existed for as long as we have been willing to send Canadians into harm's way and must be honoured now and forever.

FIREARMS LEGISLATION

Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today to present a petition signed by hundreds of Canadians supporting our government's common sense firearms licensing act. These Canadians are proud that our government is standing up for hunters and law-abiding gun owners through these reasonable updates that would reduce red tape while keeping our communities safe.

The petitioners call upon the government to pass the common sense firearms licensing act.

SEED INDUSTRY

Mr. Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise in the House to present a petition from dozens of people from my community in Nickel Belt.

The petitioners wish to bring to the attention of the House of Commons the fact that multinational seed companies are threatening the ability of small family farmers to produce the food required to feed their families and their communities.

On November 12, I had a round table with about 40 farmers in Verner. These farmers are very concerned about the way the Conservative government is operating with these seed companies, and the petitioners want to prevent that.

SEMAHMOO BAY BEACH

Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am presenting a petition signed by literally hundreds of residents from White Rock, British Columbia.

The petitioners are concerned that, based on a notice from the federal government's Department of Transportation, the City of White Rock has shut down the public's open access to the beaches of Semiahmoo Bay without prior public consultation and notice.

They are concerned that this will increase the likelihood of risky behaviour such that people will try to cross the railway tracks to get to the beach. It will cause a significant drop in property value and a reduction in business patrons for the marine businesses, as well as other hardships.

Therefore, the petitioners call upon the government to direct the City of White Rock to stop further installation of planned fences and immediately consult with the local public, find mutually acceptable solutions, and then collaborate on sharing costs for the controlled crossings of these tracks.

ASBESTOS

Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to present a petition signed by literally tens of thousands of Canadians who call upon Parliament to take note that asbestos is the greatest industrial killer that the world has ever known. The petitioners point out that more Canadians now die from asbestos than all other industrial and occupational causes combined.

Therefore, the petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to ban asbestos in all of its forms and institute a just transition program for asbestos workers and the communities they live in, end all government subsidies of asbestos both in Canada and abroad, and stop blocking international health and safety conventions designed to protect workers from asbestos, such as the Rotterdam convention.

FALUN GONG

Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table a petition today on behalf of Canadians who are concerned about the cruel practice of forced organ harvesting by the Chinese regime on vulnerable prisoners, including Falun Gong practitioners.

Routine Proceedings

The petitioners call upon the government to take measures to stop the Chinese regime's crime of systematically engaging in forced harvesting of the organs of Falun Gong practitioners, to amend Canadian legislation to combat forced organ harvesting and to publicly call for an end to the persecution of Falun Gong in China.

Having introduced Bill C-561 to further restrict organ trafficking, I am pleased to stand in solidarity with these petitioners.

● (1520)

CANADA POST

Mr. Malcolm Allen (Welland, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions.

The first one is to reverse the cuts to Canada Post. Hundreds of petitioners are calling on the government to reverse those cuts and restore home delivery, as well as look at innovative ways to make Canada Post a viable corporation on a go-forward basis.

NATIONAL GARDEN DAY

Mr. Malcolm Allen (Welland, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition actually speaks to my private member's bill, which is to designate the Friday preceding Father's Day as National Garden Day.

Representing a part of the city of St. Catharines, which is also known across this great land of ours as the garden city, I ask what more appropriate thing could we do than actually celebrate the horticultural industry, but celebrate part of my riding at the same time, and designate that Friday as national garden day?

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, each year in Canada 10,000 people die from prescription drugs taken exactly as prescribed, and some 3.5 million Canadians have inadequate drug coverage or no coverage at all.

Petitioners call on the Government of Canada to establish a committee with the necessary authority, mandate, expertise, and funding to make recommendations to reduce the number of deaths by prescription drugs and to work with the provinces and territories to ensure all Canadians have a drug plan that covers the costs of prescription drugs and to expand catastrophic drug coverage for all Canadians.

[*Translation*]

CANADA POST

Mrs. Djaouida Sellah (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to present a petition from dozens of citizens from Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert who oppose the reduction of Canada Post services.

Canada will be the only G8 country that no longer has home delivery. Thousands of Canadians from across the country have mobilized against this. I support their petition.

Routine Proceedings

AGRICULTURE

Mrs. Djaouida Sellah (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform you that I have a second petition that I am pleased to present in the House.

The petition is calling on the government to respect the rights of small family farms to keep, share, and use their seeds. It was sent to me by Denise Brouillette, who has gathered over 100 signatures from the people of my riding, Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert.

[English]

CANADA POST

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36 I rise to table two petitions. The first is yet another petition regarding the devastating cuts to service and huge price increases at Canada Post.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am also pleased to table the second petition on behalf of many concerned citizens regarding the government's serious cuts to the interim federal health program, which has assisted refugees in Canada since the 1950s.

I look forward to the government's response to these petitions.

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition concerning the ship *Kathryn Spirit* that has over 1,000 signatures.

The *Kathryn Spirit* is an old wreck that has been languishing for over three years in Lac Saint-Louis, a tributary of the St. Lawrence River. The ship contains toxic substances and poses a threat to the environment and to people's health, since it is in a drinking water reservoir.

The petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to force the owner of the *Kathryn Spirit* to complete the work and leave before the seaway closes for the season; they have less than 30 days. Furthermore, it must ensure that the ship is safely towed out of Canadians waters, also before the seaway closes for the 2014 season.

[English]

THE ENVIRONMENT

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

The first is from residents of Ontario and Quebec who are noting what is now an increasingly loud and growing concern over the threat to pollinators posed by neonicotinoid insecticides. They are calling on the government to take action to remove the use of these pesticides.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is from residents of the greater Vancouver area as well as Victoria. They are calling for a permanent legislated tanker ban to ensure that crude oil tankers do not pass up and down the coast of British Columbia.

DEMENTIA

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise in the House with petitions from people across the country who are pushing for the House of Commons to support Bill C-356, put forward by my colleague, the member for Nickel Belt, regarding the need for a national dementia strategy.

As we deal with an aging population, issues of Alzheimer's and dementia can have very profound and dramatic effects, not just on the person suffering it but the families and loved ones as well. There needs to be a better system in place. We need to work with the provinces and have a national discussion on the issue of dementia and Alzheimer's.

Petitioners are hoping Parliament will take this matter seriously and support this New Democratic Party bill.

• (1525)

FALUN GONG

Mr. Brent Rathgeber (Edmonton—St. Albert, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour of tabling a petition signed by over 3,500 residents of Edmonton—St. Albert calling on this House to pass a resolution condemning the Chinese Communist party's crime of systematically murdering Falun Gong practitioners for their organs and to amend Canadian laws to legislate against forced organ harvesting.

It is my pleasure to table this petition, and I look forward to the government's response.

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week I had a group of caring constituents come to my office with some petitions.

The petitioners are calling on the government to look at the consideration of adopting international aid policies that would support small family farmers, especially women, and recognize their vital role in the struggle against hunger and poverty.

* * *

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if Questions Nos. 738 to 741 could be made orders for returns, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 738—**Mr. Dennis Bevington :**

With regard to the government's support for the development and use of renewable energy for each year between 2006 and 2014 inclusive, what were the government's expenditures, broken down by (i) province and territory, (ii) department or agency, (iii) program?

(Return tabled)

Government Orders

Question No. 739—**Mr. Dennis Bevington** :

With regard to the Prime Minister's trip to Northern Canada in August 2014: what are the details concerning the costs of this trip, including those costs of federal personnel already on the ground in Northern Canada tasked with support, broken down by (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) department or agency?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 740—**Ms. Kirsty Duncan**:

With respect to Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada's initiative entitled "21st Century Consular Plan: Canadian Consular Services — A Modern Approach 2014": (a) what are the names, positions, organizations or affiliations of all the stakeholders consulted during the creation of this plan; (b) what submissions, proposals or recommendations were made by stakeholders during the consultation process; (c) what are the dates, times and locations of the meetings with those individuals or organizations consulted during the creation of this plan; (d) what is the total of all government expenditures arising from the consultation process related to the plan, including, but not limited to, (i) travel expenses, including transportation, accommodation, rental of meeting spaces or equipment, food, and other travel-related expenses, (ii) staff time costs, including any overtime pay incurred, (iii) any services or other support procured from consultants or other contractors, (iv) other relevant expenses incurred, broken down by related details; (e) what are the titles and file names of all reports, emails and briefing notes prepared in relation to the development and consultation process involved in finalizing the creation of the plan; (f) how many requests for consular services have been classified as "complex", noting whether or not they were resolved from fiscal year 2006-2007 to 2013-2014; (g) what are the details respecting the Vulnerable Children's Consular Unit, as they relate to (i) the budget of this unit for fiscal years 2012-2013 and 2013-2014, (ii) the number of full-time equivalent employees employed in this unit, for fiscal years 2012-2013 and 2013-2014, (iii) the titles and file names of all reports and briefing notes prepared by this unit for the last fiscal year; (h) what partnerships and technologies are currently being discussed in relation to modernizing the approach for outreach of this plan; (i) what methods have been employed to increase "the scope of public awareness campaigns" to make Canadians more aware of important travel tips; and (j) how much funding has been allocated to the deployment of this proposal for fiscal year 2014-2015?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 741—**Ms. Françoise Boivin**:

With regard to the distribution of government jobs within departments and agencies in the National Capital Region (NCR): (a) how many jobs were located in the Quebec part of the NCR in 2014; (b) how many jobs were located in the Ontario part of the NCR in 2014; (c) how many jobs in the Quebec part of the NCR will be eliminated as a result of the cuts introduced in the last budget; and (d) how many jobs in the Ontario part of the NCR will be eliminated as a result of the cuts introduced in the last budget?

(Return tabled)

[English]

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

The Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

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

The Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

AGRICULTURAL GROWTH ACT

BILL C-18—TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Peter Van Loan (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I move:

That in relation to Bill C-18, An Act to amend certain Acts relating to agriculture and agri-food, not more than one further sitting day shall be allotted to the consideration of the report stage and one sitting day shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the said bill; and

That fifteen minutes before the expiry of the time provided for government business on the day allotted to the consideration of the report stage and on the day allotted to the third reading stage of the said bill, any proceedings before the House shall be interrupted, if required for the purpose of this Order, and in turn every question necessary for the disposal of the stage of the bill then under consideration shall be put forthwith and successively without further debate or amendment.

The Speaker: We will now have a 30-minute question period.

The hon. member for Burnaby—New Westminster.

[Translation]

Mr. Peter Julian (Burnaby—New Westminster, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness that I rise today in the House because of this government's sorry record. This is the 82nd time that it has imposed a time allocation motion and closure on a government bill before the House.

This sorry record is unprecedented in the history of Canada. We have never seen a government axe debate in the House so quickly before. Only a handful of people get the opportunity to speak to the bills in question.

What is even sadder is that this government has the worst record when it comes to the number of laws rejected by the court. This year alone, half a dozen bills were rejected by the court. This government keeps cutting off debate, while introducing seriously flawed bills. That is why taxpayers are paying such enormous bills, as this government has to redraft its legislation every time it makes these mistakes.

● (1530)

[English]

On this particular bill, Bill C-18, this is the 82nd time the government is imposing time allocation and closure. The NDP offered 16 different amendments to fix problems with the bill. Farmers have raised concerns, including the increased cost of seeds and the increased likelihood of litigation against farmers. The Conservatives have refused to amend the bill to fix these problems.

My question is very simple. Is the reason why the Conservatives are putting forward time allocation that they do not want farmers to know about the problems with the bill?

Government Orders

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is a ridiculous assertion. This piece of legislation has been running around these halls for some 23 years. It is called UPOV '91 because its basis came from discussions in 1991. There have been decades of discussion around this bill, so for any farm group to say that it has not had time to frame its opinion or bring forward its issues is completely ridiculous.

The bill has had several iterations in the House. The Liberals took a couple of runs at it when they were in government for 13 years, but they did not get it to this point. We intend to see this put into law. It is the right thing to do.

The vast majority of farm groups out there, with the exception of one, recognize the benefits they would gain from this. It would draw more R and D to this country. It would draw more investment in research.

It is amazing. Farmers have grasped that they need the best in order to be innovative and efficient on their farms. They welcome the passage of this bill. We will see that it gets done.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have had the opportunity on dozens of occasions to talk about time allocation. What I would like to suggest to the government is that it look at the degree to which it uses time allocation. Every time they bring a time allocation motion, it is in the neighbourhood of an hour of the House of Commons' time. We are getting to close to 200 hours of talking just about time allocation. Time allocation, in essence, is when the government forces a bill through, disallowing all members who want to contribute to the debate.

This is a record. Never in the history of Canada have we witnessed this. This is not even the first time for this particular minister. Do members remember the Canadian Wheat Board? Even though it was denied the plebiscite, which by law was mandated, there was time allocation. It is disrespectful of our democracy.

My question is not for the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food but for the government House leader. Quite simply, why is the Government of Canada so dependent on time allocation in getting its legislative agenda passed through the House? Whatever happened to consensus, co-operation, and working with stakeholders?

Hon. Gerry Ritz: Mr. Speaker, as I said in my response to my colleague from the NDP earlier, this has been ongoing for 20-some years. There have been discussions on this. The committee had full hearings and more than 50 witnesses, who fully exposed any problems in this bill. We have made a couple of adjustments ourselves and amendments, as the government, to make sure that being able to use the seed is spelled out in a more farmer-friendly way than the legalese that was there.

The Liberals are in such a hurry to discuss this bill that I can see everyone lined up over there behind the member for Winnipeg North.

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the minister could explain the quality of debate from the opposition when closure is not imposed. I also wonder if the minister could explain why the Conservative Party holds every rural seat west of Kenora—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Order, please. The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry, but this is a debate about cutting off the ability of the opposition to ask questions. It is not an opportunity for Conservative backbenchers to lob softballs.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): The hon. member is correct. The question before the House is related to time allocation, but obviously, members often refer to the substance of the bill in their question as well.

I would ask the hon. member to quickly put his question so that the minister can respond.

• (1535)

Hon. Steven Fletcher: Mr. Speaker, I do not know if the member has any problem with backbenchers asking questions. If he does, his party and the opposition should never ask questions.

With regard to time allocation, can the minister again explain why we need to use it now and get on with things?

Hon. Gerry Ritz: Mr. Speaker, I welcome that question and comment from my colleague from Manitoba. Certainly, there have been years of debate. As I said, there have been over two decades of debate and discussion on this particular issue. It is time to put it in place.

Canada is one of the very few, if not the one major agriculture-based country in the world that has not embraced UPOV '91. There are things in UPOV '91 that would give farmers more rights and more privileges than they enjoy now under UPOV '78. What we are striving to do is bring this up to that level.

Certainly there were some concerns from one farm group. Over 50 witnesses came to the committee and had full access to talk about the issues in it. To us, as a government, that is far more important than listening to the opposition, which raised the same points. We would rather hear it directly from the horse's mouth, those farmers and investors who will welcome this in Canada so that we can move forward with some new and exciting varieties for farmers to grow.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am always surprised when the government cuts off the debates. It shocks me because it is shameful. This is the 82nd time this has happened. I have not been able to speak to this debate and I will not get the chance to do so.

Agriculture is extremely important. Protecting our farmers under law to prevent lawsuits is important. We have not managed to add our points of view to the discussion. Indeed, agriculture has been around for a long time and it is the breadbasket of our food supply. It is therefore important to talk about it in the House, as we do with any other topic, and in fact we should discuss it even longer.

Government Orders

[English]

Hon. Gerry Ritz: Mr. Speaker, I could not agree more. We need to talk about agriculture more in the House. It is one of the base industries in this great country. It is the third-largest contributor to our GDP. Our exports are in the \$60-billion range. They have gone up exponentially since we formed government, simply because we have gone out there. The Minister of International Trade, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, a number of other ministers, and I have been on the road. The Prime Minister himself, who is the greatest salesman ever when it comes to agricultural goods, just had a successful trip to China. That is another \$1.5 billion of new access to that growing market for our commodities.

That is the nature of agriculture in this country. It is innovative. It is lean, mean, and efficient. It needs this type of cutting-edge legislation to allow farmers to continue to move forward.

It is important that the opposition listen to farmers who want to move ahead, not to those who want to move back to the fifties, when grain was dug out of a bin and stuck in the ground. It should listen to those farmers who are excited about the new varieties out there that give them efficiency, ingenuity, and that edge when it comes to competing with other farmers from the U.S., Australia, Argentina, and Brazil.

We need this legislation. We needed it 20 years ago. We did not get it then, but we will get it today.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the people back home need to understand that whenever the minister makes a statement, there needs to be some kind of explanation as to what he really means. When he says that this legislation has been debated for 24 years, that is not correct. There has been the issue of UPOV '91, but the bill before us is an omnibus bill. The government sticks all manner of issues in it, including the power it will give the minister to make regulations, taking it away from farmers and putting it in the hands of the minister and the cabal that sits with him. That is an issue that needs to be discussed.

When this government continually shuts down debate, it blows it. How many bills has it passed that have not had proper debate and have been struck down as unconstitutional? The government's recall rate is worse than the Ford Pinto. If the Conservatives did their job and showed up for work and allowed us to do our work, they might not look so ridiculous some of the time.

We bring forward reasonable amendments at committee to defend the interests of farmers and maintain that balance, and the Conservatives strike down every single amendment, as they do on every single bill, on every single occasion, including if we point out in a committee hearing that they have spelled something wrong. They will strike that down too. They would rather be wrong on the most basic things than right on anything.

What we are here to do in Parliament is debate to allow Canadians to hear the issues. People watch, and I sometimes wonder what they are watching. They should be able to sit here and know that members from every part of this country are able to talk about an issue, yet time after time the Conservatives shut down the debate, and the result is that they keep coming forward with fundamentally flawed legislation.

● (1540)

Hon. Gerry Ritz: Mr. Speaker, I completely reject that diatribe, as any clear thinking Canadian would.

Yes, that party brought forward 56 motions on this particular piece of legislation, each one to take a clause out of the bill. Each one of those clauses is pertinent to UPOV '91. All those members are doing under the smokescreen of democracy is pulling out the parts of UPOV '91 that are in this legislation.

We have been 24 years getting it to this point. There has been a lot of discussion. Several bills were tried by the Liberals at different times during their reign here. We are now moving forward. Farmers, now that they have marketing freedom and are moving forward and having access to other markets in the world, will have access to new varieties of seed, not just hard red spring anymore. There will be a lot of utility varieties that are still millable. They will keep the price down yet have a return per acre that is better.

That is what we are seeking to do here. The NDP is seeking to gut the bill. We will not allow that. We will put this legislation forward. We will stand it on its merits out there, and farmers will make use of it or not. This would not affect in any way, shape, or form any types of seeds that are out there already, including heritage seeds and the predominant seeds that are out there now. This is only on new varieties as of when this legislation is passed. That is another thing the NDP gets wrong all the time.

Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have to commend the government for stepping up to the plate to try to get some modern legislation on agriculture. However, I think the member for Timmins—James Bay is also correct. The government has just thrown a whole bunch of things in the bill.

When we started the committee process, the minister said that the government was very open to amendments. The reality is that none of the amendments from either the Liberals or the NDP were accepted.

The minister mentioned witnesses. I have to commend the chair of our committee, too, because he did a great job, and we had a lot of witnesses.

I know that everyone is focused on new crops, and having better varieties is something we need to have in this country. However, the canola growers talked about the advance payments. They said that it is not enough for today's modern farming. They want an increase, so we put an amendment forward. I thought the government, in good faith, would have changed that, because the reality is that it is a loan and it would have worked.

Government Orders

The Canadian Cattlemen's Association brought forward the issue of penalties. The Conservatives have penalties in the bill that are pretty high for farmers. The association said that they want the government to be like a coach, not a referee, in dealing with food safety and helping farmers and food production move forward.

On those two parts I think the government could have listened to some of the opposition amendments, and we could have had a "made in Canada" bill that would have been good for all, especially the small farmers. I think there should have been more in there for small, organic, and start-up farmers, which the government did not do. It could have done a lot more with the bill.

At the end of the day, the Liberals will go with the bill, but I think the government could have done a better job of listening to the opposition and could have added more to the bill.

Hon. Gerry Ritz: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for his constructive criticism.

It did not surprise me at all that the canola growers would want a bigger program to administer, since they are the ones that administer it. At the end of the day, only 2% of farmers, to date, hit the \$400,000 cap. They want me to double it to \$800,000 to catch whom? It is the big farmers. The member just made the statement that he wants to ensure that there are still small farmers out there. That is what we are doing by maintaining this cap at \$400,000. We changed it from \$250,000 under the Liberals to \$400,000 when I became minister. We also changed the \$50,000 interest free to \$100,000 interest free, and we added livestock. We significantly changed this program in the last few years.

To increase it to \$800,000, as I said, would only affect 2% of farmers, so that really was not a constructive amendment.

I recognize the great work the canola growers do, but I would not be shocked that they came forward and said, "We want more money to play with." However, they do not need it. As I said, only 2% of farmers hit the cap now.

On his other point on penalties, which the CCA brought forward, it was a bit of a misunderstanding by the Canadian Cattlemen's Association, unfortunately, and the member for Sydney—Victoria has picked it up, in that the federal government only comes into play post farm gate. Everything done on the farm, and these were the examples they gave, was on the farm. They were concerned about the onerous penalties. That is all at provincial level. That is not us at all. There is a bit of misinformation out there that the punitive side of on-farm animal husbandry could go up. That would be up to the provinces, not the federal government.

CFIA, our regulatory agency, only comes into play from transportation from the farm gate on through the processing sector and so forth, so there is a bit of misinformation there.

• (1545)

Mr. Malcolm Allen (Welland, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as we have unfortunately become very accustomed to in the House, we have time allocation and this time it happens to be with respect to agriculture. I guess we have to spread it around every ministry to ensure everybody gets an opportunity to come and defend time allocation in this place, so now it is the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food's opportunity.

Even when the minister came before committee, he said that the bill was not quite the way the government wanted it and required some changes. He is correct about some of the things that go on in this place because of the way the process is when it comes to the amendments. However, we submitted 16 recommendations that we thought would strengthen the bill. In its wisdom, the government side of the committee decided to vote against all of them. That was disappointing to say the least because the minister said that he would send a recommendation and the department would have some changes to it, which actually came about. However, it turned out to be a very small piece.

Clearly, the dilemma with Bill C-18 is that it is an omnibus bill, so there are many moving parts contained within it, some of which we like. The problem is we have to vote for all of it, so we have to vote for the parts we dislike more than the parts we like. That is part of the problem.

Ultimately, the minister said that the new seed act would take care of the new seed varieties, which is true. UPOV '91 will not affect them. However, as I said in committee, one of the amendments we tried to make was with respect to the varieties that were established today. When I asked the department this, it clearly agreed with me and said that if I applied to deregister them, there was a process for the deregistration and if that was not opposed to in any way, I could have them removed. The reality is that if I have a new seed variety under UPOV '91 and two old ones and I want to keep the two old ones, which I do not make as much money from, as a business person, I would probably take the new one. Why could we not have ensured that piece was in legislation?

There were a number of other things that did not get through the committee, which is unfortunate because we are now in this situation. The minister made a promise that he would get it done by August, and the last time I checked it was November. That is no reason for time allocation.

Hon. Gerry Ritz: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure how the member for Welland knew what I said at committee when he was not even there.

At the end of the day, I do have a couple of things I would like to discuss with him. He talked about this bill. We consider it comprehensive. It is five different parts and pieces that dovetail in with agriculture, so it is a very comprehensive bill. It is not large, rather it is several pages long, so I do not see why anybody would have a problem understanding what is in it.

Government Orders

He talked about existing varieties, and he is right to that extent. He said that it was so easy for companies to deregister, which they can do now as it has nothing to do with this bill. If I as a seed grower or a farmer I want to pick up something that the Minister of Foreign Affairs has deregistered, I can do that. It would cost me \$200 through the Canadian Grain Commission. It is not an onerous project or process. It has been done before.

There are a couple of issues with some durum wheat. I remember a few years ago there was a variety that was deregistered. When it is no longer registered, it cannot be put into the system under the old Wheat Board. We have made some changes in that regard too. It is much easier to maintain these historic varieties than it ever was before because we do not have the Wheat Board saying that it is prescriptive. The idea that one can deregister and somehow hide that is no longer on. We can pull that variety back up for that registry fee of \$200 and continue to produce those seeds.

Mr. Pierre Lemieux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in my time in the House, I have noted that the New Democrats in particular will do anything to delay voting or the passage of legislation. It is in their best interest because they never have to vote on something in that case.

That is particularly true with this bill. I bring this up in terms of their Quebec MPs who represent Quebec farmers who want this bill to pass. The New Democrats have already indicated quite clearly that they will not vote in favour of this bill, so their position is already known.

I want to ask the minister about these delay and obstruct-type tactics being used by the NDP. Could he explain to the House and to farmers why it is important for the legislation to move forward in a reasonable time period?

• (1550)

Hon. Gerry Ritz: Mr. Speaker, Canada is not an island when it comes to investments by companies developing new seed varieties. We are competing with a number of other venues around the world, so it is very important that we get this passed.

When we started talking about this, and the member for Welland made that point that, we were trying to get this through by August 1. We had some transportation logistics that took the House time, and I thank them for their help on that. However, at the end of the day, we have to get this passed. We have already seen some significant investments from several groups coming to Saskatchewan apparently and developing some of these research farms. We are seeing investments coming through our universities with other people partnering around the world, which is not a bad thing.

The parliamentary secretary also made reference to farmers in Quebec wanting to see this happen. It is not just farmers in Quebec; it is also dairy farmers across Canada who want to see this happen. They are very supportive of this because they know they need the best new corn and alfalfa varieties to keep the animals under their care well fed. Our dairy animals have the best genetics in the world. That is what they require of this, those new varieties, so they want to see this done very quickly too.

I cannot understand why the NDP continues to vote against supply management.

Ms. Ève Pécelet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is very bizarre for the minister to talk about supply management. We presented a motion to protect supply management and the government supported it. I think our efforts are made at the right place.

We will wait to vote for about an hour. Almost a dozen MPs could have talked about agriculture and our farmers during that time. The minister has talked for the past 30 minutes on how he is proud of our farmers and our agricultural sector. We are all proud of this, but why is he preventing members to talk about our amazing agricultural sector and why is he preventing members who represent Canadian farmers to talk about this in the House? I would like to know.

Hon. Gerry Ritz: Mr. Speaker, as I said, in this legislation, and in some of the other parts that are in it as well, is comprehensive legislation. There have been discussions for over two decades, so it is well known what everyone's opposition and thoughts are in this regard, so I will not say that we need to have more debate.

The problem is the motions that the NDP members put forward, which they want to debate for the rest of time, would gut the bill. They would pull UPOV '91 right out of the bill. That is all it does. We will not tolerate that. We are moving forward.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Lise St-Denis (Saint-Maurice—Champlain, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are many small farmers in my riding. I talked to them about this bill and they all told me it does not really take them into consideration.

Can the minister explain to me once more why small farmers are not being taken into consideration in this bill?

[*English*]

Hon. Gerry Ritz: Mr. Speaker, there is no small or large farmer affected any differently throughout the bill. It is all about economies of scale. Even small farmers need good seeds. It does not matter whether they are planting a garden or planting 10,000 acres, they need good seed and need the best seed that is available out there so they can compete with the farmer down the road, or the farmer in the United States, or the farmer in Australia. That is what this is all about. Even small farmers will benefit from this because they will be have access to that best seed.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives have a habit of always arguing that time is of the essence. The members of the official opposition are certainly not responsible for the government's negligence. After all, the Conservatives have been in power for almost nine years.

I remember reading this summer the memoirs of the former Quebec agriculture minister, Jean Garon, who implemented a huge number of measures over nine years. He always held extensive consultations that went well beyond interest groups.

Government Orders

I would like to know what the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food is afraid of and what is preventing him from thoroughly debating a bill that is basically an omnibus bill. This bill demands much more attention than can be given under a time allocation motion. It seems that they are just blindly forging ahead.

• (1555)

[English]

Hon. Gerry Ritz: Mr. Speaker, I am always happy to discuss agriculture with anyone. It is well known in the House that I have been the most lobbied minister for a number of years in a row, simply because we discuss this with every farmer and farm group caring to have a discussion with us.

Therefore, we are accessible, available and we continue to have those meetings, and we will on any legislation that affects farmers.

Mr. Arnold Chan (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise with reluctance to join this debate on the time allocation motion because it really is sad. As a new member in this place, I have only had a short time to observe the practices of the House and at committee, but I have seen already a pattern of bringing in time allocation motions.

It reminds me of another government where I had the privilege of spending some time, and that was at Queen's Park. The Minister of Foreign Affairs was there at that time. It reminds of the time that government brought in the use of time allocation motions hundreds of times.

It reflects ultimately on a fundamental disrespect for this place and for places of parliament with respect to allowing for a full debate.

I want to ask the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Foreign Affairs why they feel they do not want to allow full debate to take place. As the Minister of Agriculture has already noted, this matter has been around for 23 years. Why not simply allow sufficient time for all those members who want to speak on the bill to speak to it?

Hon. Gerry Ritz: Mr. Speaker, he just made the point at the end. After 23 years, the points have all been made. No one has changed his or her mind.

The NFU came in many different iterations to committee and said exactly the same thing it had been saying for 23 years. Grain growers of Canada, canola growers, dairy farmers, and all the other relevant groups came forward and said exactly what they had said, that they needed to be competitive, they needed the best, they needed to move forward on this and get it done. That is exactly what we are doing.

We are starting to run government like business. We make a decision, push forward and get it done. We implement it and move forward. That is what this is all about, ensuring that farmers have access to the best varieties and the best programming we can possibly deliver as a government.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Before I put the question, I want to remind members that during a 30-minute debate on a time allocation motion, we do not follow the normal rotation. The majority of the questions are given to the opposition parties, usually only a couple of them to government members, and the

rotation between opposition parties is proportional to the members who want to participate in the debate, rather than simply from one caucus to the other. I think there was genuine confusion in terms of how it works. I appreciate the co-operation of all hon. members.

It is my duty to interrupt the proceedings at this time and put forthwith the question on the motion now before the House.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): Call in the members.

• (1635)

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

(Division No. 276)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy	Adams
Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Allison	Ambler
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	Armstrong
Aspin	Baird
Barlow	Bateman
Benoit	Bergen
Bezan	Block
Boughen	Braid
Breitkreuz	Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Bruinooge	Butt
Calandra	Calkins
Cannan	Carmichael
Carrie	Chong
Clarke	Crockatt
Daniel	Davidson
Dechert	Dreeshen
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Dykstra
Falk	Fast
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Fletcher	Galipeau
Gill	Glover
Goguen	Goldring
Goodyear	Gosal
Gourde	Grewal
Harper	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hawn	Hayes
Hiebert	Hillyer
Hoback	Holder
James	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kennedy (Calgary Southeast)
Kent	Kerr

Government Orders

Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lake	Lauzon
Lebel	Leef
Leitch	Lemieux
Leung	Lizon
Lobb	Lukiwski
Lunney	MacKay (Central Nova)
MacKenzie	Maguire
Mayes	McColeman
McLeod	Menegakis
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Moore (Fundy Royal)	
Nicholson	Norlock
Obhrai	O'Connor
Oliver	O'Neill Gordon
O'Toole	Payne
Poillievre	Preston
Rajotte	Reid
Rempel	Richards
Ritz	Saxton
Schellenberger	Seeback
Shea	Shipley
Shory	Smith
Sopuck	Sorenson
Stanton	Strahl
Sweet	Toet
Trost	Trottier
Truppe	Uppal
Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Wallace	Warawa
Warkentin	Watson
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	
Weston (Saint John)	
Wilks	Williamson
Wong	Woodworth
Young (Oakville)	Young (Vancouver South)
Yurdiga	Zimmer — 140

NAYS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Angus
Aubin	Ayala
Bélaban	Bellavance
Benskin	Blanchette
Boivin	Borg
Boutin-Sweet	Brahmi
Brison	Caron
Casey	Cash
Chan	Chicoine
Chisholm	Choquette
Christopherson	Cleary
Comartin	Côté
Cotler	Crowder
Cullen	Cuzner
Davies (Vancouver East)	Day
Dewar	Dion
Dionne Labelle	Doré Lefebvre
Dubé	Dubourg
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Dusseault
Easter	Eyking
Foote	Freeland
Fry	Garrison
Genest	Genest-Jourdain
Giguère	Godin
Goodale	Gravelle
Groguhé	Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Hsu	Hughes
Jones	Julian
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Latendresse	Laverdière
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)	Leslie
Liu	MacAulay
Mai	Marston
Martin	Masse
May	McCallum
McGuinty	MacKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Michaud	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	Murray
Nantel	Nunez-Melo
Papillon	Péclet
Perreault	Pilon
Rafferty	Rankin

Rathgeber	Ravignat
Raynault	Regan
Rousseau	Sandhu
Scarpaleggia	Scott
Sellah	Sims (Newton—North Delta)
Sitsabaiesan	St-Denis
Stewart	Stoffer
Sullivan	Thibeault
Toone	Tremblay
Trudeau	Turmel
Valeriote	Vaughan — 106

PAIRED

Nil

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Barry Devolin): I declare the motion adopted.

I wish to inform the House that because of the proceedings on the time allocation motion, government orders will be extended by 30 minutes.

Pursuant to Standing Order 38, it is my duty to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, Aboriginal Affairs; and the member for Ahuntsic, Public Safety.

● (1640)

REPORT STAGE

The House resumed from November 17 consideration of Bill C-18, An Act to amend certain Acts relating to agriculture and agri-food, as reported with amendments from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as always, it is a great honour to stand up in the House to speak on this agricultural issue, in this case Bill C-18 and the question of plant breeders' rights. It is a great honour for me as well, because I represent a very large agricultural region in the Timiskaming and Timmins—James Bay region.

What we have seen over the last number of years through the boom-bust economy of forestry and mining is a growing strength in northern agriculture. In the southern part of my riding, known as the little clay belt, extending down through Témiscaming, Quebec, and over into northern Ontario, there is now a \$91 million a year direct agriculture business with another \$111 million in spinoffs for support organizations, dealers, and milk organizations in our area. There are over 1,000 people now directly involved in agriculture just in the Timiskaming region. Therefore, these issues are important to them.

Moreover, a very interesting transformation in northern agriculture has been happening over the last 25 years in areas that had opened up to development back at the turn of the last century. People who had homesteaded had found out that it was very hard and brutal work, and because of the climate it was simply not possible to maintain farming over any period of time. Therefore, in the so-called upper northern clay belt, we did have an incredible number of farmlands cleared, but people just could not make a go of it and much of that land was beginning to go back to dogwood and poplar. However, we are now seeing a new move back into agricultural regions in the upper part of Timiskaming and Timmins—James Bay, Val Gagné, Black River-Matheson up toward Cochrane.

Government Orders

A number of factors have made this possible. Certainly a changing climate has affected the north, although I would say this past year we did have a very erratic year that was very troubling for farmers. From putting tile drainage in northern fields we have seen an increased ability to get a crop off the field more quickly and in a more sustainable way, which makes lands that were less profitable before, or less possible for farming, now able to support farms.

One of the other factors is that we have seen new breeds of plant varieties that work in the north. This is testament to research and development. There is now an ability to grow soybeans and grains, with canola in particular being a big market for producers in our region, as well as corn, something that no one had ever thought possible but in which we are now having large growth.

At the same time there has been a whole change in how people perceive agriculture in the north. Back in the day we had many small local dairies, because we could not transport food very long distances, but there has been a move toward bigger agriculture. There is a belief that big agriculture is the only way to go, but we have seen in the last number of years smaller producers starting to create niche markets, the organic producers, the people producing specialty foods that people want.

In terms of balance and what really cuts to the heart of Bill C-18, as much as we want to have innovative farming and to make sure that we are supporting research and innovation on the new breeds and varieties that make it possible to expand agriculture in a world where we need to be able to build our food supply, we also have to take into account the fact that consumers are making very clear choices and want to be heard in the choices they are making about the food supply, food security, and the food market.

It is not good enough simply to say that big is the only way. We now see in our areas the local farmers' markets. People are wanting to buy local. They want to know where their food is from. They are willing to pay more for meats they know do not have a heavy hormone treatment. They want to know what they put on their plate. This is not the whole food market but represents a growing segment of the population. Last year in Timmins, we saw for the first time a march against Monsanto due to a concern about very large corporate interests and what role they are playing. These citizens are saying they want to be part of the decision-making, they want to have choice when they buy, and they want to know what is in GMOs.

● (1645)

The GMO issue is certainly very complex, and we cannot treat the public as though they should be left out of it. This is a right they have. People are raising their voices about the use of neonicotinoids as pesticides because of the clear damage that is being done to bee populations.

This bill is very important in making sure that balance is maintained, but the problem with Bill C-18 is that it is yet another omnibus bill. A whole manner of regulatory changes in agriculture were put in this bill. Some of them are long-standing and some are very much needed, but in some areas the government just did not get the mix right. The most striking example is the issue of implementing UPOV '91 and balancing the rights of the corporate breeders that are creating the new varieties. The royalties they receive will certainly be protected very well under this regime.

Coming from the artistic community, we see that the government has made no effort to ensure that artists ever get paid for their intellectual property, but very large corporate interests are being paid.

There is no problem with making sure that people are paid for their research and development. This is what drives the economy and drives development, and Canada needs to keep its own in the world. However, there is also the question of balance in terms of the small players who want to have more traditional agriculture. These are not hobby farms anymore; these are people who have a direct right to be heard, and the issue of long-standing traditions and rights that people had for saving and reusing seeds is a big question. We have seen corporate interests attempting to go after these traditional rights in India and in other jurisdictions in the third world.

New Democrats were trying to find a balance and put forward 16 amendments to fine-tune the language. Some of this language is about protecting farmers from needless litigation, an issue that was raised by the Canadian Federation of Agriculture. It wanted to make sure that producers were not going to be sued, as we have seen happening in the United States, for claims of patent infringement with respect to the natural accidental spreading of patented plant genetic materials.

Corporations cannot say that if they put genetic materials in seeds, the seeds will not propagate elsewhere. They cannot make that claim. Farmers are worried that if they use patented genetic seeds, they can then be charged with infringement if these seeds accidentally start to move elsewhere. New Democrats clarified the language on this aspect so there would be no unnecessary litigation against farmers. That was a big issue.

One of the other things that was a real concern raised by many people was the issue of protecting farmers' privilege. This bill would take decisions on the protection for farmers' traditional rights out of the legislation and put them into the hands of the minister. New Democrats do not believe that is accountable. Making sure there is some mechanism for oversight is about fairness. The fact is that the minister could simply rewrite the regulations himself and farmers would have to live with them. That is not an accountable system.

These are reasonable amendments. Unfortunately, there is a culture within the government that any attempt to improve a bill is seen as a dire threat, so it turned down the 16 amendments. It is not that the government had to accept all 16, but it could not accept one. My colleagues in the Liberal Party put forward amendments; the government would not accept any.

That is a standard practice the Conservatives have. Even when they are bullheadedly wrong, they believe that accepting amendments is somehow seen as a form of weakness. I would argue that not being able to work with one's colleagues and not being able to accept recommendations brought forward in good faith is a sign of an immature political personality.

Government Orders

We saw that happen with the Copyright Act. The government said there would be lots of opportunity for amendments and then struck down every single amendment. We ended up with a fundamentally flawed bill. It was so flawed that it actually struck down amendments that would have protected the right of blind people to access materials without being threatened as criminals. The government turned that down.

What happens when we do not listen to others? We end up with failed legislation and recalls. This is the problem. This is why New Democrats are raising these issues. These concerns were not respected in committee. Canadians have a right to be heard on the issues of agriculture and food security.

• (1650)

Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the member from northern Ontario as he spoke about how much more agriculture there would be in that area and about his interest in agriculture.

He mentioned the Canadian Federation of Agriculture. I think he got mixed up with the farmers' union. However, what are his comments when most of the federations of agriculture across the country are in favour of most of the bill?

I realize what he is saying. There were a lot of amendments put forward by the NDP and by Liberals, and we hoped the Conservatives would do some tweaking, but overall, there is so much in the bill that is also good for farmers.

If we never put the bill forward, does he think we would be missing a great opportunity for our agriculture industry?

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I said the Canadian Federation of Agriculture because it was the Canadian Federation of Agriculture that raised the concerns about patent infringements. That is not to say that it is opposed to the overall bill. However, this is about fixing the bill to make sure it will actually serve the purposes we are told it is going to serve.

Bringing forward problems and suggesting solutions through amendments are reasonable things that parliamentarians are asked to do. We brought forward a clarifying amendment so that people would not needlessly be faced with litigation. The government has ignored that concern, and we think that is unfortunate.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech and for the connection he made between this and the copyright bill.

We see here that the government is somewhat biased in favour of companies, large corporations and agribusinesses, which will be able to collect royalties while artists are unable to do so and do not have a mechanism allowing them to profit from their creations. I would like him to expand on that.

Another question comes to mind. We know that developing new varieties requires research and development, but where will this ultimately be done? Does this bill include a mechanism to ensure that Canada will be able to benefit from research and development in this area?

[*English*]

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague has asked a couple of very important questions.

In terms of making the comparison, when we saw the copyright bill, the government was focused on its mistaken belief that if we just locked down content, we would protect corporate rights. The issue here was about protecting the revenue streams for artists so that they could continue to innovate and create. Through cutting the mechanical royalties, the Canadian industry lost about \$30 million a year.

Cutting the private copying levy would amount to another \$35 million that would be taken directly out of the hands of the creators themselves. Actually, Canadian entertainment in Canada and Quebec is one of the greatest exports we have. Our artists are known internationally. Without that seed money to allow them to make a go of it, people are actually having to give up.

The other issue we are seeing now is with streaming. The streaming royalties are so abysmally low that many artists are saying they cannot make a living, even though Canada was and is a leader in this area.

In terms of supporting development, we totally support it. The question is, what support would the government give to research and development to maintain it in Canada, as opposed to just paying Monsanto down in the United States? We would like to see a commitment to researching and developing new varieties right here in Canada.

• (1655)

Mr. LaVar Payne (Medicine Hat, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-18, the agricultural growth act, fully deserves the support of the House.

The proposed legislation is both timely and necessary so that Canada's agriculture industry will continue to produce safe and nutritious products and remain competitive in global markets. My support for Bill C-18 rests largely on the latter, on the legislation's potential impacts on the global competitiveness of Canada's agriculture and agri-food industry. This bill is designed to modernize Canada's agricultural legislation and encourage innovation in the sector.

It is fair to say that most Canadians take for granted just how globalized agriculture has become. Two generations ago, few Canadians had ever eaten a mango or an avocado or tasted international cuisines. Today, international foods are all available at neighbourhood supermarkets. Agriculture and agri-food have become a major component of international trade. Billions of dollars' worth of food products are traded around the world, and Canada is a star in the industry. Up to 85% of this country's production of some commodities is exported.

Government Orders

The rise of trade in agri-food products presents several challenges to countries such as Canada, with food safety leading the way. How can we ensure that products from other countries that do not necessarily have the same standards we do for food safety will not jeopardize the health of Canadians? The answer lies in international agreements and conventions, a complex set of negotiated rules based on sound science.

The legislation that is now before us proposes to modernize the regime that governs Canada's trade in this sector.

Let us consider, for instance, the current approach for regulating farm animal feed. The current regime specifies national standards for the composition, safety, and effectiveness of end products. These standards are known as end products controls, but on their own they are not always sufficient to ensure the safety of feeds.

Along with our competitors, such as the United States and the European Union, Canada's trading partners either have already implemented or are in the process of implementing more comprehensive and effective regulatory systems for animal feeds. These systems follow an approach known as hazard analysis and critical control point, or HACCP. Rather than focus on end products, the HACCP approach involves identifying exactly where and when problems are likely to occur in production processes, taking specific actions to prevent these problems, and then carefully monitoring and documenting the results. HACCP-based systems are now standard in most Canadian food production facilities and help ensure that Canada's food supply remains among the safest in the world.

As the international standards pertaining to animal feeds evolve, so too must Canada's, particularly since this country exports so much of its production. Emerging markets such as China and Russia, for instance, have begun to adopt systems-based requirements for imports of animal feed. Under these systems, producers must obtain licences if they want their feeds to enter the country. To obtain a licence, they must register with and be certified by the appropriate government agencies. The United States released new rules for animal feed production and import. These rules require facilities to be licenced.

The agricultural growth act proposes amendments to existing legislation that would promote the safety of agricultural inputs such as animal feed through licensing or registration of feed and fertilizer manufacturers. Bill C-18 would align Canada's relevant legislation with that of our international trading partners. It would also help our feed and fertilizer industries to maintain access to feed export markets such as the United States.

The proposed legislation would enable the Canadian Food Inspection Agency to license or register the fertilizer and animal feed operators and facilities that import or sell products across provincial or international borders, but farmers who produce fertilizer and feed only for their own use on farms or to sell locally would not be subject to the new rules. This nuanced approach is just one of the ways that the proposed legislation effectively balances the interests of producers, farmers, exporters, and consumers

. Another way that Bill C-18 balances these interests is that the legislation would require the development of regulations in consultation with stakeholders. In other words, the specifics of the

regulations, such as timing and certification, would be informed through a collaborative exercise with those who would be most affected.

● (1700)

Mr. Clyde Graham, acting president of the Canadian Fertilizer Institute, said at SCAAF:

The federal regulatory system has served the industry well for 50 years. It has ensured a science-based and consistent regulatory environment for fertilizers and supplements, which emphasizes the principles of safety and efficacy for all products....

That being said, the fertilizer and supplement industry supports new provisions in the bill that enable tools such as incorporation by reference, licensing, export certificates, and acceptance of equivalent foreign scientific data.

Bill C-18 would also address the challenges of international trade in agriculture in a way that would meet the needs of Canada's plant breeders.

In 1991, countries around the world ratified a new convention, the International Union of Protection of New Varieties of Plants, known as UPOV '91. UPOV '91 is the current international standard for plant breeders' rights. More than 70 countries, including Canada, rely on UPOV to fulfill their obligations to protect plant varieties under the World Trade Organization. However, Canada is one of only two developed countries of UPOV members whose legislation does not comply with the standard of UPOV '91.

The legislation now before us would amend the Plant Breeders' Rights Act and would bring Canada's legislation up to date. It would also better align our regulatory regime with those of many of our key trading partners, including Australia, the European Union, Japan, South Korea and the United States.

What plant breeders develop is a form of intellectual property. Plant breeding is an intensive process that requires a significant investment of time and effort. It typically takes 10 to 12 years to develop a new variety and bring it to market. Under Canada's current laws, plant breeders' rights are protected for 18 years. Bill C-18 would extend this protection to 25 years for trees, vines and a few other plant categories and to 20 years for all other crops.

The proposed amendments to the Plant Breeders' Rights Act will also benefit Canada's agriculture industry in other important ways. It will, for instance, encourage investment in plant breeding in Canada and give farmers access to more varieties of seeds developed in our country or abroad.

Government Orders

Our government heard from stakeholders about needing to improve the language to make it absolutely clear that storage of seed would be included in farmer's privilege. We now have an amendment to Bill C-18 that addresses this key issue.

With this in mind, I would like to address the 56 amendments that have been proposed by the NDP and the Green Party. These amendments would result in tearing out the heart of the bill, killing this great legislation. As a result, I cannot support these two motions.

I do support Bill C-18, especially now in its revised form. We need this bill as it stands.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech.

Above and beyond the issues he discussed, it is important to remember that we have before us a huge omnibus bill related to agriculture; yet, we are being given very little time to debate it. That is something that is now firmly ingrained in the minds of all Canadians. I saw it again yesterday at the meeting of the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology, when some witnesses said that the process we were using to examine parts of the omnibus budget implementation bill was seriously flawed.

I would like to know why my colleague supports limiting debate and, unfortunately, making it impossible to seriously examine amendments in committee. Why is he so averse to all the opposition's proposals?

• (1705)

[*English*]

Mr. LaVar Payne: Mr. Speaker, I sit on the agriculture committee. We had an opportunity to hear many witnesses from NDP and Liberal sources, farmers and organizations right across the country. I have in front of me a wad of very positive comments from these individuals.

We need to ensure that we get this legislation in place. The NDP's objective is to stop any legislation before the House. As the minister said earlier, it is really important that the government acts like a business, put forward a plan, ensure we have it developed and then implement the plan. Part of the process is to ensure we get this done.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Anne-Marie Day (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government has made drastic cuts to funding for agricultural research in recent years.

Public research on plants has contributed greatly to Canadian agriculture. Support for this type of research must absolutely be maintained.

Can the member assure us that this bill will not hamper support for public research?

[*English*]

Mr. LaVar Payne: Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that as part of the agriculture committee, we studied Growing Forward 2. Hundreds of millions of dollars have been put forward for research. We do that not just as the Government of Canada, not just through Agriculture Canada, but also with partnerships from organizations that also put

in funding so they can get the research done to get the products they want and compete in the marketplace.

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened attentively to the speech, and the question I would have for the member is this.

I have also heard from a lot of farmers in Saskatchewan and Alberta. What they are deeply concerned about is the government's lack of commitment to agricultural research. The government, in its wisdom, got rid of the community pastures and shut down all the agricultural research stations.

Could the member speak to the commitment of the Conservatives to developing better seeds and crops? Why on earth would they have moved to shut down the very enterprises that support the medium-income farmers and where a lot of our very valuable research has been conducted over many decades?

Mr. LaVar Payne: Mr. Speaker, it is not true what my colleague says. In fact, we do have some ongoing research stations. Just down the road from my riding is the station at Lethbridge, and I know the people there do some fantastic research. It is our facility and we are pouring money into that to ensure that products are available to farmers so they can market them globally and Canada can remain the most competitive country. If we can get our products to market, farmers can get their money and spend on more tractors, cars and trucks.

We are making a huge investment, and we need to see this move forward for the benefit of farmers.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Réjean Genest (Shefford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, for much of my life—nearly 50 years—I worked in agriculture. When I was a student, I would spend my summers and even the fall working on farms. I then studied agriculture at Université Laval so that I could work in this industry—in various areas, but particularly in ornamental horticulture.

The riding of Shefford, which I represent, is made up of three very distinct regions. In the west, you have the rich plains of the St. Lawrence, where you can find the big farms. There are even private research centres where they are cultivating corn, soy and various grains. This area has the richest soil in the region.

Towards the centre of the eastern region, you will find fruit tree nurseries and a very big nursery for growing trees and shrubs. This bill will have a significant impact on this type of production.

More towards the centre, you will find the city and its industries. However, in the east, you will find traditional agriculture—hay fields and smaller farms, including producers of milk, veal calves, slaughter cattle, sheep, goats and chickens. There is a lot of diversity.

Pork production, which is very important in my area, is located in the eastern region because it is tied to grain production. Large-scale producers farm the land, grow grain and have mills to mix the grain and feed their animals.

Government Orders

I am curious. Will these major agriculture producers, who are used to selling their seed every year, be able to keep using their own seed as they have been doing for years without being harassed by multinational grain corporations? I wonder. We are talking about producers who have thousands of acres and who are among the top three or four pork producers in Quebec. Will they be able to use their seeds?

I cannot support this bill because it does not explicitly protect farmers and the public and because it puts too much discretionary power in the hands of the minister. Speaking of his discretionary powers, the minister has been involved with the Air Canada file since 2011 because the bosses are hands off and that suits his purposes.

The minister also uses these powers to make decisions on employment insurance. This bill will benefit big corporations. The government will pocket the profits and leave as little income as possible to the unemployed.

The minister's discretionary powers also extend to copyright. I myself am an author, and I have written several books on horticulture. I know that authors do not make any money. That law protects the publishers. Will that be the case with this bill too?

● (1710)

The Conservatives' philosophy is to protect the establishment, not the little guy. Some market gardeners in my riding have been planting the same varieties of garlic for decades, year after year. If you plant garlic from the store, it will not work out because that garlic is not adapted to the region. There is a garlic grower in my region who has been working on adapting one variety for several decades. Will his variety of garlic be stolen from him? Will he be forced to buy it back from someone else? If a multinational orders a hundred garlic bulbs and plants them, then five or ten years later that corporation can say that the garlic is its variety. Will we be able to protect the little guys against this sort of thing?

We have a lot of greenhouse farmers. Some grow organic products and heirloom varieties. Is the greenhouse farmer going to be harassed by the inspector from some company and end up having to pay a fine? The large companies are given rights, but what is being done to protect the little guys from being abused by big business? Do not tell me that such abuse does not exist. In France, the law protects multinationals so much so that companies that sell seed to individuals no longer have the right to do so and people are going after them on the Internet. Kokopelli, a seed producer for third world countries, is constantly in court with major seed companies. Is that what we want? Do we want to cause even more problems for the so-called "little guy"?

I know a seed producer who collected heirloom varieties in the northern regions of the St. Lawrence. He uses the Internet and catalogues to sell seed he produces himself for fine herbs and vegetables. Will these heirloom varieties be protected under this bill? If a company finds an heirloom tomato and it improves that tomato slightly, it can then say that the original tomato, which has been an heirloom variety for a long time, is too similar to its own tomato.

I am familiar with these kinds of things. I have had a website since about 1996. Someone came to me and said that I had copied his

pages. I had made a copy of my pages on a diskette, which I sent to myself by registered mail, without opening it. I had proof that I had written those pages five years before him. In the horticultural field, will people be able to prevent these kinds of abuses by others who want to steal varieties? These ancient varieties belong to everyone. These companies want to steal them.

What I find difficult about all this is that big breeders are being protected. How are individuals going to be protected? For instance, if I plant 10 varieties of tomato plants, someone could show up in my yard with big boxes and ask if I purchased the seeds for the various varieties. Individuals also need to be protected.

● (1715)

[*English*]

Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague. I do not know him very well. He is not on the agriculture committee, but he seems to be very knowledgeable about the growing of many things. I am sure that he represents a lot of farmers in his riding.

This must be very difficult for the NDP, especially the Quebec members, to vote against this tonight because so many of the representatives from Quebec who came forward are in agreement with this bill. The horticulture people came to us and said that there is a great opportunity with this bill for them to have varieties and new products that we could maybe sell around the world. It was of great interest to me when I heard the member talking about the garlic and tomato varieties that he has in his riding.

I do not agree with the whole bill, but would the member not agree that some of this bill would provide great opportunities to some of his horticultural producers to get those varieties, develop them and sell them all over the world?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Réjean Genest: Mr. Speaker, in the process of creating a new variety, there is a stage called licensing. All kinds of tests are done at that stage. Licensing costs a fortune. Some would say it costs an arm and a leg. Individuals do not always have the means to create a special horticultural variety and licensing their product. They will be bought out by someone else. Much like copyright royalties on a CD, individuals will get only pennies, almost nothing.

● (1720)

Mr. Raymond Côté (Beauport—Limoilou, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Shefford for his speech.

My colleague spoke about something that is arbitrary, the power that the minister is potentially giving himself. I have to say that this approach has become pervasive and is apparent in almost every bill studied by the House and by our various committees. The Conservatives are choosing to use the regulatory process to gain full control and deal with many things in an underhanded manner.

I would like my colleague to speak a little more about the Conservative government's approach, which could be detrimental to the public interest because it could be too easily used in the service of special interests.

Mr. Réjean Genest: Mr. Speaker, let us talk about ministerial discretion.

Government Orders

When it suits him, he talks about it and when it does not suit him, he does not talk about it.

Discretionary authority is being given to the minister without putting in place any legal recourse with the assistance of counsel, and without any possibility of protection. Do my colleagues know what I call that? I call that dictatorship. I call that absolute power.

The current government tends to want to put absolute power in the hands of a few people without providing any recourse.

[English]

Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour and pleasure for me to illustrate to this House my party's support for Bill C-18, the agricultural growth act.

First, I wish to express not only my appreciation but that of the farmers in Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, and I believe the large majority of farmers across Canada, to the Minister of Agriculture for his foresight and action in bringing this bill forward and the work that the parliamentary secretary has done to get the bill to committee. I also want to thank the committee, which has worked hard to get the bill to the form it is in today, so that we can move the industry of agriculture forward.

At one time or another, all of us have read the sign “If you ate today, thank a farmer.” In fact, I have a few of those in my office. I have one around the licence plate of one of my vehicles. It is an important sign as a consumer, farmer, dairy farmer and cash cropper. It raises the importance of not only what agriculture is but the importance of food.

As parliamentarians we need to do more than talk. We need to express more than just saying thanks. I need to ensure that farmers, and the industry as a whole, have the support of this effective legislation that is before us.

Before I focus on the main element of the bill, I would like to address the amendments that have been proposed by opposition members. If members can imagine, there are 56 amendments on the order paper, which would meet their objective to gut the bill and take away its effectiveness.

I will not, and my party will not, support those of types of motions. In fact, I urge everyone with a level head on their shoulders not to support the amendments, and move forward and adopt this great bill. Should we start to approve the gutting of the bill, it would turn the clock back in agriculture about 25 years. We are not prepared for that and I do not believe the country is prepared for that.

Bill C-18 proposes broad controls to ensure the safety of Canada's agriculture inputs. It would allow the licence and registration of fertilizer and animal feed operators, and facilities that import and sell products across provincial and international borders. That is in addition to the current system, which registers feed and fertilizer individually, product by product. However, licencing and registering facilities and operators is a more effective and timely method to verify that agriculture products meet, and surpass in many cases, Canada's stringent safety rules and other standards.

The bill is also important because we need to ensure that we align ourselves with our major trading partners and help our feed, seed and

fertilizer industries maintain access to those markets, especially with our closest neighbour, the United States.

For the information of members, exports in the agriculture industry range up to 85% of what we grow. That is an incredibly high number. It means that one in eight jobs in this country is related to the agriculture industry. The agricultural growth act proposes to keep these jobs safe and secure, but that can only be done through modernizing our current antiquated legislation and by improving Canadian access to the latest farming technology.

Exports are part of the solution, but what we grow here is the other part. Members may recall that during the last Parliament, Motion No. 460 was debated. It read:

That, in the opinion of the House, the government should ensure that production management tools available to Canadian farmers are similar to those of other national jurisdictions by considering equivalent scientific research and agricultural regulatory approval processes by Health Canada, the Pest Management Regulatory Agency, and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

• (1725)

I was glad that the motion was adopted by the House, but I did not get help from the NDP, which I find strange. It is clear that it does not support the idea, but do members know who does support it? Farmers. Who is fulfilling the promise to farmers? Our Conservative government.

During the 2011 federal election, the Conservative Party platform said:

Like other businesspeople, Canadian farmers want access to the latest innovations, to succeed in the global economy. Unfortunately, long and burdensome approval processes imposed by the federal government are preventing Canadian farmers from obtaining the best fertilizers, pesticides, and veterinary drugs available on the market. We will revise current approval processes to allow for international equivalencies in such products. We will eliminate needless duplication, while protecting our national sovereignty and maintaining the highest safety standards.

What did the stakeholders tell us about this at committee? The president and CEO of the Canadian Association of Agri-Retailers, for example, said in October 2014:

...allowing the CFIA the opportunity to use data that is sourced externally to Canada, not having to be reproduced, and to use data that is from a country that is considered to be equivalent to the standards in Canada is, I think, a significant improvement in terms of allowing the CFIA the freedom to operate, and reducing that administrative burden of recreating data that would be already acceptable in terms of identifying the safety and the ability to use that product in Canada.

Our bill would do this. Indeed, we have such a strong belief in this idea that clauses 56, 67, 77, and 96 of Bill C-18, the agricultural growth act, would implement this idea. The amendments proposed in Bill C-18 would provide the CFIA with stronger tools to fulfill its mandate to protect Canada's plant and animal resource base. The changes would provide additional reassurance that imported agricultural products meet Canadian requirements. Those are strict requirements. Bill C-18 would be part of our government's strong agricultural agenda—and I am not alone in seeing Bill C-18 as a key milestone for Canada's agriculture sector.

Government Orders

The Grain Growers of Canada, the Canadian Seed Trade Association, and the Canadian Horticultural Council are only a few of the many agricultural organizations anxiously waiting for the proposed legislation.

New, stronger border controls for agricultural products are urgently needed. Bill C-18 would respond to that. It would give inspectors from the CFIA the authority to have important shipments of feeds, fertilizers, or seeds that do not meet legal requirements to be ordered out of Canada. That would be similar to the current treatment of imported plants and animals that do not meet those requirements now.

Canadian farmers would benefit because they would be competing on a level playing field with their international counterparts. That is so important because Canadian consumers would benefit from a strengthened food safety regime.

To be clear, the CFIA already takes action to seize illegal animal feeds, seeds, fertilizers, and related products. Bill C-18, however, would propose to update that as we do this.

In some cases, under the current process, seizure of illegal products is followed by lengthy and costly court proceedings and, at that time, Canada must pay to dispose of those illegal products. Members can see that being able to order the products out of the country becomes a much more efficient and a much more practical procedure.

At the same time, Bill C-18 would give CFIA inspectors the ability to allow the importer to fix the problem at the border, if there are no safety concerns and if the inspector can be certain that the issue would be addressed.

● (1730)

It has been an honour and privilege for me to make this presentation on Bill C-18 on behalf of our government and I look forward to addressing any of the questions or comments that may come forward.

Mr. Malcolm Allen (Welland, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague, the chair of the agriculture committee, for his comments. I believe I said it the other night but will say it on the record again today that I thought he chaired the committee admirably when it looked at Bill C-18. I thought there was a good balance of witnesses. His ability to chair is one thing. My trying to convince the other side to accept amendments is my own responsibility and I have to admit that I was not quite as successful as I had hoped to be. In baseball parlance, it is called an “ofer”. In other words, 16 up to the plate and 16 outs. That happens in life.

The chair asked committee members to study the bill in a professional manner, and we did. We were presented with some very professional suggestions that we thought were amendments to bring forward. Where I take slight issue with the chair is when he says that these amendments to take UPOV '91 out of this particular bill before us now would leave us eons back in time. That is not quite true. If we go back to UPOV '78, which everyone is regulated under today, it has been fairly successful. I would suggest to the chair respectfully that farmers in this country have done very well, and so they should. They have worked extremely hard. If UPOV '91 is taken out, UPOV '78 would be there.

I think the chair perhaps overstates things. I recognize that members in the House sometimes stretch things a bit, but we would clearly still have a UPOV agreement. It would be UPOV '78.

Mr. Bev Shipley: Mr. Speaker, it is a great thing how this bill came forward. As chair of the committee, I very much want to express my appreciation to the members of all parties for how this was addressed and how we moved forward on the bill. As I mentioned before, the amendments that were presented to us were very much aimed at taking away from the bill's objective and what farmers in Canada were telling us.

In terms of UPOV '78, that is my point. It was 25 years ago. Agriculture is not about 25 years ago. Agriculture is about now and looking forward maybe 25 years, not going back 25 years. All of our trading partners are involved with UPOV '91. Just about all of the industry people who came to the committee said that we needed to move forward for the protection of agriculture and its sustainability.

● (1735)

Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would agree with my colleague from the NDP that the member is doing a great job as chair of the agriculture committee. Sometimes it is difficult for a government member to be in the chair and to be fair to all.

It was clear during the many presentations, especially by organic and small farmers, that there is a concern. There is a concern that there is not a lot in the bill for them and that some of their rights would be taken away. I am hoping that is not going to be the case.

On that point, I have two questions for the member. Does he recognize that we listened to the small farmers who came forward and does he see merit in the committee in its future business trying to help the smaller growers, who are really a big part of the increase in agriculture in Canada, by our taking seriously their concerns on how we can help them grow, move forward, and be a big part of our production in Canada?

Mr. Bev Shipley: Mr. Speaker, that is a great question. He has been consistent in his questioning.

How does this help small farmers? Actually, the whole issue around UPOV '91 is about being able to allow seed to come in from other countries to be used and protected in Canada. One thing about Canada is that it is geographically very big and numerically very small. Part of what my Motion No. 460 was about was the need to make sure that we aligned ourselves with countries that have the same standards we do, so that when we bring in those seeds, it will help the small breeders, because we do not always have that breeding in Canada. Whether it is horticulture, small farmers, or organic farmers who have special seeds, they will now have the opportunity to bring seeds in from other countries that have the same high standards we do.

Government Orders

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Before resuming debate I will let the hon. member who is up next, the hon. member for Winnipeg North, know that there are only about seven minutes remaining in the time allocated for debate on this particular question. I am sure that the member will be disappointed to hear that, but nonetheless, that is what we have in front of us.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I suspect that if I asked to have the debate continue, it would probably be denied, so I will not ask.

However, I will pick up on the point the member just made reference to. Canada is a vast land. Our population is around 35 million, but land-wise we produce the best food in the world. If we look at our agricultural production as a whole, it is estimated that around 80% of all the food we produce here in Canada goes to foreign markets. Canada is very much the bread basket of the world, and our potential is so great.

When we look forward to the many Liberal Party policies, one of the ones I often refer to is the area of trade. We recognize the value of trade. For me, being from the Prairies, the bread basket of Canada, at least in good part, when we look at our agricultural communities, it is through trade that we will be able to increase opportunities and generate jobs in the future and provide good quality food and consumable products, not only here in Canada but also around the world.

The Liberal Party's agriculture critic has done a wonderful job in taking the bill from its origins, bringing it to committee, and even bringing forward amendments to the legislation, recognizing that we believe that our farmers, in particular our small farmers, need to have a strong advocate here in the House. The critic has done that. Even the chair of the agriculture committee just put on the record the point of about his consistency in being there for our small farmers. That is something I know he takes to heart.

We had him in Manitoba, where we had a wonderful tour of a chicken processing plant. There were thousands of birds being processed every day and then being distributed all over Canada, far beyond our Manitoba borders. This is a realization of jobs and economic activity and some of the best product in the world.

Our leader has asked us to go out and communicate with Canadians. A big part of that for me personally is to go out and meet other farmers. I have referred in the past to the dairy farm. We know how important supply management is to Canada and our economy in ensuring that we have good quality dairy products and many other products. I had taken the opportunity to tour a dairy farm just to get a better sense of supply management and the positive impact it has in Canada in providing protection for good quality product, protection for our farmers and so forth.

Bill C-18 is all about markets. One of the Conservative speakers mentioned international markets. In order to achieve success in our international markets, we have to make sure that our industry is going in the right direction. We have to have regulations to ensure quality. If a product has a maple leaf associated with it, consumers, no matter where they live in the world, can count on it being of

world-class quality. Consumers all around the world will pay even that much more knowing it is coming from Canada.

Nowhere is that more significant than with wheat. I have had the opportunity, in different capacities, to witness its success. Driving on Highway 2, or Highway 1, one can see rows of combines harvesting tonnes of wheat in the fall. Here I could talk a little about the government's inability to get that product to the Pacific to get on to those empty ships, but that is for another day.

● (1740)

However, our farmers have a great sense of pride in the production of food. Many of us take this for granted. We go to a grocery store and we buy the consumer products we need, but it is our farmers who put those products on our tables. I do not think we give them enough recognition or the recognition they deserve. We, in the Liberal Party, believe we should acknowledge the important role of our farmers and stakeholders, those many industry representatives who came before the agriculture committee to make presentations and who wanted to improve the bill.

The Liberal critic brought forward several amendments. Unfortunately, they did not pass because the government was not open to amendments. The New Democratic Party also attempted to make changes. However, the government does not recognize that overall this is a good bill, but it could have been better. Had the Conservatives listened to what the different stakeholders, including opposition critics, were saying, we would be debating and ultimately passing a better bill.

With the leadership that has been demonstrated from our critic, we will support Bill C-18 when it comes to a vote. On that note, the government could have done better.

● (1745)

Hon. Gordon O'Connor: Better?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, as one of the members across the way has just heckled, he is right, it could have done better, so it is a lost opportunity.

However, it is good to see we are at least moving forward. Maybe next time, maybe under a different administration, we will even see more progress, more protection for our small farmers and better quality products for our consumers. We want to strive for that because we recognize the importance of the agriculture industry to the Canadian economy.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): It being 5:45 p.m., pursuant to an order made earlier today, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the report stage of the bill now before the House.

The question is on Motion No. 2. A vote on this motion also applies to Motions Nos. 3 to 5 and 7 to 52. A negative vote on Motion No. 2 necessitates the question being put on Motion No. 6.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt Motion No. 2?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

Government Orders

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): All those in favour of Motion No. 2 will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): Call in the members.

• (1825)

[*Translation*]

(The House divided on Motion No. 2, which was negatived on the following division:)

(*Division No. 277*)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Angus
Ashton	Aubin
Ayala	Benskin
Blanchette	Boivin
Borg	Boutin-Sweet
Brahmi	Caron
Cash	Charlton
Chicoine	Chisholm
Choquette	Christopherson
Cleary	Comartin
Côté	Crowder
Cullen	Davies (Vancouver East)
Day	Dewar
Dionne Labelle	Doré Lefebvre
Dubé	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Dusseau	Freeman
Garrison	Genest
Genest-Jourdain	Giguère
Godin	Gravelle
Groghé	Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Hughes	Julian
Lapointe	Latendresse
Laverdière	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Leslie	Liu
Mai	Marston
Martin	Masse
May	Michaud
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Mourani	Nantel
Nicholls	Nunez-Melo
Papillon	Péclet
Perreault	Pilon
Rafferty	Rankin
Rathgeber	Ravignat
Raynault	Rousseau
Sandhu	Scott
Sellah	Sims (Newton—North Delta)
Sitsabaiesan	Stewart
Stoffer	Sullivan
Thibeault	Toone
Tremblay	Turnel— 82

NAYS

Members

Abлонczy	Adams
Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Allison	Ambler

Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	Armstrong
Aspin	Baird
Barlow	Bateman
Bellavance	Bennett
Benoit	Bergen
Bezan	Block
Boughen	Braid
Breitkreuz	Brison
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Bruinooge
Butt	Calandra
Calkins	Cannan
Carmichael	Carrie
Casey	Chan
Chong	Clarke
Cotler	Crockatt
Cuzner	Daniel
Davidson	Dechert
Devolin	Dion
Dreeschen	Dubourg
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dykstra	Easter
Eyking	Falk
Fast	Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Fletcher
Foote	Fortin
Freeland	Fry
Galipeau	Gill
Glover	Goguen
Goldring	Goodale
Goodyear	Gosal
Gourde	Grewal
Harper	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hawn	Hayes
Hiebert	Hillyer
Hoback	Holder
Hsu	James
Jones	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kennedy (Calgary Southeast)
Kent	Kerr
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lake	Lamoureux
Lauzon	Lebel
Leaf	Leitch
Lemieux	Leung
Lizon	Lobb
Lukiwski	Lunney
MacAulay	MacKay (Central Nova)
MacKenzie	Maguire
Mayes	McCallum
McColeman	McGuinty
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	McLeod
Menegakis	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Murray
Nicholson	Norlock
Obhrai	O'Connor
Oliver	O'Neill Gordon
O'Toole	Paçetti
Paradis	Payne
Poillievre	Preston
Rajotte	Regan
Reid	Rempel
Richards	Rickford
Ritz	Saxton
Scarpaleggia	Schellenberger
Seeback	Shea
Shiple	Shory
Smith	Sopuck
Sorenson	St-Denis
Strahl	Sweet
Toet	Trost
Trottier	Trudeau
Truppe	Uppal
Valeriote	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Vaughan
Wallace	Warawa
Warkentin	Watson
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	
Weston (Saint John)	
Wilks	Williamson
Wong	Woodworth
Young (Oakville)	Young (Vancouver South)
Yurdiga	Zimmer— 174

Government Orders

PAIRED

Nil

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): I declare Motion No. 2 defeated. I therefore declare Motions Nos. 3 to 5 and 7 to 52 defeated.

The next question is on Motion No. 6. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): In my opinion the nays have it.

And five or more members having risen:

• (1835)

[English]

(The House divided on Motion No. 6, which was negated on the following division:)

(Division No. 278)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Angus
Ashton	Aubin
Ayala	Bennett
Benskin	Blanchette
Boivin	Borg
Boutin-Sweet	Brahmi
Brisson	Caron
Casey	Cash
Chan	Charlton
Chicoine	Chisholm
Choquette	Christopherson
Cleary	Comartin
Côté	Cotler
Crowder	Cullen
Cuzner	Davies (Vancouver East)
Day	Dewar
Dion	Dionne Labelle
Doré Lefebvre	Dubé
Dubourg	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Dusseault
Easton	Eyking
Foote	Freeland
Freeman	Fry
Garrison	Genest
Genest-Jourdain	Giguère
Godin	Goodale
Gravelle	Groguhé
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)	Hsu
Hughes	Jones
Julian	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Latendresse
Laverdière	LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Leslie	Liu
MacAulay	Mai
Marston	Martin
Masse	May
McCallum	McGuinty

McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	Michaud
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Mourani	Murray
Nantel	Nicholls
Nunez-Melo	Pacetti
Papillon	Pécelet
Perreault	Pilon
Rafferty	Rankin
Rathgeber	Ravignat
Raynault	Regan
Rousseau	Sandhu
Scarpaleggia	Scott
Sellah	Sims (Newton—North Delta)
Sitsabaiesan	St-Denis
Stewart	Stoffer
Sullivan	Thibeault
Toone	Tremblay
Trudeau	Turmel
Valeriote	Vaughan— 112

NAYS

Members

Ablonczy	Adams
Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Allison	Ambler
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	Armstrong
Aspin	Baird
Barlow	Bateman
Bellavance	Benoit
Bergen	Bezan
Block	Boughen
Braid	Breitkreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Bruinooge
Butt	Calandra
Calkins	Cannan
Carmichael	Carrie
Chong	Clarke
Crockatt	Daniel
Davidson	Dechert
Devolin	Dreeshen
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Dykstra
Falk	Fast
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)	Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Fletcher	Fortin
Galipeau	Gill
Glover	Goguen
Goldring	Goodyear
Gosal	Gourde
Grewal	Harper
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Hawn
Hayes	Hiebert
Hillyer	Hoback
Holder	James
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Kent
Kerr	Komarnicki
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake
Lauson	Lebel
Leaf	Leitch
Lemieux	Leung
Lizon	Lobb
Lukiwski	Lunney
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
Maguire	Mayes
McColeman	McLeod
Menegakis	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Nicholson
Norlock	Obhrai
O'Connor	Oliver
O'Neill Gordon	O'Toole
Paradis	Payne
Poilievre	Preston
Rajotte	Reid
Rempel	Richards
Rickford	Ritz
Saxton	Schellenberger
Seeback	Shea
Shipley	Shory
Smith	Sopuck

Government Orders

Sorenson	Strahl
Sweet	Toet
Trost	Trottier
Truppe	Uppal
Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Wallace	Warawa
Warkentin	Watson
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	
Weston (Saint John)	
Wilks	Williamson
Wong	Woodworth
Young (Oakville)	Young (Vancouver South)
Yurdiga	Zimmer— 144

PAIRED

Nil

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): I declare Motion No. 6 defeated.

Hon. Gerry Ritz (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, CPC) moved that the bill, as amended, be concurred in at report stage with further amendment.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

• (1840)

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

(Division No. 279)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy	Adams
Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Allison	Ambler
Ambrose	Anders
Anderson	Armstrong
Aspin	Baird
Barlow	Bateman
Bellavance	Bennett
Benoit	Bergen
Bezan	Block
Boughen	Braid
Breitkreuz	Brisson
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Bruinooge
Butt	Calandra
Calkins	Cannan
Carmichael	Carrie
Casey	Chan
Chong	Clarke
Cotler	Crockatt
Cuzner	Daniel

Davidson	Dechert
Devolin	Dion
Dreeschen	Dubourg
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dykstra	Easter
Eyking	Falk
Fast	Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Fletcher
Foote	Fortin
Freeland	Fry
Galipeau	Gill
Glover	Goguen
Goldring	Goodale
Goodyear	Gosal
Gourde	Grewal
Harper	Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hawn	Hayes
Hiebert	Hillyer
Hoback	Holder
Hsu	James
Jones	Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)	Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kent	Kerr
Komarnicki	Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lake	Lamoureux
Lauzon	Lebel
Leaf	Leitch
Lemieux	Leung
Lizon	Lobb
Lukiwski	Lunney
MacAulay	MacKay (Central Nova)
MacKenzie	Maguire
Mayes	McCallum
McColeman	McGuinty
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	McLeod
Menegakis	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Murray
Nicholson	Norlock
Obhrai	O'Connor
Oliver	O'Neill Gordon
O'Toole	Pacetti
Paradis	Payne
Poilievre	Preston
Rajotte	Regan
Reid	Rempel
Richards	Rickford
Ritz	Saxton
Scarpaleggia	Schellenberger
Seeback	Shea
Shipley	Shory
Smith	Sopuck
Sorenson	St-Denis
Strahl	Sweet
Toet	Trost
Trottier	Trudeau
Truppe	Uppal
Valeriotte	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Vaughan
Wallace	Warawa
Warkentin	Watson
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)	
Weston (Saint John)	
Wilks	Williamson
Wong	Woodworth
Young (Oakville)	Young (Vancouver South)
Yurdiga	Zimmer— 174

NAYS

Members

Allen (Welland)	Angus
Ashton	Aubin
Ayala	Benskin
Blanchette	Boivin
Borg	Boutin-Sweet
Brahmi	Caron
Cash	Charlton
Chicoine	Chisholm
Choquette	Christopherson
Cleary	Comartin
Côté	Crowder
Cullen	Davies (Vancouver East)
Day	Dewar

Dionne Labelle
 Dubé
 Dusseault
 Garrison
 Genest-Jourdain
 Godin
 Groguhé
 Hughes
 Lapointe
 Laverdière
 Leslie
 Mai
 Martin
 May
 Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
 Mourani
 Nicholls
 Papillon
 Perreault
 Rafferty
 Rathgeber
 Raynault
 Sandhu
 Sellah
 Sitsabaiesan
 Stoffer
 Thibeault
 Tremblay

Doré Lefebvre
 Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
 Freeman
 Genest
 Giguère
 Gravelle
 Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
 Julian
 Latendresse
 LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
 Liu
 Marston
 Masse
 Michaud
 Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
 Nantel
 Nunez-Melo
 Pécelet
 Pilon
 Rankin
 Ravnignat
 Rousseau
 Scott
 Sims (Newton—North Delta)
 Stewart
 Sullivan
 Toone
 Turmel— 82

PAIRED

Nil

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): I declare the motion carried.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

The House resumed from November 18 consideration of the motion, and of the amendment, and of the amendment to the amendment.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the subamendment of the motion to concur in the first report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food.

[Translation]

The question is on the amendment to the amendment.

• (1850)

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

(Division No. 280)

YEAS

Members

Allen (Welland)
 Ashton
 Ayala
 Bennett
 Blanchette
 Borg
 Brahma
 Caron
 Cash
 Charlton
 Chisholm

Angus
 Aubin
 Bellavance
 Benskin
 Boivin
 Boutin-Sweet
 Brison
 Casey
 Chan
 Chicoine
 Choquette

Christopherson
 Comartin
 Cotler
 Cullen
 Davies (Vancouver East)
 Dewar
 Dionne Labelle
 Dubé
 Duncan (Etobicoke North)
 Dusseault
 Eyking
 Fortin
 Freeman
 Garrison
 Genest-Jourdain
 Godin
 Gravelle
 Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
 Hughes
 Julian
 Lapointe
 Laverdière
 Leslie
 MacAulay
 Marston
 Masse
 McCallum
 McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
 Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
 Mourani
 Nantel
 Nunez-Melo
 Papillon
 Perreault
 Rafferty
 Ravnignat
 Regan
 Sandhu
 Scott
 Sims (Newton—North Delta)
 St-Denis
 Stoffer
 Thibeault
 Tremblay
 Turmel
 Vaughan— 113

Routine Proceedings

Cleary
 Côté
 Crowder
 Cuzner
 Day
 Dion
 Doré Lefebvre
 Dubourg
 Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
 Easter
 Foote
 Freeland
 Fry
 Genest
 Giguère
 Goodale
 Groguhé
 Hsu
 Jones
 Lamoureux
 Latendresse
 LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
 Liu
 Mai
 Martin
 May
 McGuinty
 Michaud
 Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
 Murray
 Nicholls
 Pacetti
 Pécelet
 Pilon
 Rankin
 Raynault
 Rousseau
 Scarpaleggia
 Sellah
 Sitsabaiesan
 Stewart
 Sullivan
 Toone
 Trudeau
 Valeriete

NAYS

Members

Adams
 Aglukkaq
 Albrecht
 Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
 Ambler
 Anders
 Armstrong
 Baird
 Bateman
 Bergen
 Block
 Braid
 Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
 Butt
 Calkins
 Carmichael
 Chong
 Crockatt
 Davidson
 Devolin
 Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
 Falk
 Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
 Fletcher
 Gill
 Goguen
 Goodyear
 Gourde
 Harper
 Hawn
 Hiebert
 Hoback
 James

Routine Proceedings

Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Kent
Kerr	Komarnicki
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake
Lauzon	Lebel
Leef	Leitch
Lemieux	Leung
Lizon	Lobb
Lukiwski	Lunney
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
Maguire	Mayes
McColeman	McLeod
Menegakis	Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Moore (Fundy Royal)	Nicholson
Norlock	Obhrai
O'Connor	Oliver
O'Neill Gordon	O'Toole
Paradis	Payne
Poillievre	Preston
Rajotte	Rathgeber
Reid	Rempel
Richards	Rickford
Ritz	Saxton
Schellenberger	Seeback
Shea	Shipley
Shory	Smith
Sopuck	Sorenson
Strahl	Sweet
Toet	Trost
Trottier	Truppe
Uppal	Van Kesteren
Van Loan	Wallace
Warawa	Warkentin
Watson	Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to
Sky Country)	
Weston (Saint John)	Wilks
Williamson	Wong
Woodworth	Young (Oakville)
Young (Vancouver South)	Yurdiga
Zimmer— 143	

PAIRED

Nil

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): I declare the amendment to the amendment lost.

[*English*]

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): All those in favour of the amendment will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

• (1900)

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

(Division No. 281)

YEAS

Members

Adams
Aglukkaq
Albrecht
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Ambler
Anders
Armstrong
Baird
Bateman
Benoit
Bezan
Boughen
Breitkreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Butt
Calkins
Carmichael
Casey
Chong
Cotler
Cuzner
Davidson
Devolin
Dreeshen
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Dykstra
Eyking
Fast
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Foote
Fry
Gill
Goguen
Goodale
Gosal
Grewal
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hayes
Hillyer
Holder
James
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kerr
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lamoureux
Lebel
Leitch
Leung
Lobb
Lunney
MacKay (Central Nova)
Maguire
McCallum
McGuinty
McLeod
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Murray
Norlock
O'Connor
O'Neill Gordon
Pacetti
Payne
Preston
Regan
Rempel
Rickford
Saxton
Schellenberger
Shea
Shory
Sopuck
St-Denis
Sweet
Trost
Trudeau
Uppal
Van Kesteren

Ablonczy
Adler
Albas
Alexander
Allison
Ambrose
Anderson
Aspin
Barlow
Bennett
Bergen
Block
Braid
Brison
Bruinooge
Calandra
Cannan
Carrie
Chan
Clarke
Crockett
Daniel
Dechert
Dion
Dubourg
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Easter
Falk
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Fletcher
Freeland
Galipeau
Glover
Goldring
Goodyear
Gourde
Harper
Hawn
Hiebert
Hoback
Hsu
Jones
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kent
Komarnicki
Lake
Lauzon
Leef
Lemieux
Lizon
Lukiwski
MacAulay
MacKenzie
Mayes
McColeman
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Menegakis
Moore (Fundy Royal)
Nicholson
Obhrai
Oliver
O'Toole
Paradis
Poillievre
Rajotte
Reid
Richards
Ritz
Scarpaleggia
Seeback
Shipley
Smith
Sorenson
Strahl
Toet
Trottier
Truppe
Valeriotte

Routine Proceedings

Van Loan
Wallace
Warkentin
Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)
Weston (Saint John)
Wilks
Wong
Young (Oakville)
Yurdiga

Vaughan
Warawa
Watson
Williamson
Woodworth
Young (Vancouver South)
Zimmer — 172

NAYS

Members

Allen (Welland)
Ashton
Ayala
Benskin
Boivin
Boutin-Sweet
Caron
Charlton
Chisholm
Christopherson
Comartin
Crowder
Davies (Vancouver East)
Dewar
Doré Lefebvre
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Fortin
Garrison
Genest-Jourdain
Godin
Groguhé
Hughes
Lapointe
Laverdière
Leslie
Mai
Martin
May
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Mourani
Nicholls
Papillon
Perreault
Rafferty
Rathgeber
Raynault
Sandhu
Sellah
Sitsabaiesan
Stoffer
Thibeault
Tremblay

Angus
Aubin
Bellavance
Blanchette
Borg
Brahmi
Cash
Chicoine
Choquette
Cleary
Côté
Cullen
Day
Dionne Labelle
Dubé
Dusseau
Freeman
Genest
Giguère
Gravelle
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Julian
Latendresse
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)
Liu
Marston
Masse
Michaud
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Nantel
Nunez-Melo
Pécllet
Pilon
Rankin
Ravignat
Rousseau
Scott
Sims (Newton—North Delta)
Stewart
Sullivan
Toone
Turmel — 84

PAIRED

Nil

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): I declare the amendment carried.

The next question is on the main motion as amended. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion as amended?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

● (1910)

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

(Division No. 282)

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy
Adler
Albas
Alexander
Allison
Ambrose
Anderson
Aspin
Barlow
Bennett
Bergen
Block
Braid
Brison
Bruinooge
Calandra
Cannan
Carrie
Chan
Clarke
Crockatt
Daniel
Dechert
Dion
Dubourg
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Easter
Falk
Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Fletcher
Freeland
Galipeau
Glover
Goldring
Goodyear
Gourde
Harper
Hawn
Hiebert
Hoback
Hsu
Jones
Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kent
Komarnicki
Lake
Lauzon
Leef
Lemieux
Lizon
Lukiwski
MacAulay
MacKenzie
Mayes
McColeman
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)
Menegakis
Moore (Fundy Royal)
Nicholson
Obhrai
Oliver
O'Toole
Paradis
Poilievre
Rajotte
Regan
Rempel

Adams
Aglukkaq
Albrecht
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)
Ambler
Anders
Armstrong
Baird
Bateman
Benoit
Bezan
Boughen
Breitkreuz
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)
Butt
Calkins
Carmichael
Casey
Chong
Cotler
Cuzner
Davidson
Devolin
Dreesen
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)
Dykstra
Eyking
Fast
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Foote
Fry
Gill
Goguen
Goodale
Gosal
Grewal
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)
Hayes
Hillyer
Holder
James
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)
Kerr
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)
Lamoureux
Lebel
Leitch
Leung
Lobb
Lunney
MacKay (Central Nova)
Maguire
McCallum
McGuinty
McLeod
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)
Murray
Norlock
O'Connor
O'Neill Gordon
Pacetti
Payne
Preston
Rathgeber
Reid
Richards

Private Members' Business

Rickford	Ritz
Saxton	Scarpaleggia
Schellenberger	Seeback
Shea	Shiple
Shory	Smith
Sopuck	Sorenson
St-Denis	Strahl
Sweet	Toet
Trost	Trottier
Trudeau	Truppe
Uppal	Valeriote
Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Vaughan	Wallace
Warawa	Warkentin
Watson	Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to
Sky Country)	
Weston (Saint John)	Wilks
Williamson	Wong
Woodworth	Young (Oakville)
Young (Vancouver South)	Yurdiga
Zimmer — 173	

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[Translation]

NATIONAL DAY OF THE MIDWIFE ACT

The House resumed from November 18 consideration of the motion that Bill C-608, An Act respecting a National Day of the Midwife, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-608 under private members' business.

● (1915)

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

*(Division No. 283)***NAYS**

Members

Allen (Welland)	Angus
Ashton	Ayala
Bellavance	Benskin
Blanchette	Boivin
Borg	Boutin-Sweet
Brahmi	Caron
Cash	Charlton
Chicoine	Chisholm
Choquette	Christopherson
Cleary	Comartin
Côté	Crowder
Cullen	Davies (Vancouver East)
Day	Dewar
Dionne Labelle	Doré Lefebvre
Dubé	Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)
Dusseault	Fortin
Freeman	Garrison
Genest	Genest-Jourdain
Giguère	Godin
Gravelle	Grogulé
Harris (Scarborough Southwest)	Hughes
Julian	Lapointe
Latendresse	Laverdière
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)	Leslie
Liu	Mai
Marston	Martin
Masse	May
Michaud	Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)
Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)	Mourani
Nantel	Nicholls
Nunez-Melo	Papillon
Péclet	Perreault
Pilon	Rafferty
Rankin	Ravignat
Raynault	Rousseau
Sandhu	Scott
Sellah	Sims (Newton—North Delta)
Sitsabaiesan	Stewart
Stoffer	Sullivan
Thibeault	Toone
Tremblay	Turmel — 82

PAIRED

Nil

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): I declare the motion, as amended, carried.

YEAS

Members

Ablonczy	Adams
Adler	Aglukkaq
Albas	Albrecht
Alexander	Allen (Welland)
Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac)	Allison
Ambler	Ambrose
Anders	Anderson
Angus	Armstrong
Ashton	Aspin
Aubin	Baird
Barlow	Bateman
Bellavance	Bennett
Benoit	Benskin
Bergen	Bezan
Blanchette	Block
Boivin	Borg
Boughen	Boutin-Sweet
Brahmi	Braid
Breitkreuz	Brisson
Brown (Leeds—Grenville)	Bruinooge
Butt	Calandra
Calkins	Cannan
Carmichael	Caron
Carrie	Casey
Cash	Chan
Charlton	Chicoine
Chisholm	Chong
Choquette	Christopherson
Clarke	Cleary
Comartin	Côté
Cotler	Crockatt
Crowder	Cullen
Cuzner	Daniel
Davidson	Davies (Vancouver East)
Day	Dechert
Devolin	Dewar
Dion	Dionne Labelle
Doré Lefebvre	Dreeschen
Dubé	Dubourg
Duncan (Vancouver Island North)	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	Dusseault
Dykstra	Easter
Eyking	Falk
Fast	Findlay (Delta—Richmond East)
Finley (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Fletcher
Foote	Fortin
Freeland	Freeman
Fry	Galipeau
Garrison	Genest
Genest-Jourdain	Giguère
Gill	Glover
Godin	Goguen
Goldring	Goodale
Goodyear	Gosal
Gourde	Gravelle

Adjournment Proceedings

Grewal	Groguhé
Harper	Harris (Scarborough Southwest)
Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	Hawn
Hayes	Hiebert
Hillyer	Hoback
Holder	Hsu
Hughes	James
Jones	Julian
Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission)	Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's)
Kenney (Calgary Southeast)	Kent
Kerr	Komarnicki
Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings)	Lake
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Latendresse	Lauzon
Laverdière	Lebel
LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard)	Leef
Leitch	Lemieux
Leslie	Leung
Liu	Lizon
Lobb	Lukiwski
Lunney	MacAulay
MacKay (Central Nova)	MacKenzie
Maguire	Mai
Marston	Martin
Masse	May
Mayes	McCallum
McColeman	McGuinty
McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood)	McLeod
Menegakis	Michaud
Moore (Port Moody—Westwood—Port Coquitlam)	
Moore (Fundy Royal)	
Morin (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine)	Morin (Laurentides—Labelle)
Mourani	Murray
Nantel	Nicholls
Nicholson	Norlock
Nunez-Melo	Obhrai
O'Connor	Oliver
O'Neill Gordon	O'Toole
Pacetti	Papillon
Paradis	Payne
Péclet	Perreault
Pilon	Poillievre
Preston	Rafferty
Rajotte	Rankin
Rathgeber	Ravignat
Raynault	Regan
Reid	Rempel
Richards	Rickford
Ritz	Rousseau
Sandhu	Saxton
Scarpaleggia	Schellenberger
Scott	Seeback
Sellah	Shea
Shiple	Shory
Sims (Newton—North Delta)	Sitsabaiesan
Smith	Sopuck
Sorenson	St-Denis
Stewart	Stoffer
Strahl	Sullivan
Sweet	Thibeault
Toet	Toone
Tremblay	Trost
Trottier	Trudeau
Truppe	Turmel
Uppal	Valeriote
Van Kesteren	Van Loan
Vaughan	Wallace
Warawa	Warkentin
Watson	Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country)
Weston (Saint John)	Wilks
Williamson	Wong
Woodworth	Young (Oakville)
Young (Vancouver South)	Yurdiga
Zimmer — 255	

NAYS

Nil

PAIRED

Nil

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): I declare the motion carried. Consequently, this bill is referred to the Standing Committee on Health.

(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

● (1920)

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): I wish to inform the House that because of the delay, there will be no private members' business hour today. Accordingly, the order will be rescheduled for another sitting.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[English]

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to pursue a question that I initially asked on October 10. The Minister of the Environment responded to my question. It has been catalogued tonight under aboriginal affairs, but it really touches on a number of key questions. It touches on energy policy, environmental impacts, and first nations rights. The issue is that of the proposed Site C dam.

When I asked about this dam on October 10, the federal government had not yet rendered a decision in response to a joint federal-provincial panel that reviewed the project.

This is an extraordinarily large megaproject. Some people are perhaps not aware of it, but British Columbians certainly know about it. This project is expected to top \$8 billion in costs. It will flood over 5,550 hectares along an 83-kilometre stretch of the valley. It is an extremely controversial project. The question I asked on October 10 related to the opposition to this project from Treaty 8 first nations in Alberta as well as from the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs and B.C. first nations.

A few days after I asked the question, the federal government committed to approving the Site C dam.

I see that the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment is indicating that he will be responding to me this evening, and that is very good news indeed.

Here is the problem. The joint environmental review panel found as a matter of fact that if Site C goes ahead, there would be significant environmental damage that would not be capable of mitigation. As well, the panel found that there was significant damage to the exercise of traditional and first nations rights, including fishing rights, hunting and trapping rights, and other customary uses of this land. These too could not be mitigated. This runs directly contrary to first nations treaty rights and to rights that are protected through the Constitution. Furthermore, the nature of aboriginal rights in title has been consistently upheld in the Supreme Court of Canada.

Adjournment Proceedings

Since the government approved the project, several first nations have now taken the matter to court, as have residents within the area. The Treaty 8 first nations, including the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation and the Mikisew Cree First Nation, both of which are in Alberta, as well as Treaty 8 signatories in northern British Columbia, have launched lawsuits against this project. Their contention—which I think is unassailable, but we will see what the courts have to say—is that they were never adequately consulted.

Site C is simply not needed. Even B.C. Hydro admits that it does not have a need for the power that would be generated from Site C, at least not for quite some time.

The joint federal-provincial panel was also clear that the economics of this project are dubious and would put the Province into debt, and that the Province and B.C. Hydro failed to adequately consider other forms of cleaner generation, which numerous economic studies say would provide more benefits to British Columbia, particularly for the first nations involved.

It is a matter of respecting first nations that we say no to Site C.

• (1925)

Mr. Colin Carrie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's question from October 10 deals with a matter that is now before the courts, so it would be inappropriate for me to touch on certain details. I can, however, use my allotted time to speak about the review process, the Site C clean energy project, and the potential benefits if the project proceeds.

Site C underwent a rigorous review by an independent panel that was jointly established with British Columbia. The environmental assessment met the requirements of both the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012, and the B.C. Environmental Assessment Act. As Canadians expect, we avoided duplication and delivered on our goal of one project, one review.

Public hearings were held in the Fort St. John region of British Columbia. The process included extensive, meaningful, and respectful consultations with first nations. The process drew upon federal and provincial scientific and technical experts. The process provided an opportunity for experts outside government to weigh in and provide a variety of information both for and against the project. The panel explicitly recognized the effective engagement of the public and aboriginal groups. The result was a thorough and comprehensive report that has informed the positive environmental assessment decisions of both governments.

The federal government is committed to making environmental assessment decisions based on the best available scientific evidence and to balancing economic and environmental considerations. This is what we have done for Site C. Construction of Site C would translate into about 10,000 direct person years of employment until 2024, and when indirect and induced jobs are added in, that figure climbs to 29,000 person years of employment.

This project would benefit future generations. Site C would support jobs and economic growth through clean renewable and dependable energy over the next 100 years. Over the life of the project, Site C would help mitigate the growth of greenhouse gas

emissions in Canada by preventing the discharge of between 34 and 76 megatonnes of CO₂ equivalent.

It is now up to the government of B.C. to make an investment decision. If the project does proceed, British Columbia Hydro will be obligated to fulfill specific conditions, including the implementation of mitigation measures identified by the Minister of the Environment. A failure to do so would be a violation of the federal law.

In closing, I want to remind the House that the legally binding nature of these federal conditions is a result of legislative changes passed by the House in 2012.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, the joint environmental review, federal and provincial, of Site C was quite scathing in its findings of the lack of economics in BC Hydro's projections. It also was very clear that there was going to be massive environmental damage and loss of farmland. The report was anything but unequivocal: it clearly stated that there would be losses that were not capable of mitigation.

As to the claims that Site C is anything like renewable or green, large-scale hydro facilities of this type are specifically not included globally in terms that would be applicable to renewable energy. The State of California, for instance, in its definition of renewable, would not include a project of this size. This is a damaging non-renewable, non-green project.

On the other hand, a number of studies, such as by KPMG and a number of other economic think tanks, have looked at the alternatives in green technology and other renewable energy that could have been put forward instead. Clean Energy BC, as the Association of Independent Power Producers of BC, has made a compelling case that we do not need Site C.

Mr. Colin Carrie: Mr. Speaker, our government is protecting the environment while supporting economic growth. This project would provide thousands of direct and indirect jobs and provide clean renewable energy for the next 100 years. Of all the possible ways to generate energy, this project would have the lowest level of greenhouse gas emissions. The project underwent a thorough independent review and extensive consultations with the public and aboriginal groups.

I am amazed to see the member oppose this project. Maybe it is because she would rather see a job-killing carbon tax. I am not sure.

Adjournment Proceedings

• (1930)

[*Translation*]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mrs. Maria Mourani (Ahuntsic, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, I am rising during this adjournment debate to talk about a question I asked the Minister of Public Safety regarding the violent radicalization of young Canadians to Islam and regarding what he could do in terms of prevention. I told him that a specific budget was needed to address this phenomenon, which is becoming increasingly common in our society.

According to a very recent 2014 report from the Department of Public Safety, the government knew that there were 130 individuals with Canadian connections who were abroad and who were suspected of terrorism-related activities. Syria is unfortunately the main destination of extremist travellers, as they are called. The report estimated that there were more than 6,000 of these people in Syria, including nearly 30 individuals who were apparently from Canada. Those are conservative figures. These individuals can also be found in Somalia, Algeria and, particularly, in Iraq. The government apparently knew that about 93 people had returned to Canada after travelling abroad for various terrorism-related reasons. This situation is very worrisome.

The government introduced a bill about terrorism. We have also seen government policies and bills on dual citizenship. I would like to talk about a young person whose mother I have been speaking to. I have had a number of conversations with her, and I will likely have more. This mother, a good person, a Canadian, had a son named Damian Clairmont, 22, who was born in Nova Scotia into a francophone Catholic family of Acadian heritage. His family moved to Calgary when he was seven. He had anxiety and identity problems and converted to Islam. At the beginning, everything was normal. He was very comfortable in the faith. Then he became radicalized. He went to Syria and was reportedly killed while fighting in Aleppo. This young man is an example, a tragedy. We are seeing this more and more. For example, there are the Gordon brothers and many other young people. What is tragic is that the bills being introduced will not do anything to change the situation. Damian Clairmont is Acadian. He does not even have dual citizenship. This kind of bill will not change his mother's life. What victims want, what the families of these young people want, are prevention programs. This woman is fighting for programs that will help other families and other young people. That is what I am asking of the government: a program with a budget so that we can work on prevention with families and young people.

[*English*]

Ms. Roxanne James (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Ahuntsic for providing me with this opportunity to highlight our Conservative government's commitment to combatting terrorism.

The government's approach to violent extremism is clearly articulated in this year's public report on the terrorist threat to Canada. I think the member actually referred to that report. In fact, our government has taken strong action to combat radicalization, with this being a key pillar of our counterterrorism strategy.

Additionally, the RCMP has developed a countering violent extremism program, which consists of working with local law enforcement partners to prevent individuals from engaging in terrorist or other criminal activities. The RCMP's countering violent extremism efforts complement our counterterrorism approaches, which are designed to disrupt individuals who have mobilized and are committed to further criminal action.

However, there are in fact many facets to countering terrorism. Our Conservative government has a strong record in this area. We have given law enforcement new tools by making it a crime to go overseas to engage in terrorist activities. We have given authorities tools to strip Canadian citizenship from those who engage in terrorist activities.

In fact, despite what we hear in the House day after day from the opposition, we have increased the funding for our national security agencies, such as the RCMP and CSIS, by one-third since forming government.

Unfortunately, we have not found opposition support for any of our past measures. Most recently in this House we introduced new measures to allow our national security agencies to better track threats to Canada.

Although the record of NDP support for any of our legislation on combatting terrorism is zero, I certainly hope that the member opposite will encourage her new-found friends in the NDP to take a tougher stand when it comes to terrorism and how we keep Canadians safe.

• (1935)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Maria Mourani: Mr. Speaker, following the attack in Parliament and the events that took place in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, which resulted in the death of two soldiers, the RCMP clearly stated that it needs resources to do its work.

The government has to stop hiding behind the RCMP by saying that it is already doing prevention. The RCMP is doing excellent work, but it is not necessarily its job to do prevention. The RCMP can do prevention, but it does repression.

There are organizations dedicated to prevention, but they do not have the means to do their work. The government invested in prevention to address street gang activity, and now it has to invest specifically in a prevention agenda for youth. Now is the time to do that. The government must not wait until other youth become radicalized.

[*English*]

Ms. Roxanne James: Mr. Speaker, as I have said, our Conservative government is committed to addressing the problem of radicalization to violence. We will continue to take action to keep Canadians safe from radical and violent terrorists. It is why we passed the Strengthening Canadian Citizenship Act. It is why we passed, at second reading, the protection of Canada from terrorists act yesterday. It is why we passed the Combating Terrorism Act, which makes it an offence to travel abroad to engage in terrorist activities.

Adjournment Proceedings

In closing, it is important to note that, although the member has brought this topic to the House tonight for debate, she has not supported a single measure that this government has put forward to combat terrorism. Perhaps this may help explain to her constituents why she has now chosen to join the NDP.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bruce Stanton): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:38 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Wednesday, November 19, 2014

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS			
St. Albert Small Business Week		Mr. Harper	9535
Mr. Rathgeber	9531	Mr. Mulcair	9535
Retirement Congratulations		Mr. Harper	9535
Mr. Harris (Cariboo—Prince George)	9531	Access to Information	
World Day for Prevention of Child Abuse		Mr. Trudeau	9535
Ms. Doré Lefebvre	9531	Mr. Harper	9536
RED FM Radiothon		Infrastructure	
Mr. Shory	9532	Mr. Trudeau	9536
Holodomor		Mr. Harper	9536
Ms. Freeland	9532	Intergovernmental Relations	
Jerusalem		Mr. Trudeau	9536
Mr. Adler	9532	Mr. Harper	9536
Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month		Poverty	
Mr. Comartin	9532	Ms. Turmel	9536
Municipal Elections 2014		Mr. Kenney	9536
Mr. Cannan	9532	Ms. Sitsabaiesan	9536
ALS Ice Bucket Challenge		Mr. Kenney	9536
Ms. Adams	9533	Ms. Sitsabaiesan	9536
ALS Ice Bucket Challenge		Mr. Kenney	9537
Mr. Thibeault	9533	Employment Insurance	
Taxation		Mr. Aubin	9537
Mr. Butt	9533	Mr. Kenney	9537
Pay Equity		Ms. Sims	9537
Ms. Liu	9533	Mr. Kenney	9537
Taxation		Mr. Sullivan	9537
Mr. Williamson	9533	Mr. Kenney	9537
ALS Ice Bucket Challenge		Housing	
Mr. Cuzner	9534	Ms. Boutin-Sweet	9537
Taxation		Ms. Bergen	9538
Mr. Dechert	9534	Infrastructure	
Child Care		Mr. Rankin	9538
Ms. Charlton	9534	Mr. Lebel	9538
Taxation		Mr. Gravelle	9538
Mr. Richards	9534	Mr. Rickford	9538
		Mr. Vaughan	9538
		Mr. Lebel	9538
		Ms. Murray	9538
		Mr. Lebel	9538
		Regional Economic Development	
		Mr. McGuinty	9539
		Mr. Rickford	9539
		National Defence	
		Mr. Chisholm	9539
		Mr. Nicholson	9539
		Ms. Michaud	9539
		Mr. Nicholson	9539
		Veterans Affairs	
		Mr. Chicoine	9539
		Mr. Gill	9539

ORAL QUESTIONS

Child Care	
Mr. Mulcair	9535
Mr. Harper	9535
Mr. Mulcair	9535
Mr. Harper	9535
Mr. Mulcair	9535
Mr. Harper	9535
Health	
Mr. Mulcair	9535

Mr. Stoffer	9539
Mr. Gill	9540
National Defence	
Mrs. Ambler	9540
Mr. Nicholson	9540
Access to Information	
Mr. Angus	9540
Mr. Albas	9540
Mr. Boulerice	9540
Mr. Albas	9540
Citizenship and Immigration	
Mrs. Groguhé	9540
Mr. Alexander	9540
Mr. Cash	9541
Mr. Alexander	9541
Fisheries and Oceans	
Ms. Foote	9541
Mrs. Shea	9541
Mr. LeBlanc (Beauséjour)	9541
Mrs. Shea	9541
Citizenship and Immigration	
Mr. Nicholls	9541
Mr. Alexander	9541
Mr. Godin	9541
Mr. Alexander	9542
National Defence	
Mr. Carmichael	9542
Mr. Nicholson	9542
Public Safety	
Mr. Dion	9542
Mr. MacKay	9542
Health	
Mrs. Hughes	9542
Ms. Ambrose	9542
Taxation	
Mr. Warkentin	9542
Mr. Kenney	9543
Canada Post	
Ms. Borg	9543
Mr. Watson	9543
Natural Resources	
Mr. Bellavance	9543
Mr. Rickford	9543
Presence in Gallery	
The Speaker	9543
ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS	
Foreign Affairs	
Mr. Obhrai	9543
Government Response to Petitions	
Mr. Lukiwski	9543

Committees of the House	
Procedure and House Affairs	
Mr. Preston	9544
Public Accounts	
Mr. Christopherson	9544
Procedure and House Affairs	
Mr. Preston	9544
Motion for concurrence	9544
(Motion agreed to)	9544
Freedom of Expression and Association in Hong Kong	
Mr. Dewar	9544
Motion	9544
(Motion agreed to)	9544
Petitions	
Sex Selection	
Mr. Bruinooge	9544
The Environment	
Ms. Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	9544
Iraq	
Ms. Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona)	9544
Canadian Armed Forces	
Mr. Valeriote	9544
Firearms Legislation	
Mr. Sopuck	9544
Seed Industry	
Mr. Gravelle	9545
Semiahmoo Bay Beach	
Ms. Murray	9545
Asbestos	
Mr. Martin	9545
Falun Gong	
Mr. Cotler	9545
Canada Post	
Mr. Allen (Welland)	9545
National Garden Day	
Mr. Allen (Welland)	9545
Prescription Drugs	
Ms. Duncan (Etobicoke North)	9545
Canada Post	
Mrs. Sellah	9545
Agriculture	
Mrs. Sellah	9546
Canada Post	
Mr. McGuinty	9546
Health Care	
Mr. McGuinty	9546
The Environment	
Ms. Quach	9546
The Environment	
Ms. May	9546
Ms. May	9546
Dementia	
Mr. Angus	9546
Falun Gong	
Mr. Rathgeber	9546
Agriculture	
Mr. Lamoureux	9546

Questions Passed as Orders for Returns

Mr. Lukiwski 9546

Motions for Papers

Mr. Lukiwski 9547

GOVERNMENT ORDERS**Agricultural Growth Act****Bill C-18—Time Allocation Motion**

Mr. Van Loan 9547

Motion 9547

Mr. Julian 9547

Mr. Ritz 9548

Mr. Lamoureux 9548

Mr. Fletcher 9548

Mrs. Day 9548

Mr. Angus 9549

Mr. Eyking 9549

Mr. Allen (Welland) 9550

Mr. Lemieux 9551

Ms. Pécelet 9551

Ms. St-Denis 9551

Mr. Côté 9551

Mr. Chan 9552

Motion agreed to 9553

Report Stage

Bill C-18. Report stage 9553

Mr. Angus 9553

Mr. Eyking 9555

Ms. LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard) 9555

Mr. Payne 9555

Mr. Côté 9557

Mrs. Day 9557

Ms. Duncan (Edmonton—Strathcona) 9557

Mr. Genest 9557

Mr. Eyking 9558

Mr. Côté 9558

Mr. Shipley 9559

Mr. Allen (Welland) 9560

Mr. Eyking 9560

Mr. Lamoureux 9561

Motions Nos. 2 to 5 and 7 to 52 negatived 9563

Motion No. 6 negatived 9564

Mr. Ritz 9564

Motion for concurrence 9564

Motion agreed to 9565

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**Committees of the House****Agriculture and Agri-Food**

Motion for concurrence 9565

Amendment to the amendment negatived 9566

Amendment agreed to 9567

Motion agreed to 9568

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**National Day of the Midwife Act**

Bill C-608. Second reading 9568

Motion agreed to 9569

(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee) 9569

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS**Aboriginal Affairs**

Ms. May 9569

Mr. Carrie 9570

Public Safety

Mrs. Mourani 9571

Ms. James 9571

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