



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

House of Commons Debates

VOLUME 148 • NUMBER 278 • 1st SESSION • 42nd PARLIAMENT

OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Thursday, March 29, 2018

—

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, March 29, 2018

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1005)

[*Translation*]

FISHERIES ACT

The House resumed from February 13 consideration of the motion that Bill C-68, An Act to amend the Fisheries Act and other Acts in consequence, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Darrell Samson (Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform you that I will be sharing my time with the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

[*English*]

I am very pleased to speak to Bill C-68, an act to amend the Fisheries Act. Before I get into the bill itself, I want to share with the House that my riding has various communities that benefit directly from fisheries. We have the Eastern Passage area, which is a very big community focused on fishing, and then we have other communities as we move down toward the eastern shore. Down in Seaforth and then into Chezzetcook we see all kinds of fishing taking place.

This is a very important bill, because we need to make sure we restore the protections that were cut back in 2012 by the former Conservative government. One wonders why those cuts were made. It is obvious, in the three years I have been here, that the Conservatives had a lot of difficulty balancing investment in the economy and the environment, which is so crucial.

The Conservatives moved forward to make those changes. It is important to know how they made those changes. Did they consult? Did they check with the fishers? Did they consult with environmentalists? Did they consult with the various coastal areas and harbours? No, they put it into an omnibus bill so that it was hidden. There was no consultation, and they just put it in there to slide it through and make cuts to various protections for the fisheries. It affected all the coastal communities, as well as the environment, and people had no opportunity to express themselves in any way, shape, or form.

However, this government took a very different approach. We consulted with Canadians. All Canadians had the opportunity to participate in this consultation. We also had two round tables, where Canadians could participate and offer their advice, suggestions, and comments. They could share some of the key areas where they had concerns.

Furthermore, our Minister of Fisheries suggested to the permanent committee on fisheries that it could have various witnesses come in and share their opinions on this important topic. This exercise allowed for 32 more recommendations to come forward. All those consultations and the feedback from Canadians in various forums allowed the minister, his staff, and the government to put forward legislation that would solidly ensure that we are protecting our fisheries and that we have some standards and safeguards in place, but also that we can do business, which is crucial for our economy.

We have invested over \$284 million in that initiative. We have invested as well in the ocean supercluster. We have invested \$1.5 billion in the oceans protection plan, and \$325 million in the Atlantic fisheries fund. That is a clear indication.

[*Translation*]

I would like to point out that these cuts were comparable to all of the other cuts made by the Conservative government, such as those that weakened our official language communities.

[*English*]

I will go back to the first point, which is the restoration of these protections to ensure that we are protecting our fish and fish habitats, which is crucial to protecting the resource. That resource is precious and important to all Canadians. We benefit from that resource, and we cannot afford not to protect it. In the House, not too long ago, I presented a petition from my constituents Blair Eavis and Walter Regan about the conservation funding for the partnership program, which is important to continue as well.

Also in the legislation are some guidelines about issuing permits. There have to be guidelines, and they are very important. If it is a major project, we have to have a permit process. If it is a small project, then we would basically have a code of practice. This would actually help the industry, because the people in the industry would know there is a process in place. If they are going to bid on projects, they would know that these steps need to be taken, and therefore they would consider that when they put out bids. That is important, but it was not in place in the process.

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When the minister considers issuing those permits, he has to consider what effect that would have on the fishing industry and the habitat, and whether there are alternate ways we could do these types of projects to ensure that we are balancing the economy, our resources, and the environment, which the Conservatives never did. That is a crucial issue that the past government did not do.

The minister would also be responsible for ensuring that the fish stocks are not depleted, and if they are depleted there has to be a plan in place to replenish that industry, because it is crucial. That is what it is all about: monitoring and making sure that we are safeguarding our resource, which is crucial.

To go further and continue with the transparency that our government has put forward since the beginning, we would have an official public registry. That registry would show what plans are in place to support, protect, and safeguard our industry. That would be public, so people would be able to see the plans and give feedback on those plans, which is crucial. Also, in that public registry we would see any permits that were issued, and on what conditions.

We would also see, which is very important, any agreements that may have been signed between the federal government and the provinces or the indigenous peoples. That is crucial. There is a very important piece about indigenous peoples' rights in this legislation, which was not considered by the past government in the last 10 years prior to our being here. This is what open and transparent government will bring, and we have done that on many occasions. Of course, we also had the political financing, which is another transparency legislation that we brought forward. There is access to information as well and the mandate letters that were made public. They were made public so that people would have an opportunity to speak on those issues.

This bill, to amend the Fisheries Act, would allow us to keep the fishery strong, but also to ensure that the environment is safe for a long, long time. These changes were crucial, and I am very proud of our government's commitment and our promise to move forward on this issue. In only two years, we are here with this legislation, which is extremely important.

• (1010)

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I almost feel sorry for the hon. member across the way. I feel as though he is a lamb being led to slaughter. He spoke very eloquently, but he gave us so much ammunition with that speech.

We have a member whose family has benefited from a decision made by the Minister of Fisheries. The member's brother has just been given a lucrative surf clam quota valued at hundreds of millions of dollars.

The member talked about the government investing in fisheries, but the government invested in the member's family. He talked about indigenous rights and reconciliation, which is so important, and yet his brother's bid had no first nations involvement until three weeks after the winning bid was announced.

I have to ask the member how he feels about the process. When it comes to the people in Grand Bank who are going to lose their jobs, what are the member's comments to them on this whole process? His family is definitely benefiting from the minister's corrupt decision.

Mr. Darrell Samson: Mr. Speaker, the member gives me a great opportunity. He says there is a lot to talk about, and there is.

The Conservatives cut protection. Let us think about this. They cut protection of our fisheries and our habitats. That is unbelievable. On top of that, the former Conservative government was going to issue those licences while it was ignoring the indigenous people, because the Conservatives did not feel they were important.

In our government, we are here for all Canadians, including indigenous people. That is what we are doing, and we will continue to do that.

• (1015)

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for his eloquent and very loud speech. I want to ask a question about the west coast.

Many British Columbians are very concerned about open net fish farms that are on our oceans, particularly those that are close to salmon migratory routes. The Cohen commission looked at this matter in depth. I am not sure those recommendations have been implemented by the previous government or the present government.

Many British Columbians and many Canadians want to make sure that we keep our coasts clean and that we preserve the iconic wild salmon that are such an important part of our coast and our economy as well as indigenous culture.

Could my hon. colleague tell us what his government's opinion is of the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam's promotion of the idea of moving open net ocean fish farms to closed containment systems inland? By doing that we could make sure we preserve our wild salmon, and in fact all of the species that live on our iconic west coast.

Mr. Darrell Samson: Mr. Speaker, there is no question that these issues are very important.

Our government has put forward an oceans protection plan with \$1.5 billion. That is a major investment in our coastal waters. The member will also find that a part of that funding, \$75 million, is for the coastal restoration fund. As well, there is \$64 million that will focus on transportation, ports and traffic.

On top of that, I would have to say that our government is working closely with the British Columbia government on these issues, which are very important. We will continue to find ways to support the communities in B.C. and across Canada.

Mr. Chris Bittle (St. Catharines, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend spoke about reconciliation with indigenous people. I know there is not very much time, but I was wondering if he could expand on their importance to the government, as well as what the previous government did on that particular subject.

Mr. Darrell Samson: Mr. Speaker, this question is a very important one. We could speak about this all day long.

Government Orders

We know of the challenges of indigenous people and their communities. There are challenges, for example, in education and health. As a government, we need to do much more. Our government has taken many initiatives. One has to do with water in, I believe it is, 54 communities in the last two years. There have been many investments in housing and health. Those are very important areas that we need to invest in. We should have been doing this a long time ago. It is our responsibility. We are all Canadians, and we will do it together.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by acknowledging we are on the traditional territory of the Algonquin people, and express gratitude to them for their generosity and patience. *Meegwetch*.

I also want to thank the hon. member for Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook for sharing his time with me, and acknowledge this shows a spirit of respect toward opposition benches from the current Liberal government. I am grateful for the opportunity to speak, although I still must object to the use of time allocation and reducing time for debate in this place. However, the respect shown in shortening time but still allowing a member such as me to have at least one crack in second reading to this very important legislation is appreciated. It is particularly appreciated when I stand to speak, with shared time from a Liberal member, with the intention of attacking Liberal legislation, which I have done recently with shared time.

Today is a different occasion. Bill C-68 would repair the damage done to the Fisheries Act under former budget implementation omnibus bill, Bill C-38, in the spring of 2012, as the hon. member for Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook was just referencing. This bill goes a long way. Within the ambit of what the Minister of Fisheries can do, it would repair the damage done by omnibus budget bill, Bill C-38, in relation to the Fisheries Act. I want to speak to that, as well as the one aspect where it would not fully repair the damage.

This is definitely a historic piece of legislation. The Fisheries Act was brought in under Sir John A. Macdonald. Canada has had a fisheries act for 150 years. That act traditionally dealt with what is constitutionally enshrined as federal jurisdiction over fish, and some people may wonder where the environment landed in the Constitution of Canada and the British North America Act. Where was the environment? The fish are federal. The water is provincial if it is fresh water, and federal if it is ocean water, so there has always been a mixed jurisdiction over the environment.

Over fish, there has been no question. Fish are federal. In the early 1980s, this act received a significant improvement, which was to recognize that fish move around and they cannot be protected without protecting their habitat. The Fisheries Act was modernized with a real degree of environmental protection. It had always been a strong piece of environmental legislation, because if we protect fish then we tend to protect everything around them.

In this case, the Fisheries Act was improved in the early eighties by a former minister of fisheries, who by accident of history, happened to be the father of the current Minister of Fisheries. It was the Right. Hon. Roméo LeBlanc. We use the term “right honourable” because he went on to be our Governor General. He amended the Fisheries Act in the 1980s to include protection of fish habitat, requiring a permit from the federal Minister of Fisheries if that

habitat was either temporarily or permanently harmed or damaged. This piece of legislation is the significant pillar upon which much of Canada's environmental regulation rested.

What happened in Bill C-38 in the spring of 2012 was a travesty that remains in the annals of parliamentary history as the single worst offence against environmental legislation and protection by any government ever. It was followed up with a second omnibus budget bill in the fall of 2012, Bill C-45, which took an axe to the Navigable Waters Protection Act. In the spring, Bill C-38 repealed the Environmental Assessment Act and replaced it with a bogus act, which I will return to and discuss. Bill C-38 also repealed the Kyoto Protocol Implementation Act, the National Roundtable on Environment and the Economy, and gutted the Fisheries Act.

Rather than go on about that, the hon. member who was just speaking referenced the changes made. I can tell people some of the changes that were made, and I was so pleased to see them repealed. When one opens a copy of Bill C-68, the first thing one sees is subclause 1(1), “The definitions commercial, Indigenous and recreational in subsection 2(1) of the Fisheries Act are repealed.” This is not a scientific thing. This is what Bill C-38 did to our Fisheries Act. Fish were no longer fish. They were only fish if they were commercial, indigenous, or recreational. That language came straight from a brief from industry. It did not come from civil servants within the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. It came from the Canadian Electricity Association. That is repealed.

This bill would bring back protections for habitat. It goes back to looking at some of the foundational pieces of how the Fisheries Act is supposed to work, and then it goes farther.

● (1020)

I have to say I was really surprised and pleased to find in the bill, for the first time ever, that the Fisheries Act will now prohibit the taking into captivity of whales. That was a very nice surprise. It is proposed section 23.1. I asked the minister the other day in debate if he would be prepared to expand this section with amendments, because over on the Senate side, the bill that was introduced by retired Senator Wilfred Moore and is currently sponsored by Senator Murray Sinclair, and I would be the sponsor of this bill if it ever makes it to the House, Bill S-203, would not only ban the taking of whales into captivity but the keeping of whales in captivity. I am hoping when this bill gets to the fisheries committee. We might be able to expand that section and amend it so that we can move ahead with the protection of whales.

This bill is also forward-looking by introducing more biodiversity provisions and the designation of areas as ecologically sensitive, work that can continue to expand the protection of our fisheries.

I will turn to where there are gaps. Because I completely support this bill, while I do hope for a few amendments, they come down to being tweaks.

Government Orders

Where does this bill fail to repair the damage of Bill C-38? It is in a part that is beyond the ability of the Minister of Fisheries to fix. That is the part about why Harper aimed at the Fisheries Act, the Navigable Waters Protection Act, and the Environmental Assessment Act.

There was not random violence in this vandalism; it was quite focused. It was focused on destroying the environmental assessment process so that we would no longer be reviewing 4,000 projects a year. Of those 4,000 projects a year that were reviewed under our former Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, most of them, about 95% of them, were reviewed through screenings that were paper exercises, that did not engage hearings, and so forth. However, it did mean that, at a very preliminary level, if there was a problem with a project, a red flag could go up, and it could be booted up for further study.

There is a reason that the Fisheries Act habitat provisions were repealed. They were one of the sections listed in our former Environmental Assessment Act under what was called the “law list”, where a minister giving a permit under section 35 of our former Fisheries Act automatically triggered that the decision was subject to an environmental assessment.

Similarly, why did the former government take a hatchet to the Navigable Waters Protection Act? Like the Fisheries Act, it is an act we have had around for a long time, since 1881. It was not an act that had impeded the development of Canada or we would never have had a railroad. Since 1881, we have had the Navigable Waters Protection Act. The previous government took a real axe to it. The current Minister of Transport has gone a long way toward fixing it under one portion of Bill C-69.

This is why. Navigable waters permits also were a trigger under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. Do members see where I am going here? This was synchronized action. It was not random.

The current government has pledged to fix all of the damage done by the previous government to environmental laws. Where the failure to fix things is evident is in what is called the “impact assessment act” in Bill C-69. It has abandoned the concept of a law list altogether. It has abandoned the concept of having permits and environmental assessments required whenever federal money is engaged. In other words, the Harper imprint of going from 4,000 projects reviewed a year to a couple of dozen will remain the law of the land without significant improvement to Bill C-69. In particular, the decisions the Minister of Fisheries makes should be subject to an EA, just as the decisions of the Minister of Transport should be subject.

In my last minute, I want to turn our attention to something I hope the Minister of Fisheries will take up next, because he is doing a great job. I hope he will take up looking at open-pen salmon aquaculture. It must end. It is a threat to our wild salmon fishery on the Pacific coast. It is a threat to the depleted wild Atlantic salmon stocks on the Atlantic coast, where I am originally from. There is no Atlantic salmon fishery because it has been destroyed. However, there are still Atlantic salmon, which could restore themselves if they did not have to compete with the escapement of Atlantic salmon from fish farms in Atlantic Canada, and the destruction of habitat by

those farms. On the west coast, these are not even indigenous species that are escaping and threatening our wild salmon.

Let us close down open-pen fisheries, give aquaculture to the Minister of Agriculture, have fish in swimming pools on land, and let the Minister of Fisheries protect our coastal ecosystems.

• (1025)

Hon. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a great deal of respect for the member for both her excellent knowledge of the environment and also of process. She started out talking about process and time allocation, and I would like to ask her, because of her expertise in that area, for a solution.

We are sent to Parliament to accomplish. There is so much that has to be done in the year, and along with dilatory motions and everything, there has to be a way to get everything in. What some legislatures in the world use is programming, but there did not seem to be an appetite in opposition parties for that solution. Therefore, I wonder what the member would suggest, in light of the fact that in this and previous Parliaments, a number of dilatory motions can stop the agenda.

How can any government get its program through Parliament, on important bills like this, within a year, in the time it has?

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Yukon for a very useful question because I would love to see us fix the problem. I talked to colleagues of mine in the Parliament at Westminster. There is one Green Party member there, Caroline Lucas, leader of the Greens of the U.K. and Wales. She said do not go for that programming thing because it really does fast-track bills without enough time for debate.

What we should do is open up the process here. The hon. leader of the government in the House and the whip get frustrated and say they will have to bring in time allocation because they are not going to get the bill through. What is happening is due to the secretiveness of the meetings of House leaders and whips. They are trying to figure out how to schedule something. If those meetings were open, imagine if I could go to them. Imagine if any member could go. They could say, “Our side isn’t even being reasonable here. We ought to be able to provide a list of how many speakers we have on the bill”.

Another very helpful thing would be if we followed the rules that we still have, but which are now viewed as no longer in effect, such as that no member be allowed to give a speech that is a written speech. If members had to come here and give a speech on what they knew about the bill without notes, I think we would not find so many people at the last minute willing to stand up and give a speech on the matter before this place, and we might find we could move along more expeditiously, as they do in the Parliament at Westminster, where the only people speaking are those intimately knowledgeable of the question at hand.

Government Orders

• (1030)

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my neighbour from Saanich—Gulf Islands for her speech. As she knows, my riding is home to the iconic Cowichan River, which is a designated heritage river in British Columbia and home to salmon habitat.

I have handed a lot of petitions to the government on the status of the Lake Cowichan weir, which is responsible for managing flow rates into the Cowichan River. The government has acknowledged that summer low flows in the Cowichan River are a threat to fish and fish habitat, but there does not seem to be any explicit legal protection for environmental flows in the bill. I would like to hear her comments on that.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, the issue around environmental flows is one place we might be able to see this legislation amended. However, even as we are currently looking at it, on the question of protection of habitat when an artificial weir, such as the one at Lake Cowichan, and the flow rates have the effect of threatening the salmon population, I think the Minister of Fisheries would still have the power to act to protect those salmon.

However, the introduction of the term “environment flows” would clarify the matter, and I certainly would support it.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, does my hon. colleague have any evidence where the harmful cuts, in the words that are being put forth, or the changes that were made in 2012 to the Fisheries Act, made by the previous government, caused harmful destruction to fish and fish habitat?

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, this is my first opportunity to address the hon. member for Cariboo—Prince George since he returned from an illness, and I am so happy to see him back on the floor of the House.

I can give many examples from just my own riding. We had clam beds on Salt Spring Island that were being over-harvested and habitat was not being protected. When residents of my community contacted Fisheries and Oceans, it said it could not get there and do anything about it, and that it could not protect that habitat anymore. Every single fisheries officer within the Department of Fisheries and Oceans was also given a pink slip, so they did not have the capacity to go out and help.

I heard from some of my halibut fishing constituents that they were having trouble with habitat issues. It was widespread and quite disastrous, so we need to bring back the law and the individual officers who enforce the law.

The Deputy Speaker: For the benefit of all hon. members, I will let members know that we have crossed the five-hour mark after the first round of speeches on the bill that is before the House. Consequently, all speeches from this point onward will be limited to 10 minutes with five minutes for questions and comments.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Cariboo—Prince George.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a pleasure to speak to Bill C-68.

Bill C-68, from a policy perspective, is another piece of unnecessary legislation aimed at making Canadians feel good. It is filled with fluff. It is all about pandering to environmental groups. It

is all about making sure that those that backed the Liberals in the 2015 election get their due, much as what we heard earlier when the member of Parliament for Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook spoke.

If those who are in the audience were falling asleep previously, they should stay tuned, because I promise it is about to get more lively in the short period of time that I have to speak.

The member of Parliament for Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook talked about how proud he is of the government investing in fisheries and investing in areas within his region. His own family has just received a lucrative surf clam quota worth hundreds of millions of dollars. People heard that correctly. I am looking right at the camera and I am going to say that again. The brother of the Liberal member of Parliament for Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook just received a lucrative surf clam quota worth hundreds of millions of dollars, and all on a bid that has lots of questions about it.

Therefore, I would beg to differ in terms of some of the points that have been put forward about being open and transparent, and how the minister seems to be doing the right thing. Well, he is spending a lot of money; there is no two ways about it. He is spending a lot of money, but is value going to come out of that money? Who is benefiting from the money that is being spent? I would hesitate to say that Bill C-68 is going to be the stopgap for the changes the government is putting forth that it says are going to have such a profound impact on our waterways and our fisheries.

I sit on the fisheries committee. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans and Canadian Coast Guard has been before us numerous times. We heard just last week that our northern cod is at near decimated levels. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans and Canadian Coast Guard likes to throw money at things, but it does not like to throw money at things that are going to have an impact on those who are in the communities. It has not done anything that is going to help create more fish so that we have fish not only for today, but for the future.

The Liberals say that former Prime Minister Harper absolutely gutted the Fisheries Act. I will be the first to admit that the Fisheries Act has been around for 150 years. Maybe it needed some modernization, but the changes the government has put forward are more fluff than anything else.

As a matter of fact, numerous witnesses came before the committee, including academics, environmental groups, or NGOs that are a steady stream into the minister's office. We had local fishers and people in those communities who said that with the Conservatives at least they knew they had the ear of the ministers. Now they have to go through the NGOs to get to the ministers, because the ministers place greater importance on the NGOs than on those who actually matter the most, the communities and the Canadians that the policy impacts the most.

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It is interesting that the member of Parliament for Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, the Prime Minister, and the Minister of Fisheries stood up to talk about the surf clam and said that it was all about reconciliation, yet the winning bid had no first nations, no multiple first nations partners. This was a critical component of the bid criteria. There were no first nations partners, until after the bid was announced.

• (1035)

Three weeks later, there was an announcement of the first nations that were there. The bid actually included just placeholders, which said, “Hey, trust us, we’ll get that done”. Guess what? The brother of that member of Parliament, or the group that got the bid, was not even incorporated. It was not even a legal entity. It did not have a boat, a vessel, and did not have a facility to do this.

This leads people to believe that this just does not smell right. As a matter of fact, it sounds very corrupt. Therefore, it is very rich to have that member of Parliament stand in the House and preach about his open and transparent government that he is so proud of. Obviously, he is proud of it, because his family is benefiting from a quota worth hundreds of millions of dollars. That is unacceptable.

As we know, it is open and transparent if one is a Liberal insider or family member, and one would get the appointment. If one is a Liberal insider or family member, one would get the job. If one is a Liberal insider or family member, guess what? One would get the quota. That is what we are seeing.

Today, with Bill C-68, it is interesting that people are saying that Prime Minister Harper absolutely decimated the fishery. I will tell members that this is more of an attack on Prime Minister Harper by folks who dislike him than it is on his policy. That is shameful. Not one witness who came to our committee to testify on this could demonstrate any loss of fish habitat because of what was done in 2012, and that includes academics, environmental groups, fishers, and industry experts. Conservatives want to make sure that we have the appropriate balance between the economy and the environment. We do not want to see our rivers, lakes, and streams ruined.

I am a hunter and a fisher. My family has farmed, logged, fished, and hunted our property in the Cariboo Chilcotin for generations. We want to make sure it is there for future generations. It is shameful how we get this holier-than-thou attitude when all the Liberals are doing is pandering to special interest groups.

Members can tell I am a little heated, and I will tell them why. I was in Grand Bank, Newfoundland, earlier this week and I talked with Edgar, Brenda, Barbara, Bernice, Barry, Tom, and Kevin. I talked with people who are impacted by the policy decisions that the minister has made, which impact that community. With 300 years of fishing history, they have had their ups and downs, but they have had consistent economic viability. They have been okay for about 27 years in terms of the surf clam fishery.

This arbitrary decision to take away 25% of the quota from that community is not acceptable. They are going to see job losses. Edgar told us that he does not want to go on EI. He wants a job. He had 52 weeks of work this year, and with this decision, it looks like he will lose 17 weeks of work. He does not want EI. He wants to work. We heard that time and time again.

Shamefully, it seems that the minister is more intent on looking after his Liberal family and friends than the families of Grand Bank. It is disappointing and, frankly, it is shameful.

• (1040)

Mr. Chris Bittle (St. Catharines, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a few years back I was visiting Washington state. In Puget Sound, I had the opportunity to take a whale sightseeing tour. We followed a pod of orcas from Puget Sound all the way to within sight of Vancouver Island. It was impressive to watch these mammals travel this incredible distance.

In my part of the world, in Niagara, 20 minutes from my home, there is a place called Marineland, which has an orca in a very small tank. This piece of legislation speaks to that, and would prevent individuals from capturing whales like orcas for captivity. This is a practice that needs to end.

I wonder if the hon. member could comment on that practice and on what he and his party think about that.

• (1045)

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Speaker, there is no two ways about it. We live in a beautiful province. It is adjacent to Washington state. The waters are pristine. We have some of the most iconic views. When we hosted the world for the 2010 Winter Olympics, the world could see what Vancouver and British Columbia really have to offer.

I too have gone on whale watching trips and I agree that they are majestic and beautiful beasts. We should do whatever we can to save them.

I would like to pose a question to my colleague. Perhaps he could tell us how he feels about the brother of one of his Liberal colleagues getting a lucrative surf clam quota worth hundreds of millions of dollars.

Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for my colleague in regard to this fishery contract. In light of Shawinigate and the sponsorship scandal, I am a little concerned that the governing party is back to its old tricks.

I would like my colleague to please explain how this consortium that he described was able to get around the requirement that indigenous people be involved. I would be interested in knowing how that was achieved.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Speaker, that is an excellent question. Many people have questions regarding it, including first nation groups that actually submitted a bid. First nations submitted a bid and were unsuccessful and yet the successful group did not have any first nations in it. It only had placeholders. People in that group said not to worry about it, because they would get them after they won the bid, and that is what happened. There are a lot of questions.

The minister and the Prime Minister said how dare we pit first nations against non-first nations. This decision has nothing to do with reconciliation and more to do with just looking after Liberal friends and family. It is shameful, because many first nations put in bids and were unsuccessful. However, the group that won the bid had no first nations involved until three weeks after the winning bid was announced.

Government Orders

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, like the hon. member, I could not believe the audacity of the Liberal Party in having the member for Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook stand in the House and speak to this issue given the fact that his brother was just given hundreds of millions of dollars in quota.

The hon. member was in Newfoundland this week. He spoke generally about the impact that this has, about people wanting to work rather than being on employment insurance, and the Liberal Party's intention to make the employment insurance system the largest employer in this country.

I would like to hear what the hon. member heard in Newfoundland.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Mr. Speaker, I will tell the member exactly what we talked about. In Grand Bank we talked to a lady who said that people there have lost brothers, sons, fathers, uncles, and grandfathers in the fishery. The community has 300 years of fishery history. The scars of those losses go straight through the community. The minister has opened up those wounds all over again and has placed the community of Grand Bank in uncertain times.

I want to thank my hon. colleague for allowing me to bring the voices of the people of Grand Bank to the floor of the House once again.

Mr. Nick Whalen (St. John's East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is always great to rise in this House to talk about an issue that is so important to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, and certainly to the people from St. John's East.

Amending the Fisheries Act to bring it into modern times would provide the flexibility we need to make sure that we not only provide for the care and protection of marine mammals, such as porpoises, whales, and dolphins, but take into account indigenous concerns and make sure that our act and our fisheries protections takes their traditional knowledge and beliefs into account. It is also important that we provide some framework so that Canadians can better understand the decisions the minister will be making and how they will be made. It is important to make sure that there are advisory panels to consult on fees to make sure that people who are licensees under the Fisheries Act, who are engaged in the fishery, are appropriately paying into the system, but not overpaying into the system, and that when we administer the rights and responsibilities with respect to our offshore resources, stakeholders appropriately participate in that. The advisory council would be a great way to do that.

We also have to make sure that we meet our international obligations on fish habitat. We need to do the good work to protect the coastal waters of Canada under our international obligation under the Aichi target, which is 10% by 2020. To protect these areas, we need to make changes to the act so that we can protect fish habitat with respect to works, undertakings, or activities that may result in the death of fish or the harmful alteration, disruption, or destruction of fish habitat. In the case of Newfoundland and Labrador, this is obviously a very sensitive topic. Newfoundlanders and Labradorians care about the protection and growth of the biomass of fish off our coasts. At the same time, we need to make sure that we can undertake our enterprise so that we can maintain the high standard of living Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, and indeed all Cana-

dians, enjoy. This legislation would require that we both maintain access to the productive areas of our coasts and at the same time identify areas that are ecologically important. There is going to be a balance that needs to be struck.

My understanding is that the fisheries ministry has, through various mechanisms that already exist, hived off about 7.75% of Canada's waters for protection, meeting our target of 5% by December 31, 2017. However, there is still some way to go.

The member from Prince Rupert will have a chance to examine the changes we are proposing to the Fisheries Act in committee after, hopefully, we pass this here today. I encourage all members to vote in favour of it at this stage. The changes would allow the government to move forward and protect those next 2.25% or more of our coastal areas so that we can protect these ecologically important areas. We can protect things like cold-water coral off the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador or dogfish off the southern coast of Newfoundland and Labrador. We can make sure that our ecologically protected areas are interlinked so that species can travel safely through them, and important breeding grounds and important transitory areas for different marine mammals are protected.

Yesterday the minister made an important announcement about protecting right whales. It is a scary prospect that it is possible that the world may lose yet another species this year, the right whale. We saw a couple of weeks ago the loss of the last male white rhino, protected at Ol Pejeta, in Kenya. Here we are now in a situation where people are very concerned about the reproductive capacity of right whales in Atlantic waters as they pass through the Gulf of St. Lawrence through very important areas for industrial development in Canada. At the same time, we need protections such as the Minister of Transport is undertaking under the Transportation Act and also that the Minister of Fisheries is doing. The changes we are proposing would allow them to do more and do it in the right way and provide a period of time in which we could make quick decisions to save species.

I look forward to the protections that are coming. When oil and gas proponents met with me earlier this year, such as British Petroleum, for instance, on their desire to do offshore exploratory drilling off the coast of Nova Scotia, there was some concern that their ships, drill rigs, and whatnot were going to be expected to move at a slower pace through those waters.

● (1050)

I fully applaud the foresight of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency in including those conditions, because now we are seeing that this is going to be an important factor not only for oil and gas exploration but for other transportation in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. It is similar to what happened last year, is my understanding. It is heartwarming and good to see the government of the day putting in place the mechanisms, regulatory policy, and now legislation that will help Canada meet its international targets to protect cetaceans.

Statements by Members

The 45 days to address the proper management and control of the fisheries and conservation and to protect fishing is obviously very important in Newfoundland and Labrador. There is a strongly held belief, not always supported by the science, that cod is coming back. We see it coming back in Norway. We see it coming back in the North Sea. Iceland's cod fishery is recovering, yet Canada's cod fishery remains a bit stagnant. It is important to have hope. It is important to make sure that the science is done.

I applaud the government's earlier decision to hire more fishery scientists in Newfoundland and Labrador to help create a plan to see the regrowth of the cod stock. However, as we are seeing this year, the science does not support a regrowth. Cod still finds itself in the critical zone. To get back to the point where we can have a sustainable amount of biomass so that cod fishing can be undertaken safely, with the preservation of the resource, and historical amounts of cod can be taken and can support the infrastructure that is needed, requires that we be patient. We need to do the necessary science. It is good to see that the minister will be provided with special tools under the act to take special steps to put a halt to overfishing if the science deems it required.

Protecting, preserving, and restoring our environment should be key principles of the Fisheries Act to make sure that Canadians trust the act. Not all Canadians, when they think about the fisheries, think about them the same way Newfoundlanders do. I need that empathy for the environmentalists. When they look at the fisheries, they see that perhaps they have a larger impact on our environment than I do, but it is important that all Canadians have confidence that our fisheries are being undertaken in a sustainable way. I know that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have faith that they are and that more could be done. They have faith that the government is doing the right thing by putting scientists in place. They like that the focus is on the fisheries and that the Minister of Fisheries is taking this time to propose new legislation to bring it into the 21st century.

We do not want to return to the previous version of the Fisheries Act. We want to make the law even better than it was before. Through this process, it is not just something that has arisen from the imagination of the minister. It came after thousands of consultations undertaken by the minister and his department. All Newfoundlanders and Labradorians find this to be of critical importance to our future.

When the previous minister was in Newfoundland and Labrador early in this government's tenure, all Newfoundland and Labrador MPs were invited to participate in the consultations at that time. Those consultations have continued. People feel that their voices are being heard by the government, but not always, perhaps, by the department. Providing this link between Canadians, government ministries, and departments is important for confidence to be created. These changes will allow both environmentalists and people who are engaged in the fishery to have more confidence. They will allow us to meet our international obligations with respect to the preservation of 10% of our territory. They are long overdue.

Without further ado, I would like to encourage all members of the House to support the bill at second reading and get it to committee, where people can answer some of the questions my colleague from Cariboo—Prince George had earlier. We can have this improved for future generations of Canadians and for the preservation and growth of our resource.

• (1055)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for St. John's East will have five minutes for questions and comments when the House next returns to debate on the question that is before the House.

Now we will proceed to statements by members.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

RETIREMENT CONGRATULATIONS

Mrs. Mona Fortier (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today marks the last day in the remarkable public service career of Yaprak Baltacioglu. Since joining the public service almost 30 years ago, her smarts, her drive, and her style of service leadership have led her to hold senior positions across government, including deputy secretary to cabinet at the Privy Council, deputy minister of agriculture, deputy minister of Transport, deputy minister of Infrastructure, and since 2012, secretary of the Treasury Board.

[Translation]

Under her watch, the Treasury Board Secretariat of Canada was named one of Canada's top 100 employers.

In addition to leading departments and advising ministers and prime ministers, Yaprak also trained a new generation of women leaders in the public service, empowering women to take their rightful place in the upper ranks of government. In fact, 70% of the Treasury Board's top executives are women.

• (1100)

[English]

Please join me in giving our sincere congratulations and best wishes to Yaprak on her retirement. We thank her on behalf of all Canadians.

* * *

STAN BLOCK

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today in memory of Stan Block, who passed away from the midst of the Rocky Mountain Calvary Chapel congregation and community on February 27, 2018, at the youthful age of 65. Stan will be greatly missed by Lori, his wife of 43 years, his children, grandchildren, mother, siblings, friends, and fellow congregation members.

Stan dedicated his life to serving God, which included 17 years as an associate pastor at Rocky Mountain Calvary Chapel. Those of us who knew Stan, loved him for the positive, encouraging, and faithful servant he was. He leaves a legacy of running “with patience the race that is set before us. Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith”.

Statements by Members

My sincerest condolences go out to the family, especially his wife, Lori, to his friends, and to his fellow congregation members. Stan leaves a legacy of service to Christ that long will fuel the passion of those Stan brought to Him.

* * *

WINNIPEG JETS

Mr. Dan Vandal (Saint Boniface—Saint Vital, Lib.): Mr. Speaker,

In mid-April, Winnipeggers will don everything and anything white, A white-out is coming, and the Bell MTS Place will be a sight.

[*Translation*]

After a long snowy winter that wasn't so warm,
My hometown is bracing for another big storm.

[*English*]

"We are coming for Stanley" is our new chant of choice,
for Wheeler, Laine, Hellebuyck, Scheifele, too many to voice.

[*Translation*]

For Perreault and his team, we'll chant and we'll cheer,
They'll lead us to victory, year after year.

[*English*]

Over the past couple of weeks, our city has tasted much victory,
Our curling Team Jones and our Bisons women's hockey,
You see, Mr. Speaker, Winnipeg is aglow,
as we rise together, and say, "Go Jets go."

* * *

DAFFODIL MONTH

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this April is Daffodil Month, and once again, Canadians across the country will be donating their time and money to the Canadian Cancer Society.

No family is untouched by this disease. Two in five Canadians receive a cancer diagnosis in their lifetime, yet thanks to improved treatments, the survival rate has now reached 60%. This is in no small part thanks to the research and support provided by daffodil sales, yet the fight against this disease goes on, and too many Canadians lose loved ones to cancer every year.

Through the generosity of Canadians and the hard work of the Canadian Cancer Society, we know that we will make great progress in the future. On behalf of the New Democratic Party of Canada, I wholeheartedly encourage all members of this House and Canadians everywhere to show their support this April by wearing a daffodil and giving all they can in the fight against cancer.

* * *

EASTER

Ms. Filomena Tassi (Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this weekend, millions of Canadians and well

over a billion people around the world will gather together with family and friends to celebrate Easter. For Christians, Easter is one of the holiest seasons, when we celebrate the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is a season when we focus on the joy that can often come after struggle and sorrow.

I would like to point out to this House His Holiness's remarks in his Palm Sunday sermon, in which he encouraged youth to continue to advocate for justice.

[*Translation*]

I urge our young people to not be afraid to advocate for justice.

I would like to wish a happy Easter to my colleagues and constituents who celebrate Holy Week.

[*English*]

Let us take time, as we gather with loved ones, and be inspired by the beautiful Easter message of hope and renewal.

[*Translation*]

Happy Easter to one and all.

Buona Pasqua.

* * *

[*English*]

HOLY WEEK

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is Holy Week, when Christians observe Passover, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday to remember the crucifixion and triumphant resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is because of His loving sacrifice for each of us we have forgiveness and hope.

This week we also gather with family and friends. Diane and I will be spending Easter in Ottawa with our son Jon, our wonderful daughter-in-law Jen, and our grandchildren Carrington and Richie. They are visiting from Kentucky.

Jon is a brilliant professor and doctor of microbiology at the University of Louisville. Jen is a director at Louisville's largest long-term and palliative care facility for seniors. Carrington likes to play the ukulele and wants to be the president of United States. Richie is very smart, collects eggs from the chickens on their farm, and is actually a superhero. I know they will enjoy their visit in Canada's Parliament.

This is a very special weekend, and our family wishes everyone a very wonderful Easter.

* * *

●(1105)

[*Translation*]

FIGHT AGAINST CANCER

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Youth), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this past weekend, with my family by my side, I celebrated six years in remission. Every year, I celebrate by volunteering with some amazing organizations in Vaudreuil-Soulanges that work hard every day to help people battling cancer, and this year was no exception.

*Statements by Members**[English]*

This year, I proudly took part in the “Great Spin” with my friend and neighbour Mei-Lin Yee, who invited her “Sisters Reloaded” and other members of our community to raise much-needed awareness and funds at Physical Park.

On April 28, I will be joining the Hudson Fire Department, the Canadian Cancer Society, and organizer Ali Nadeau for Hudson's 5th annual “Shave 2 Save”, helping to shave heads, raise awareness, and fundraise.

[Translation]

In June, I will take part in the 15th edition of the Relay for Life at the Pincourt Olympic Park. This year, I am honoured to serve alongside 14 outstanding ambassadors led by our captain, Pincourt mayor Yvan Cardinal. I encourage all members of our community to support these initiatives and seize every opportunity to take action in the fight against cancer.

* * *

*[English]***LORD READING LAW SOCIETY**

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Lord Reading Law Society on its 70th anniversary.

Lord Reading, which was created in 1948, was founded with the mandate of lobbying for fair representation of Jewish attorneys within the Quebec Bar and on the bench following decades of discrimination. As discrimination against Jewish attorneys was gradually eradicated, Lord Reading turned its attention to fighting for the rights of all minorities, including Quebec's English-speaking attorneys and judges.

I would ask all my colleagues to help me honour this terrific organization. Its president David Ettegui, vice-president Inna Nekhim, as well as past president Larry Markowitz join us on the Hill today. Let us wish them continued success in their efforts to promote the equality and rights of all within the legal community and Quebec society at large.

I will take this opportunity to wish all my colleagues a very happy Passover.

* * *

LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

Mr. Len Webber (Calgary Confederation, CPC): Mr. Speaker, most of us go to work in the morning expecting to come home again. This is not a luxury that our nation's front-line law enforcement officers enjoy. Their jobs are unpredictable and so are the consequences of their work.

Every day they go to work hoping they will come home after their shift. Every day they put their lives on the line. Every day we borrow these courageous individuals from their families. Their families live in a constant state of trepidation, until they hear the reassuring sound of the front door opening.

This week, Constable Jordan Forget, a five-year member of the Calgary Police Service, was shot twice in the line of duty. While his

injuries are serious, he is stable and expected to recover from his wounds, and thank God for that.

On behalf of all Calgarians, we want to thank Jordan and his fellow officers for their service. We wish Jordan a speedy and full recovery and look forward to having him back on duty again.

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*[Translation]***ANIMAL WELFARE**

Mrs. Alexandra Mendès (Brossard—Saint-Lambert, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, some of my Liberal colleagues and I are passionate about animal welfare. During our awareness sessions, we have discussed the transportation of animals to slaughter and the sometimes atrocious conditions in which they are transported.

[English]

However, we were heartened to learn that it is possible to do much better.

Last fall we met with Luckhart Transport, a family-owned company from Ontario. It has voluntarily upgraded its trailers to ensure the humane transportation of livestock. Six years ago, Angie Luckhart and her family decided to change their business model to ensure the humane handling of animals. This meant that Luckhart had to be innovative in retrofitting existing trailers with better designs to include onboard water, ventilation systems, and ramps that would be easier to climb, all for the benefit of animals, as well as keeping up with how other countries were handling livestock.

Luckhart is an exemplary Canadian company that has embraced what technology has to offer to better the transportation of livestock.

I congratulate Angie and her entire team.

* * *

WHITE HELMETS

Ms. Iqra Khalid (Mississauga—Erin Mills, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I watched footage of a small boy, covered in dust, face streaked with blood, eyes baring hopelessness, being pulled out of rubble and into an ambulance. The brave people who saved this boy's life, along with tens of thousands like him, wore white helmets, and belonged to the Syrian civil defence. It is a team of 3,700 civilian volunteers who devote their lives to helping vulnerable Syrians in conflict areas. Since 2013, 243 white helmets have lost their lives.

They are in Ottawa today so MPs can learn first-hand about the brave work they do in Syria, and what our Liberal government support has meant for them on the ground. Support from our government has helped them increase women volunteers in their organization and provide more services for women and children, including access to first aid.

I ask my colleagues to join me in commending their bravery, their dedication, and their commitment to saving lives. They are the heroes of our time.

Statements by Members

●(1110)

PETER MUNK

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Niagara Falls, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to rise in the House today to pay homage to a great Canadian, Peter Munk. Yesterday, we learned of his passing at the age of 90.

Peter Munk founded one of the world's largest gold producers, Barrick Gold Corporation, and Mr. Munk became the epitome of the Canadian dream. He was born in Budapest and escaped Hungary with his family in 1944, when the Nazis invaded. He arrived in Canada with only a suitcase and, among other things, sold Christmas trees to help support himself as a student.

One of his most famous quotes was, "You can create wealth. You are entitled to the joy of this creation. But ultimately society makes it possible, and this wealth should flow back to society." He lived by that philosophy and donated over \$300 million to worthy causes and institutions over his lifetime.

We extend our thoughts and prayers to his wife Melanie, their children, and grandchildren.

He set the "gold standard" for the rest of us and will be sorely missed.

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WORLD AUTISM DAY

Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on World Autism Day, I would like to pay tribute to the leadership of Wendy and Sergio Cocchia.

When seeking a diagnosis for their son over 20 years ago, Wendy and Sergio came to believe that every individual and family in B.C. affected by autism should have access to state-of-the-art resources for assessment, treatment, education, support, and research for full lifespan needs, from diagnosis to being a senior citizen. Now the Pacific Autism Family Network, and generous partners, have raised over \$32 million.

Over 60 organizations bring essential resources together in one very special building, and through satellite locations across B.C. This year, an additional \$11 million in budget 2018 added the Autism-Intellectual Disability National Resource and Exchange Network.

West Vancouverites, like Wendy and Sergio Cocchia, Jean and the late Michael Lewis, and many more, are tireless and give so much.

It is with gratitude that we celebrate all the families on World Autism Day.

* * *

FAMILIES OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP): Two months ago, a reporter from *The Hill Times* stopped me outside the House of Commons and asked a question. She said, "Prince Harry and Meghan Markle are getting married. Do you have any advice for them?" I said, "Yes. Learn to cut each other some slack." "Is that what you do for your wife", she asked. I said, "No. Just the opposite.

I would not be here if she didn't cut me an incredible amount of slack."

Being in Ottawa six months of the year and away from home much of the time when we are in our ridings requires incredible sacrifices by our families. We miss special occasions, day-to-day household crises, conversations, and hugs, to name just a few. We do it because we all want a better Canada and we all want to serve our constituents well. However, it does come with a personal cost.

Therefore, I thank my family, Audrey, Shawn, Kellie, Adrian and Lalita, for its love and support. I would also like to thank the families of all members for cutting their favourite MPs a lot of slack and for sharing them with us, with their constituents, and with all of Canada. It is very much appreciated.

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CANADA SUMMER JOBS PROGRAM

Mr. Alexander Nuttall (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for months now my colleagues and I have been speaking against the Liberal's values test on jobs for youth. I am happy to see that the minister intends on scrapping it. By getting rid of the attestation, the government has admitted it was wrong about this in the first place. However, so far, nothing has been done to fix the situation for this year.

I have met with hundreds of organizations since last December, and they are all saying the same thing. Thousands of underprivileged youth will not get to go to summer camps this year. Thousands of university students will be without summer jobs this year. Thousands of homeless people will not get the same shelter support this year. Thousands of impoverished seniors will not receive health care support this year.

The government needs to act now to ensure the youth this year have the same opportunities they have had each and every year before.

* * *

●(1115)

GOVERNOR GENERAL'S AWARD

Ms. Kate Young (London West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today, I would like to take the time to congratulate Wyn Geleynse on being a recipient of the 2018 Governor General's Award in visual and media arts. These awards celebrate the remarkable careers of individuals in the Canadian visual and media arts community.

Wyn Geleynse is a London, Ontario artist whose work provokes, questions, and investigates the nature of our humanity. His work has been exhibited widely in Canada, the United States, and Europe, and will be on exhibition at the National Gallery of Canada beginning today. His is an incredible 40-year long career that deserves to be known and appreciated.

I applaud Wyn Geleynse for being one of the eight recipients this year receiving this prestigious award. I know his work will continue to engage and inspire audiences around the world.

*Oral Questions***ORAL QUESTIONS***[English]***ETHICS**

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after being elected in 2015, the Liberal MP for Brampton East entered into a business relationship with a local businessman, receiving pay from him. Even though there is a clear conflict of interest, the Brampton East member arranged to give his business partner privileged access to the Prime Minister and members of his cabinet while on the Prime Minister's disastrous trip to India.

Why did the Prime Minister's Office invite this individual on the trip to India when there is a such a clear conflict of interest?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us be clear on the facts. The member has consulted the Office of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner on this relationship, and will keep following its advice. As a common practice, the member invited a diverse group of more than 30 stakeholders to participate in events around the India trip. In this case, people who were interested in attending could fill out a form online through the Canada-India Business Council, which the individual in question also did.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what is clear is that the Liberals always seem to want to benefit their friends who are helping them and giving them money. The MP for Brampton East arranged for the person who is paying him to get access to the Prime Minister in India. We have a Conflict of Interest Act to avoid this exact type of behaviour, but the Liberals seem to have no regard for the Conflict of Interest Act. They are under constant investigation for these breaches.

Again, who in the PMO authorized the attendance of this individual on the trip to India?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we on this side have a lot of regard and respect for officers of Parliament, and that is why the member has consulted the Office of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner on this relationship and will keep following its advice.

We were proud to be joined by hundreds of community leaders and members of the business community to strengthen our ties with India, but I remind the member that the individual in question also received an invitation to the Canada-India Business Council, which I think we can all agree is very important work.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let us be clear. It was the opposition that referred this to the conflict of interest office. It was not the Liberal member.

Yet again, we have another questionable person travelling with the Prime Minister on his disastrous trip to India and no one on the Liberal side who is willing to take responsibility. So much for transparency and accountability. All we get from the Liberals is denial and deflection.

What is next? Is the Prime Minister going to blame India for this new debacle?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will continue to remind all Canadians that we are proud to be working to create more opportunities for the Canadian middle class and those working hard to join it.

The member has consulted the Office of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner on this relationship and will keep following its advice. MPs and business organizations will often invite community and business leaders to join these business exchanges to increase Canada's standing in the global community, and we are going to continue doing just that.

* * *

*[Translation]***JUSTICE**

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, three years ago, all MPs and all senators voted unanimously in favour of Bill C-452 to combat procuring and trafficking in persons. The only thing missing for this legislation to take effect is the Prime Minister's signature. Members heard correctly: the Prime Minister's signature is the only thing missing to give our justice and public safety systems the tools needed to protect our young girls who are trapped in the hell of prostitution and human trafficking.

My question is simple. When will the Prime Minister finally sign the legislation?

● (1120)

[English]

Mr. Marco Mendicino (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, human trafficking is one of the most heinous crimes imaginable, and our government is working to combat it in many ways. We are committed to strengthening efforts to combat it and to better protect victims. Bill C-38 proposes to give law enforcement and prosecutors new tools to investigate and prosecute certain human trafficking offences that can be particularly difficult to prove. These are strengthening measures, which will help law enforcement.

Our government is committed to advancing this legislation and looks forward to receiving broad support from all parliamentarians on its passage into law.

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, here are the facts: thousands of young girls across Canada, including about 2,000 in Quebec alone, are trapped in the clutches of pimps and street gangs.

Since 2013, MPs and senators have been doing their job and unanimously supported Bill C-452. This includes the Prime Minister, I might add, when he was in opposition.

When it comes to legalizing marijuana, the Prime Minister has no problem rushing it through, but when it comes to protecting our young girls who are trapped in the clutches of pimps, he seems to find it too difficult to sign the document.

What is he waiting for?

[English]

Mr. Marco Mendicino (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it begs the question, if the opposition Conservatives were so concerned about human trafficking, why did they make cuts to law enforcement? Why did they make cuts to the entire public safety apparatus to the tune of \$750 million?

As I said, this government believes in combatting human trafficking. It is a very serious criminal offence. We have engaged with the chamber in the other place. We are listening to parliamentarians. We are listening to stakeholders right across the country. We will pass this law with the support of all parliamentarians.

* * *

[Translation]

ETHICS

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brousseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister held a fundraiser yesterday in Montreal. Stephen Bronfman was there, but that comes as no surprise. Let us not forget that he was named in the paradise papers.

Who else was there? There was Mitch Garber, whom the Minister of International Trade recently named chairman of a new federal agency.

The Prime Minister thanked those in attendance for all the time they have devoted to their movement, but especially for all the money they pay to attend these galas.

Does the Prime Minister also thank his friends by giving them patronage appointments?

[English]

Mr. Andy Fillmore (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are taking concrete action to improve our already strong and robust rules around political fundraising events. That is why the Minister of Democratic Institutions introduced Bill C-50, which will give more information to Canadians than ever before by letting them know who is going to fundraisers, when they will be happening, and the amount required to attend.

Canadians have a right to know and understand, more than they do now, about fundraising events attended by the Prime Minister, cabinet ministers, party leaders, and party leadership contestants. We encourage all members in the House to join us in working to build a more open and transparent fundraising system for Canada.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there was a lot of chortling and clanking of champagne glasses at the Prime Minister's latest fundraiser for the billionaires, when he said that he was not only there to get maximum donations but to get tough on the 1%.

Oral Questions

Step forth exhibit A. Stephen Bronfman raised \$250,000 for the Liberals in two hours. When Bronfman was named in the paradise papers scandal, the Prime Minister immediately intervened and said that no investigation was necessary. No investigation happened.

That is the power of who one knows in the PMO. Why is the Prime Minister using the highest office in the land to feather the nest of his Liberal donors?

Mr. Andy Fillmore (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the truth is that this party is leading the way with openness and transparency in fundraising. We are a shining example for what all parties in the House could do.

It is very curious, in fact, that the party from which this question proceeds is itself still keeping its information about its fundraisers a secret. Will the member join our example?

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the idea that the Prime Minister is hanging out with billionaires to protect the hard-pressed middle class is like telling us that those billionaire Liberal turkeys showed up and asked for an early Easter.

This brings us to Mitch Garber. He is a mega donor, and the Liberals paid him back by giving him his own agency. They call it "Invest in Canada", when it is really another case of investing in friends of the Liberal Party.

Does the Prime Minister not understand that the public service in this country needs to be more than a patronage smorgasbord for his friends, donors, and insider pals?

• (1125)

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very happy that the member has given me the opportunity to talk about Invest in Canada, a new flagship investment and promotion agency in this country.

I was travelling the country to make sure that Canadians know about this new agency. I am very proud we have appointed Mitch Garber, the chair of Cirque du Soleil, as the first chair of this agency. We have also brought in Ian McKay, who is the director of the Vancouver Economic Commission. We want people who understand business to bring business to Canada, because that is the way to create jobs around this country.

* * *

LABOUR

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brousseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Air Canada flight attendants have filed complaints against the airline for sexual harassment and discrimination. Although the airline claims it has zero tolerance for harassment, it has outright denied these claims. Air Canada now asks female attendants to wear dress uniforms in order to show more cleavage and it told one gay flight attendant to stop prancing. Air Canada even dictates the colour and type of underwear flight attendants can wear. This is disgusting. This is unacceptable.

What is the government going to do to ensure that anti-harassment policies are both adopted and followed by Canadian industries?

Oral Questions

Mr. Rodger Cuzner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member well knows that all members in the House believe that harassment of any type is unacceptable in the workplace or anywhere. We put forward Bill C-65, which is legislation that would cover the Parliament Hill precinct and all federally regulated workplaces. The legislation is currently in committee and we are accepting some amendments from all parties. It is going to be a strong piece of legislation.

We committed to this in the past election and we are going—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on March 1, when the public safety minister was asked why the Liberals will not let the national security adviser appear at committee, he said, “You are asking me to wade into a classified discussion. I can't do that.” Then he ran away from questions to the elevator, quite conveniently. Today and earlier this week, he said that none of the information given by the adviser to the media was classified.

On what day was he telling the truth?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): All of them, Mr. Speaker.

I am very glad to have the question, because we will be happy to discuss all manner of House committee work through the House leaders, which we can advance just as soon as the official opposition is fully briefed on all of the facts, classified and unclassified. Those members just have to let us know when they would like to get started and all of that information can proceed.

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians want to understand who trotted out the national security adviser to give classified or not classified information to the media, who did not know what was classified or what was not classified.

What we know here is that the government is trying to cover up the fact that it sent someone out to spin that it had a ridiculous conspiracy theory that somehow the Indian government was to blame for the Prime Minister's disastrous appearance. Why are the Liberals trying to cover this up? Why do they not just come clean?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, offering a full classified briefing is hardly covering things up.

The opposition has confirmed that it does not want to be encumbered by the truth when it is asking questions. Therefore, it is choosing to remain wilfully ignorant of the facts.

There are other consequences too, like the voting at the end of last week, which forced the opposition to vote against very good things that Canadians want. For example, the hon. member's party voted against the settlement of Yazidi women and girls in Canada.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister is deflecting, but let us carry on—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles.

• (1130)

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Mr. Speaker, the minister is trying to deflect, but the problem is that the Liberals think that it is entirely appropriate to offer a briefing to the media, but not to the representatives of the people, us, the elected members of the House. The minister himself said that the information was not sensitive or classified, but he refuses to share it with MPs.

Since the information provided to the media was not classified, will the minister confirm that the media that received the briefing from the national security advisor are free to report every word that they heard during that briefing?

[*English*]

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition complains that he will not be able to ask questions about classified information but that is exactly true already. What is classified needs to remain classified.

What is being offered to the leader is a full description of all the facts so that he can know what is classified and what is not, and then he will be fully equipped to discharge his responsibility, rather than just political gamesmanship.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let's be honest. If the media briefing did not include sensitive information, there is no reason why journalists could not share it with Canadians. The minister seems to be caught up in the talking points provided by the Prime Minister's Office. However, to disentangle himself, could the minister confirm whether the media who were briefed are free to report every word that they heard during that briefing, yes or no?

[*English*]

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition, because he is a privy councillor, has been offered a full and complete briefing on all matters with respect to this situation, both classified and unclassified, so he can be fully informed. If he willfully refuses to be fully informed, it appears that his only objective is a political game that has nothing to do with the truth.

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have been asking for Parliament to get the same briefing the national security adviser gave to journalists. However, we know the national security adviser is not the only person who the public safety minister and the government is muzzling. They are also muzzling journalists, preventing them from reporting on what they heard in the unclassified briefing.

Oral Questions

When will the minister stop muzzling the national security adviser, stop muzzling journalists, stop the cover-up, and tell Canadians the truth?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, only the Conservative Party would consider and see offering it a full brief of both classified and unclassified information so they could know all the facts as muzzling. The fact is that the Conservatives are tying themselves into some strange knots, because they forced themselves last Friday to vote against some very good things that Canadians wanted. For example, they voted against the funding for injured members of the RCMP. They voted against benefits for veterans.

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a sad spectacle to see a member who has served the House for this long reduced to reading talking points from the Prime Minister's Office. It is also sad to see him continue to stand against a briefing for members of Parliament, asking simply to receive the same that briefing members of the media received. Now members of the media are confirming that the national security adviser told them they could not report everything they received, even though it was an unclassified briefing.

Why will the minister not simply do the right thing, stop covering up, and allow the national security adviser to appear before parliamentarians?

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said some moments ago, I am very glad to have the question. We can have a very good discussion about all manner of committee work, and that discussion will go on among House leaders.

Step number one is for opposition members to stop the political game and, in fact, inform themselves of all the relevant facts. The offer has been made for a full briefing, both classified and unclassified, so the Leader of the Opposition can have all that information and then base himself on the truth and not some silly innuendo the Conservatives have dreamed up for themselves.

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we learned yesterday that as early as summer 2015, IBM was advising the government that Phoenix was not ready to go. For those keeping score, that means departmental reviews, public sector unions, and the principal private contractor itself were saying that Phoenix was not ready to go.

Now, the Liberal Party has a rich history of going back on its commitments. I am thinking of electoral reform and I am thinking of its promise on CEO stock option loopholes.

Why is it that the one time the Liberals could have used their great power of doubling back on their commitments to help Canadians, they passed up the opportunity?

• (1135)

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, IBM's testimony to the Senate committee last night confirmed that the Harper Conservatives

botched this program from the start. They de-scoped the project and ignored the advice of their contractors.

The development of the request for proposal and award of contract for Phoenix was done by the previous government. We continue to work with IBM and will hold it to account to fulfill its obligations. To date, our government has invested \$645 million to stabilize the pay system.

[Translation]

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind members that it was the Liberal government that implemented the Phoenix pay system. Public servants and the unions told the Liberals to delay its implementation, and yesterday we learned that IBM had advised the government to delay the system's implementation because it was just not ready. When employees, public servants, unions, and even the company that designed and built the system say do not go ahead, the government must listen.

Why, in spite of this, did the government decide to gamble with the wages of thousands of workers?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, before the Senate committee, the IBM witnesses confirmed that Harper's Conservative government botched the program from the beginning. They reduced the scope of the project and did not take into account the advice of their supplier. The previous government developed the request for proposal and awarded the contract for the Phoenix pay system.

We are continuing to work with IBM, and we will hold it accountable to ensure it complies with its obligations.

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ETHICS

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, ethics problems are all too common with the Liberals. This time, the problem with the member for Brampton East, who was hired by a construction company after becoming a member of Parliament. It just so happens that the owner of this company was invited on the Prime Minister's disastrous trip to India. It is impossible to know who invited the man in question, since the member and the Prime Minister's Office are pointing the finger at each other.

Who is telling the truth? Why all the mystery?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us be clear on the facts. The member has consulted the Office of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner on this relationship and will keep following its advice.

As common practice, the member invited a diverse group of more than 30 stakeholders to participate in events around the India trip. In this case, people who were interested in attending could fill out a form online through the Canada-India Business Council, which the individual in question also did.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Conflict of Interest Code demands that all members uphold their public duties with honesty and fulfill to the highest standard so as to avoid real or apparent conflicts of interest. The member's conduct goes well beyond apparent conflict. This is a blatantly formalized case of a cash for access retainer.

Was the member's boss invited on the India trip to seek business in India or was he invited to hang with the Prime Minister, the Minister of Infrastructure, and the Minister of Innovation to get an inside track on contracts in Canada?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I stated earlier, and I shall repeat again, the member has consulted the Office of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner on this relationship, and will continue following its advice.

However, I remind the member that the individual in question also received an invitation through the Canada-India Business Council, which I think we can all agree does important work.

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government has abandoned even a half-hearted acknowledgement of members and ministers' ethical obligations under the Conflict of Interest Act and Code.

Again, there was a question asked and not answered yesterday. Will the Prime Minister and will the Liberal government, disgraced by a spectrum of ethical lapses and violations, do the right thing and clean up the mess themselves or are they leaving it, once again, to the Ethics Commissioner?

•(1140)

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said, the member has consulted the Office of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner on this relationship and will continue working with the office and following its advice, as I would encourage all members to do.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Conflict of Interest Code is very clear. MPs are not to use their position to further their own private interests or those of another person, or entity, yet the member for Brampton East did just that. He ensured one of his private sector employers, the president of a large construction company, gained access to the Prime Minister as well as to key Liberal cabinet ministers. Obviously, both stand to profit as a result.

Does the Prime Minister believe that the Conflict of Interest Code is wrong or does he just think the Liberals are above it?

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is important that we be clear on the facts. The member has consulted the Office of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner on this relationship, and will keep following its advice.

As is common practice, the member invited a diverse group of more than 30 stakeholders to participate in events around the India trip. In this case, people who were interested in attending could fill out a form online through the Canada-India Business Council, which the individual in question also did.

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*[Translation]***INFRASTRUCTURE**

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary budget officer just released a new report on phase 1 of the Liberals' infrastructure plan. The report confirms what we already knew, and we are not really surprised. The Liberals are incapable of keeping their promises. Half of the millions of dollars earmarked have not yet been allocated to projects. I did say half. Municipalities have been waiting too long for that money. They believed the Liberal promises.

On their behalf, I am once again asking the government where its plan is.

Mr. Marc Miller (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians across the country are enjoying the benefits of the more than 3,400 projects approved under Infrastructure Canada's phase 1 programs. The previous government spent a decade doing nothing, but now these projects are modernizing public transit and water pipes and building healthier communities. Over \$4 billion in federal funding has been approved for these projects, and the money will flow as soon as our partners submit their applications.

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*[English]***IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP**

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, after quietly announcing the end of the current caregiver program, the minister was forced to change course by stating he would engage in consultations about the future of the program.

At committee, IRCC officials committed to providing details of the consultation process to members. To date, no information has been provided even though multiple consultations have already taken place.

My direct request to attend the consultation with caregivers in Ottawa was denied. We were told that it was not a consultation meeting. Why did the minister's staff mislead my office and why the secrecy?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we recognize the services that caregivers give to Canadian families. In fact, we have recognized the importance of reuniting caregivers with their own families. That is why we invested more money and more resources to make sure we would bring down the processing time for caregivers, from five years under the previous government to under 12 months under our government. We are moving very quickly to also eliminate the existing cases under the live-in caregiver programs.

Oral Questions

The two existing programs are also working well. We are conducting an assessment to make them even better. Let me be very clear. We will always maintain pathways to permanent residency for caregivers.

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SCIENCE AND RESEARCH

Mr. Geng Tan (Don Valley North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to hear from the scientists in my region that after a decade of questions from their international counterparts about why the Conservative government was opposed to science, Canada is once again being viewed as a leader in science around the world and many of their international counterparts want to work in Canada.

Could the Parliamentary Secretary for Science tell the House what our government is doing to capitalize on our renewed scientific reputation to recruit the top international talent?

Ms. Kate Young (Parliamentary Secretary for Science, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians can be proud that the world is once again looking to Canada as a leader in science. Top scientists and researchers from around the world want to come to Canada. Last week—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: I am sure all members would be interested to know the response from the hon. Parliamentary Secretary for Science, and so I will allow her to start again with her response and we will then go on to the next question.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

• (1145)

Ms. Kate Young: Mr. Speaker, Canadians can be proud that the world is once again looking to Canada as a leader in science. Top scientists and researchers from around the world want to come to Canada.

Last week, the Conservatives voted against investing to recruit the best and the brightest. We know that science and research help improve the lives of Canadians. Therefore, the member for Don Valley North and the Liberal caucus voted for that funding. This morning, we were proud to announce the Canada 150 research chairs. We look forward to their exciting new breakthroughs.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this week the government introduced a massive carbon tax on Canadians. Government official John Moffet called the tax, a foundational element of the government's climate change plan. However, last week, when the minister was repeatedly asked how much this foundational tax would reduce greenhouse gas emissions, she could not answer and neither could her deputy.

If the carbon tax is so important, how is it that the minister cannot even tell Canadians what impact such a tax would have on carbon emissions?

Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the pricing of carbon pollution is a key part of any serious

plan to address climate change. Pricing pollution is a market mechanism that will reduce emissions and will drive innovation in the country.

We believe that provinces and territories are best placed to design pricing systems that work for them, as long as it meets the national standard. The design of the system will affect the amount of emissions reductions that are achieved. We will be, as we have said very publicly, reviewing all provincial and territorial systems later this year.

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Again, there is no answer, Mr. Speaker, so let us talk about science.

How is it that a government that claims to be based on science and evidence, does not have the foggiest clue of how harmful such a carbon tax would be to Canadians? Has the minister not done her homework? Does she not know how much emissions will go down under her carbon tax? Does she not know the devastating impact such a tax will have on our economy and the millions of jobs that hang in the balance? Do struggling Canadians not deserve to know if these massive new taxes will have any impact on reducing greenhouse gas emissions to Canada?

Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians know that addressing climate change is an important issue and any thoughtful approach and plan include the pricing of carbon pollution.

Four out of five Canadians live in jurisdictions that have shown the leadership to put into place carbon pricing systems. We are working actively with the provinces and territories which have primary responsibility for implementing these systems. We will continue to do that because addressing climate change is something that we know is an important challenge which the Conservatives did not address in their 10 years in government.

[Translation]

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the environment commissioner released a report this week entitled "Perspectives on Climate Change Action in Canada".

The data collection began in 2016, after this Liberal government came to office. It is all too clear that the Liberals have no plan. Once again, they have nothing to offer but window dressing. On the environment, as in many other areas, they are not keeping their promise.

My question is simple. How much will greenhouse gas emissions be reduced by the carbon tax they introduced?

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us be clear. The commissioner's report actually dealt with the period before the development of the pan-Canadian framework. It was an indictment of the climate policies of the previous government. We have put into place a plan that is focused on addressing climate change in a substantive way. The report that was issued in December 2017 by the United Nations showed that, relative to the 2016 report, there was a 232 megatonne reduction in carbon emissions. We are taking active and effective measures to ensure that we are addressing climate change in a thoughtful way.

Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what a ridiculous answer.

Last week, the environment minister refused to answer a very simple question at committee, so I will give her another chance.

It is a truism that environmental programs should have specific and measurable outcomes. We know how much scrubbers on smokestacks reduce SO₂. We know how much a waste-water treatment plant will improve water quality. It is shocking that the Liberals do not know how much a carbon tax will reduce emissions.

By how much will a \$50 a tonne carbon tax across Canada reduce our greenhouse gas emissions? I want a number.

• (1150)

Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians recognize very well that the environmental policies of the previous government were an abject failure, whether it was addressing climate change, environmental assessment, biodiversity in Canada—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: There is too much noise in the chamber. We have limited time, so we will continue.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

Mr. Jonathan Wilkinson: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, Canadians know that the environmental policies and the environmental legacy of the previous government were an abject failure. The Conservatives did not address climate change. They destroyed the environmental assessment process in Canada. They let the decline in biodiversity accelerate over the course of their 10 years in power.

We are working very actively to ensure that environmental progress and economic progress go together going forward.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, earlier this year, in one of the most shocking and disturbing cases ever witnessed, B.C. SPCA officers attempted to rescue a severely emaciated dog standing in a pile of mud and feces. The collar was embedded in his neck causing his head to swell to almost three times its normal size. When the collar was removed,

it exposed an infected wound showing the dog's trachea and jugular vein. This case of animal cruelty has profoundly impacted my community.

In 2016, the Minister of Justice made a commitment to review the animal cruelty provisions of the Criminal Code. When will she honour that commitment?

Mr. Marco Mendicino (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by first expressing my sympathies to the hon. member and his community for that loss.

Our government believes that animal cruelty is an extremely important social issue that deserves a national conversation. Our government is reviewing issues pertaining to animal cruelty provisions, including expanding the definition of bestiality and the definition of animal fighting in the code.

We believe that animal cruelty should be balanced and protect animals from deliberate and unnecessary acts of cruelty while not interfering with legitimate animal use, including indigenous animal harvesting rights. We look forward to working with our hon. colleague and all members of the House to achieve those goals.

* * *

*[Translation]***TAXATION**

Mr. Pierre Nantel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, the government of Quebec did what Ottawa is not courageous enough to do. It decided that Quebec sales tax would apply both to foreign digital platforms like Spotify and Netflix and to home-grown platforms like Tou.tv and illico.

Quebec showed yesterday that we can take action on the GST now. Not in two years, or after another consultation, or after discussions with the G7, but right now. The Prime Minister needs to stop spreading misinformation. No one here is talking about a new tax, apart from the Liberals.

When will the Minister of Finance act?

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage (Multiculturalism), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, changes in the way Canadians access content have disrupted many business models.

The reality is that the benefits of the digital world are not shared equally between the web giants and our artists, journalists, and creators. Our government wants to level the playing field among the stakeholders involved.

That is why we will be making amendments to our legislation to adapt it to the digital reality. This includes a review of the Broadcasting Act. We strongly believe in protecting our culture and promoting access to Canadian content on all platforms.

Oral Questions

[English]

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Fisheries awarded a lucrative surf clam quota worth hundreds of millions of dollars to a group that did not have first nation partners in place. It was not incorporated. It did not have a boat or a vessel, or a facility for harvesting. What it did have going for it were Liberal connections, including close family ties to the Liberal caucus.

The people of Newfoundland and Labrador want to know why they have to lose their jobs so that the minister can look after Liberal insiders and close family friends.

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since this is my first opportunity to address the member since he has come back, I hope you would allow me to say how happy I am to see him in the House and in good health. We plan to have dinners with our wives, and we will be able to reflect on how important our families and our health are in doing this job.

With regard to this specific issue, when the previous government went through a very similar public process to access this fishery, it forgot to include indigenous people. Our government has not forgotten indigenous people.

* * *

[Translation]

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this government has completely failed at managing the agriculture file. The Minister of Agriculture abandoned farmers and refused to stand up for them when his colleague, the Minister of Health, was working on the reform of the Canada food guide. He dumped them on the Prime Minister, who was unable to fix the pulse crisis during his disastrous trip to India.

Canadian exports are even worse off than they were before the trip, having dropped nearly 80%.

When will the Minister of Agriculture demand that the Prime Minister be honest with Canadians and admit that his conspiracy theory is a farce that is having devastating consequences for Canadian farmers?

• (1155)

[English]

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what this government is doing is working with farmers to make sure that the millions of dollars that the Harper government cut from science is renewed. In fact, \$100 million in agricultural science over the last two budgets have been implemented. There is \$3 billion for the Canadian agricultural partnership, \$75 million to increase trade, and I could go on and on.

This government is going to make sure that Canadian agriculture expands and meets the \$75 billion of exports by 2025. Working with our great farmers and ranchers, we will do that.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it does not matter if our producers cannot get their products to market if they do not have a market to sell it to.

The Liberals have to understand that there are very real consequences to the Prime Minister's disastrous trip to India.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

The hon. member for Foothills.

Mr. John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, our key exports are down 73%. Lentils are down 79%. India has increased tariffs and are implementing a fumigation fee. The CEO of a major pulse exporter said that the trade crisis with India is the “ultimate hammer”, and that we have been “hit over the head and we are bleeding”.

For the sake of Canadian pulse producers, will the agriculture minister insist that the Prime Minister admit that his India conspiracy theory is a farce?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Pulse Canada has been very supportive of the work the government has done to take this issue to the highest level when members went to India. We are very disappointed with the way the tariffs were implemented, but we are committed to working with our farmers and processors to make sure our industry grows.

We are extremely concerned, as I said, with the way the tariffs were implemented, but we continue to work with Indian officials to make sure that we resume the trade in pulses.

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on April 2, we will celebrate the 11th annual World Autism Awareness Day.

On this day, Canada will join the international community, hundreds of thousands of families and caregivers, and communities around the world that will wear blue in recognition of people living with autism.

Can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health please update the House on the government actions to help those affected by the various forms of autism spectrum disorder?

Mr. Bill Blair (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking my colleague from Dartmouth—Cole Harbour for his leadership on this file.

Our government is committed to supporting Canadians living with autism spectrum disorder.

I would also like to take a moment to acknowledge the compelling advocacy of the member for Edmonton—Wetaskiwin on this important issue as well. That is why, quite frankly, I was disheartened that the Conservatives' recent motion went against our 2018 investment of \$20 million in new funding to support people with autism spectrum disorder and their families.

Oral Questions

On World Autism Awareness Day 2018, I would encourage all members of this House and all Canadians to learn more about autism and how each of us can work together to make a difference.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada's wine industry has created over 37,000 jobs. Wine is our highest value-added agriculture product.

The U.S. trade representative recently said he wants even more access to our Canadian market, despite U.S. wine exports to Canada already increasing by over 2,500% since 1988, and, I will also add, a \$500-million trade surplus.

Will the minister confirm that the government will not trade away the 37,000 jobs in our wine industry at the eleventh hour of these NAFTA talks?

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Canada-U.S. Relations), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the U.S. also has measures in place to promote and protect their own wine industry, including limited points of sale. American wine already does very well in Canada. The U.S. is our largest supplier of imported wines.

The priority of the government is to look out for the interests of Canadians and the wine growers, including job creation and trade opportunities in various sectors and other venues.

We will stand up for Canadian industries, specifically the wine industry, and defend our workers.

* * *

● (1200)

[Translation]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP): Mr. Speaker, sometimes, Ottawa can seem far away, as Patrick Lagacé pointed out in a column two weeks ago about one of my constituents, Sophie Thewys.

Despite the hard work by my team and Sophie after the tragic death of her partner Nicolas, she has yet to receive her permanent resident status, which had already been approved.

The Prime Minister likes to boast that our immigration system is compassionate and humane, but it certainly does not feel that way.

When will the minister use his power to put an end to this tragedy and allow Sophie to grieve and move on?

[English]

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our immigration system is based on respectful rules and standards, but there is also room for compassionate and humanitarian considerations with respect to any particular case.

The member opposite knows that I cannot go into the details of a particular case due to privacy concerns, but I am happy to meet with him at the end of question period to see what I can do for him.

[Translation]

HEALTH

Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, women have a right to choices when it comes to their health. An important part of women's health involves access to a variety of safe and effective forms of contraception. However, the Public Service Health Care Plan currently covers only oral contraceptives.

[English]

What has the government done to correct this situation for more than 650,000 federal public servants and their family members?

[Translation]

Ms. Joyce Murray (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle for her question and for her hard work.

[English]

Empowering women and respecting their rights, including reproductive health rights, is what our government does. In the public service that means we are putting women and the health of women first, including their choice of contraceptives.

I am very happy to announce that effective April 1, non-oral contraceptives will be covered under the public service health care plan. As promised, we worked hard and collaboratively with the unions to bring this about, and we have delivered.

* * *

[Translation]

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, all Canadians love our national anthem, *O Canada*.

Unfortunately, I have noticed over the past few months that CBC and Radio-Canada no longer broadcast our national anthem at 5 a. m., as they did in the past.

Why is that? When I asked, I was told that it is because they are on the air 24 hours a day. That is not an adequate response, because they have been on the air 24 hours a day since 1995, yet they stopped playing our national anthem only a few months ago.

Does the Liberal government agree with us? One minute a day for our public broadcaster to play *O Canada* is not too much to ask. It would in fact be welcome.

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage (Multiculturalism), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's question.

We are standing up for the CBC, which is why we reinvested \$675 million. We are also defending our national anthem. We always take pride in the changes, initiated by Mauril Bélanger, to the lyrics of the national anthem. Now that they are gender neutral, they are more inclusive and better reflect diversity. This is an important symbol for us.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, GPQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, we attempted to better protect young girls in Canada by fast-tracking the passage of Bill C-38, a government bill to combat pimping.

We would have preferred Bill C-452, but the Prime Minister went back on his vote. In collusion with the Conservatives, the Liberals said no to our motion. They said no to making life hard for pimps. The Liberals and the Conservatives would rather preserve the status quo than protect our young girls.

How can the government justify refusing to pass its own bill?

• (1205)

[*English*]

Mr. Marco Mendicino (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, human trafficking is one of the most heinous crimes imaginable, and our government is working to combat it in many ways. We are committed to strengthening efforts to combat it and to better protect the victims of this crime. Bill C-38 proposes to give law enforcement and prosecutors new tools to investigate and prosecute human trafficking offences that can be particularly difficult to prove. Our government is committed to advancing this legislation and we look forward to receiving support on its passage into law.

* * *

PRIVACY

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, a Canadian company, indeed a Victoria, B.C., company called AggregateIQ, has been the subject of debate in the Palace of Westminster. Our parliamentary colleagues there are hearing that this company played a significant role in manipulating data to affect the vote on the Brexit referendum.

I want to know if the Minister of Justice, or any of the relevant ministers, could decide that we can help get to the bottom of this kind of shenanigan. It is illegal, and it should be illegal. Can we get an inquiry into the activities of AggregateIQ?

Mr. Andy Fillmore (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Democratic Institutions, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government takes its fundamental responsibilities to protect the private information of Canadian citizens and the integrity of our electoral system extremely seriously, which is why we engaged the Communications Security Establishment to conduct the first-ever threat assessment of Canadian democratic processes.

The threat assessment looked at cyber-threats facing our democratic process. It is a critical step in addressing the potential issues Canadians may face. Happily, CSE found that there was no

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significant interference in the 2015 election, but we know this is going to change in 2019, and addressing this will take a whole-of-government approach. This is an issue we take extremely seriously, which is why budget 2018 committed over \$750 million for—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Nunavut.

* * *

NORTHERN AFFAIRS

Hon. Hunter Tootoo (Nunavut, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, I have asked several questions in the House regarding the promised changes to the nutrition north program, which the minister has publicly stated is failing northerners. Last May, the response was that the new program would be launched very soon. In September, the response changed to “we intend to get it right this time”. In December, it was “we’re considering all feedback”.

In budget 2018, there is not one mention of nutrition north. It seems with more time there is less progress. Why is the government continuing to fail Nunavummiut by not fixing this broken program?

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his advocacy on this issue. It is completely unacceptable that northerners are still struggling to feed their families and pay the most extraordinary prices for food in Canada.

Our government has already expanded the nutrition north program to include 37 more communities across Canada. We have also increased the budget by \$65 million over the next five years. We are continuing to engage with those in northern regions to ensure we can expand this program to ensure affordable access to food for all people in the northern regions of Canada.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent on a point of order.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, my intervention is about the fact that CBC no longer plays *O Canada*. I submitted an information request to CBC, and I would like to table this document, which contains CBC’s response explaining why it no longer plays the national anthem on CBC or Radio-Canada.

The Deputy Speaker: Does the hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent have the unanimous consent of the House to table this document?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

*Routine Proceedings***ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS***[English]***PARLIAMENTARY BUDGET OFFICER**

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to subsection 79.2(2) of the Parliament of Canada Act, it is my duty to present to the House a report from the Parliamentary Budget Officer entitled “Status Report on Phase 1 of the New Infrastructure Plan”.

* * *

*[Translation]***AIR TRANSPORT**

Hon. Andrew Leslie (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Canada-U.S. Relations), Lib.): 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, three treaties.

The first is entitled “Amendments to Annex III of the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade”. These amendments were adopted in Geneva from April 24 to May 5, 2017.

The second is entitled “Protocol amending the Agreement between the Government of Canada and the Government of the United Mexican States on Air Transport of February 18, 2014”, signed in Mexico on June 29, 2017.

The third is entitled “Agreement between the Government of Canada and the Government of the Republic of Columbia on Air Transport”, signed in Ottawa on October 30, 2017.

An explanatory memorandum is included with each treaty.

* * *

•(1210)

*[English]***GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS**

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

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 109, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the government's response to the 48th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs entitled “Services and Facilities Provided to Members of Parliament with Young Children”.

CRIMINAL CODE

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-75, An Act to Amend the Criminal Code, the Youth Criminal Justice Act and other Acts and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

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

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Minister of Justice, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table, in both official languages, a charter statement with respect to Bill C-75, an act to amend the Criminal Code, the Youth Criminal Justice Act and other acts and to make consequential amendments to other acts.

* * *

*[Translation]***INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS**

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian delegation of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association respecting its participation at the 2017 spring session held in Tbilisi, Georgia, from May 26 to 29, 2017.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 18th report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration entitled “Road to Recovery: Resettlement Issues of Yazidi Women and Children in Canada”.

[English]

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

I might just add that there are two very good supplementary reports from the opposition parties, which have been very helpful in this debate, and I commend the whole committee for their responsible action in this report.

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative Party will append a dissenting report to this report, given that we do not feel that the report covers all of the recommendations included in the UN standing report that was issued in 2015 entitled “They came to destroy”. It also does not provide a comprehensive enough set of recommendations to address the crisis that resettled Yazidi women face here in Canada.

HUMAN RESOURCES, SKILLS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE STATUS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Bryan May (Cambridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the eighth report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities entitled “Advancing Inclusion and Quality of Life for Canadian Seniors”.

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

While I have the floor, I would like to thank all members of the committee, the staff, the clerk, all the analysts, and anyone involved in producing this fantastic report.

• (1215)

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative members on the committee want to thank the chair for the work that the committee did. However, it unfortunately did not go far enough, and so there is a supplementary report that is part of the main report that is called “We Can Do Better For Seniors”. One of the major focuses is calling on the government to appoint a minister for seniors.

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I believe if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That the Fourteenth Report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, presented to the House on Thursday, November 9, 2017, be amended by replacing the name of the organization “Talent beyond Borders” to “Talent beyond Boundaries”.

The Deputy Speaker: Does the hon. member for Don Valley West have the unanimous consent of the House to propose this motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Deputy 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)

* * *

PETITIONS

CANADA SUMMER JOBS PROGRAM

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition to the House on protecting faith-based employers from discrimination under the Canada summer jobs program. It is calling on the Liberal government to stop discriminating against people who believe in legal protection for preborn children and traditional sexual morality. It is saying that if Canadians are not allowed to have different political beliefs than the government and have their funding cut off, that is discrimination.

I ask the government to consider it, and promptly so.

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Denis Paradis (Brome—Missisquoi, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am presenting a petition from my constituents in the Lake Memphremagog region regarding that lake's water quality.

Sherbrooke and Magog get their drinking water from Lake Memphremagog, but as we know, this lake straddles the Canadian-American border. The lake is a source of drinking water on the Canadian side but not on the American side. That does not make any sense, but that is how it is.

We are asking the Minister of Foreign Affairs to raise the issue of the lake's water quality with the International Joint Commission

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because there have been some questionable dumping practices on the American side.

[English]

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased again to table a petition, on behalf of Edmontonians, demanding that the government take action so that every vote counts. They are concerned that in a democracy, every vote and voter should count. Frequently our broken electoral system allows a party to win 100% of the power with less than 40% of the vote. The Liberal government has promised to change our electoral system, but time is running out if we want a fairer system before the next election. They call on the government to adopt a fair, proportional voting system so that the Parliament of Canada actually reflects how electors vote.

FIREARMS

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the great honour today to present a petition on behalf of over 16,000 Canadians, and indeed all the members of the Conservative hunting and angling caucus, asking that the government require individuals appointed to the Canadian firearms advisory committee to have earned a possession and acquisition licence, without which they lack a baseline understanding of the activities they are tasked with regulating. It is a common-sense request that we hope the government will grant.

BANKING SERVICES

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of dozens of constituents in New Westminster—Burnaby and dozens of citizens in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia, I am pleased to present a petition, which has recruited hundreds of signatures across this country, sponsored by the good activists of the ACORN community organization. This petition seeks to make banking fair and to end predatory lending in Canada by limiting interest rates that can be charged; lowering the interest rates that exist under the Criminal Code, the maximum interest rate one can charge; creating a national anti-predatory lending strategy; and supporting alternatives to predatory lenders, such as postal banking and credit union products.

Lower-income Canadians often do not have access to the banking system. About 20% of Canadians do not have access to banking at all or have very little access to banking in their communities. By ending predatory lending and making banking fair, we would provide more support to Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

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●(1220)

VISITOR VISAS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are literally hundreds of thousands of people who visit Canada every year. I have a petition signed by constituents who are raising the issue of the super visa. They want the government to provide additional clarification on when someone gets a super visa, returns to his or her home country, and wants to come back. They want to know, if it is not stamped, whether the super visa is good for two years or whether they have to leave the country in six months.

ORGAN DONATION

Mr. Len Webber (Calgary Confederation, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition, in support of my private member's bill, Bill C-316, which was submitted by members of the National Capital Region Gift of Life Network.

Coincidentally, it is also tax season across Canada. The petitioners are calling on this House to improve Canada's organ donation system. This would be achieved by making the process to register as an organ donor easier by adding a simple question to our annual tax returns. With 4,700 Canadians awaiting life-saving transplants, imagine how many lives we could have saved if this were already in place for this tax season.

CYCLING

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is a huge honour to rise today to table an e-petition, e-1344, which has 4,247 signatories, in support of my bill, Bill C-312, to create a national cycling strategy. With soaring infrastructure and health care costs, increased amounts of air contaminants and greenhouse gas emissions, and traffic congestion, the petitioners are calling on the government to create a strategy that would set clear targets so we can become a cycling nation.

Most importantly, in the 2016 ParticipACTION report card on physical activity for children, we had a grade of F. In Canada, only two per cent of children are riding their bikes to school. In Germany it is 15%, in Sweden 20%, in Denmark 40%, and in the Netherlands 50%. We can get there if we create a plan and set clear targets. We can be a cycling nation.

The Deputy Speaker: I remind all hon. members that in presenting petitions not to weigh in with their own particular views on the matter.

The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise this afternoon to present two petitions. The first is an e-petition, and it is calling on the government and the House of Commons to recognize the interwoven nature of the social, economic, and ecological crisis and to advance environmental education. Specifically, the petitioners petition this House to take a leadership role on a Canadian strategy to support educators, communicators, and community leaders, and furthermore, to recognize that fresh air, clean water, and healthy food are human rights in Canada.

SHARK FINNING

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is from numerous citizens and residents of Saanich—Gulf Islands, again raising the issue of the threat to global shark species embedded in the trade in shark fins and the cultural practice of shark fin soup. The petitioners call on the government not just to, as we currently do, forbid the finning of sharks in Canadian waters but to ban the trade, importation, and sale of shark fins in Canada.

FILIPINO HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. Frank Baylis (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from the Filipino Canadian Association of the West Island of Montreal. FCAWI, as it is commonly known, has a mission statement to create communities in its neighbourhoods. It does so under the Filipino custom of *bayanihan*. FCAWI does this through social, cultural, educational, and sports activities, and on that front, I can say that its members are excellent basketball players.

Under the leadership of its president, Mr. Ador Bolusan, it prepared this petition, which calls on the Government of Canada to recognize the month of June as Filipino heritage month. On their behalf, I am proud to present this petition to the House.

●(1225)

CONTRACEPTION

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition in support of free prescription birth control. The petitioners draw the attention of the House to the fact that, with respect to sexual activity among heterosexual Canadians, 15% have no access to contraception and 24% of Canadians do not have access to a subsidized drug plan, which means they have to pay a great deal out of pocket. The provision of subsidized contraception in places like the U.S. and Great Britain has shown a considerable reduction with respect to cost benefits and the costs of unintended pregnancies.

Therefore, the petitioners ask the Government of Canada to support my motion, Motion No. 65, which calls on the federal government to work with the provinces to cover the full cost of prescribed contraception.

VIA RAIL

Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a second petition from petitioners who want to draw the attention of the House to VIA Rail and its management. VIA Rail does not have a long-term plan or direction approved by government and can unilaterally end services, or a route, and affect thousands of Canadians. This could increase the costs of rail travel and could have a negative impact on our environment. Therefore, they call on the Government of Canada to support my private member's bill, Bill C-370, to establish a clear mandate for VIA Rail.

POVERTY

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am glad we are able to present petitions today, rather than moving to orders of the day.

I have two petitions to present to the House. The first petition recognizes the need to develop and implement a national strategy to reduce poverty in Canada. Therefore, the petitioners call on the government to make poverty reduction a priority, to develop thousands of social housing units, and so forth.

SISTERS IN SPIRIT

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is about the Native Women's Association of Canada. The petitioners call upon the Parliament of Canada to make sure it receives sufficient funding to continue its important work in protecting women through its sisters in spirit initiative.

FALUN GONG

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am tabling a petition today with respect to an issue raised in my private member's bill, Bill C-350, to create an opportunity for the House to do more to combat forced organ harvesting around the world. It is the same bill that was originally proposed by Irwin Cotler in a previous parliament. Therefore, I hope Bill C-350 will have widespread support.

The petition specifically calls to the attention of the House the issues of human rights abuse in China, and a number of issues affecting Falun Gong practitioners, particularly, the mass murder of innocent Falun Gong practitioners and the harvesting of their organs. This is an issue that Canada and the rest of the international community need to do more to combat.

BANKING SERVICES

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to table two petitions today.

The first petition is from the good folks at ACORN, which is a community organization that gathered hundreds of signatures from people in Ontario. The petitioners note that low-income people in particular have difficulty accessing banking services, and are particularly susceptible to predatory lending from payday loan outlets. They say the payday loan industry is worth an estimated \$2.5 billion annually, and that profit is coming out of the pockets of people who can least afford it.

Therefore, the petitioners call on the House of Commons to consider a number of things in its federally regulated approach to banking: to provide access to low-interest credit for emergencies, to lower fees on overdraft protections, and in particular, to offer alternatives to conventional banking, such as postal banking.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my second petition is from Gabriola Island.

Petitioners from Gabriola Island urge the transport minister to reject the applications for five bulk commercial anchorages off the sensitive shoreline of our coast. It is an island where I also live. They

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cite the potential from the project to have adverse impacts on sport fishing, spawning beds, and wetlands. The risk is extreme for our community with no benefit whatsoever. The bulk anchorages applications should be rejected.

• (1230)

BANKING SERVICES

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the late Jack Layton raised a lot of attention to the practices of banks in our country, particularly the impact that banking practices had on poor people and people of limited income, seniors, young people, indigenous people, and people who lived in communities that were not well served by the conventional banking system.

Therefore, I am pleased to rise in the House to present a petition that has been assisted by the good people at Acorn Community association.

The petitioners call upon the House to examine banking practices to better ensure that people on low income and people who do not have access to conventional banking services are treated fairly. They point out that NSF fees on a \$100 bounced cheque can cost \$45 to \$48, depending on the bank, and the interest on a \$100 payday loan could cost \$15 or \$25, depending on the province.

These kinds of oppressive fees charged to people who can least afford them should be of concern to this Parliament and all members in it. I hope members of the House and the government listen to these concerns and take action as soon as possible.

* * *

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the government's response to Questions Nos. 1484 to 1510 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 1484— **Mr. Kevin Waugh:**

With regard to the exchange of gifts between the Prime Minister and the Aga Khan, since November 4, 2015: (a) what are the details of all gifts, both given and received, including (i) date of exchange, (ii) recipient, (iii) description, (iv) estimated value; and (b) for each gift which the Prime Minister gave to the Aga Khan, how much was charged to the taxpayer?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 1485— Mr. Kevin Waugh:**

With regard to the sale of at least ten CRJ-900 regional jets from Bombardier to the Islamic Republic of Iran and government support for these transactions: (a) what is the name of the corporate entity that has entered into an agreement with Bombardier to purchase these planes; (b) is the agreement referred to in (a) for the purchase or lease of these planes; (c) is the government loaning money in order to facilitate this transaction and, if so, to whom; (d) if the answer to (c) is affirmative, what is the total amount of money being provided by the government to facilitate this transaction; (e) if the answer to (c) is affirmative, what steps, if any, have been taken to guarantee this government financing; (f) if the answer to (c) is affirmative, what steps, if any, have been taken to ensure the proper end use of these planes; and (g) did the loosening of sanctions on the Islamic Republic of Iran in 2016 by the government allow for this transaction and, if so, how?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1486— Mr. Kevin Waugh:

With regard to expenditures on signing bonuses (ledger code 50632), since November 4, 2015, broken down by department and agency: (a) what is the total amount, broken down by month; (b) how many individuals received such a bonus, broken down by month; (c) what is the range of bonuses paid out; and (d) what criteria are used to determine whether or not an employee receives a signing bonus?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1487— Mr. Kevin Waugh:

With regard to expenditures on Government Travel Service Booking Fees, since November 4, 2015: what is the total amount spent on such booking fees, broken down by department and agency?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1488— Mr. David Anderson:

With regard to concerns about human rights: what are the details, including dates, of all occasions when the Prime Minister has raised human rights with the following governments (i) China, (ii) Iran, (iii) Russia?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1489— Mrs. Cathy McLeod:

With regard to the 2017 British Columbia wildfires: what are the details, including findings, of any economic assessment which the government has done in relation to the impact of the wildfires?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1490— Mr. Peter Kent:

With regard to the Trudeau Report: (a) what does the government consider to be the report's "recommendations"; and (b) what specific action has the government taken to implement each recommendation in (a)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1491— Mr. Gérard Deltell:

With regard to the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada, the Canada Revenue Agency and an agreement in principle they signed on September 23, 2017: when does the government anticipate that the Treasury Board Secretariat will ratify the agreement?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1492— Mr. Dean Allison:

With regard to invoices the government has sent out related to the participation of Ministers, including the Prime Minister, in by-election campaigns: what are the details of all invoices that the government has sent to the Liberal Party of Canada, a local riding association, or a by-election campaign, since January 1, 2016, including (i) date of invoice, (ii) amount, (iii) recipient, (iv) description of goods or services, (v) date payment was received?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1493— Mr. Robert Sopuck:

With regard to the government's decision to cancel the National Wetland Conservation Fund: (a) what is the official reason for cancelling the program; and (b) did any organizations formally request that the fund be cancelled and, if so, what are the details including (i) name of organization, (ii) date request was made?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1494— Mr. Harold Albrecht:

With regard to the Lester B. Pearson Building, since November 4, 2015: (a) on what dates were employees sent home due to a lack of heating, cooling, or other workplace environment issues; (b) for each date in (a), what was the issue which caused employees to be sent home; (c) approximately how many employees were sent home on each date in (a); and (d) what percentage of employees whose normal workplace is the Lester B. Pearson Building does each number in (c) represent?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1495— Mr. Tom Lukiwski:

With regard to the Globe and Mail report on February 6, 2018, that China Communications Construction Co. (CCCC) was blacklisted in a foreign country for allegedly bribing government officials: is the government aware of any Canadian government officials who have been offered bribes by CCCC and, if so, what are the details?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1496— Mr. Tom Lukiwski:

With regard to meetings between the government and officials in the Communist Party of China or the Government of the People's Republic of China, since November 4, 2015: what are the details of all meetings, including (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) list of attendees, (iv) topics or agenda items?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1497— Ms. Monique Pauzé:

With regard to the application of the OECD's International VAT/GST Guidelines, which outline that value-added taxes are to be added in the jurisdiction of the residence of the customer using foreign Internet service providers, such as Netflix: (a) does Canada adhere to these guidelines and the mechanisms that ensure the effective collection of VAT/GST on cross-border supplies of services and intangibles; (b) if the answer to (a) is affirmative, what measures outlined in these guidelines does Canada intend to adopt, and when; (c) in the correspondence between Netflix and the Canada Revenue Agency, the Department of Finance and the Department of Canadian Heritage, since October 19, 2015, how many times did the application of these measures come up, especially with regard to charging Netflix GST and HST; (d) what are the details of the correspondence in (c), including emails, from the Canada Revenue Agency and the Department of Finance?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1498— Mr. Cabriel Ste-Marie:

With regard to federal spending in Quebec ridings for each fiscal year since 2010-11, inclusively: what are the specifics of all grants, contributions, and loans to all organizations, groups, businesses or municipalities, broken down by (i) constituency, (ii) name of recipient, (iii) municipality in which the recipient is located, (iv) date the funding was received, (v) amount received, (vi) granting department or agency, (vii) program under which the grant, contribution or loan was allocated, (viii) nature or purpose?

(Return tabled)

*Business of the House***Question No. 1499— Mrs. Shannon Stubbs:**

With regard to expenditures related to the legal proceedings of Heyder et al v. Attorney General of Canada and Beattie v. Attorney General of Canada: (a) what expenses have been incurred to date, including an itemized breakdown of the expenses, with salary and benefit costs for staff time related to the following court cases (i) Heyder et al v. Attorney General of Canada, (ii) Beattie v. Attorney General of Canada; and (b) what is the total for (a)(i) and (a)(ii)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1500—Mr. John Nater:

With regard to the agreement announced by the government in September 2016, related to the export of beef to China: (a) what are the terms of the agreement; and (b) is the text of the agreement available to the public and to Canadian beef producers and, if so, what is the website location of the agreement?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1501— Mr. Bev Shipley:

With regard to expenditures paid out so far, and in relation to the government's delegation to Davos in January 2018: (a) what are the details of all expenditures, including travel related expenditures, to date and broken down by (i) amount, (ii) vendor, (iii) date, (iv) description of goods or services; (b) what is the total amount for all of the expenditures in (a); and (c) what is the total estimated value of invoices related to Davos which have yet to be received or paid out?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1502—Mr. Bev Shipley:

With regard to expenditures related to legal proceedings involving veterans and veterans' groups, since January 1, 2016: (a) what is the total amount of expenditures incurred to date, broken down by case; (b) what are the expenditures in (a), broken down by type and line item; and (c) how are the expenditures in (a) consistent with the commitment on page 49 of the Liberal Party election platform that "will ensure that no veteran has to fight the government for the support and compensation they have earned"?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1503— Mr. Bev Shipley:

With regard to the leaking of information from Cabinet meetings or Cabinet committee meetings, since November 4, 2015: (a) how many instances of leaked information is the government aware of; (b) how many individuals have been, or are, under investigation for leaking such information; and (c) have any ministers been investigated for leaking such information and, if so, which ones?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1504— Mr. Bev Shipley:

With regard to expenditures on executive search, headhunting, recruiting, or other similar types of firms, since January 1, 2017: what are the details of all such expenditures, including (i) date, (ii) amount, (iii) number and titles of positions filled related to the expenditure, (iv) file number, (v) vendor?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1505—Mr. Alexander Nuttall:

With regard to loans and repayable contributions issued by the government during the 2016 calendar year: (a) what are the details, including (i) amount, (ii) date, (iii) recipient, (iv) purpose; and (b) for each loan and repayable contribution in (a), how much has been repaid to the government, as of February 8, 2018?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1506— Mr. Kelly McCauley:

With regard to VoxPop Labs and business conducted for the government, since November 4, 2015: (a) how many projects are currently underway with VoxPop Labs; (b) how many projects have been completed with VoxPop Labs; (c) what are the details of the projects that have been undertaken, broken down by (i) title, (ii)

cost, (iii) region targeted, (iv) number of text group; and (d) of the projects in (c), what were the results of each project?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1507— Mr. Kelly McCauley:

With regard to the Prime Minister's YouTube channel since, November 4, 2015: (a) how many full-time equivalents manage the channel; (b) what are the titles and corresponding pay scales of the full-time equivalents who manage the channel; (c) how much has been spent on overtime pay for the full-time equivalents who manage the channel; (d) how much has been spent on developing content for the channel, and how much is earmarked to be spent for the remainder of the 2017-18 fiscal year; (e) how much has been spent on promoting content for the channel, and how much is earmarked to be spent for the remainder of the 2017-18 fiscal year; (f) is there a cross-platform promotion plan to share content from the channel to other digital media platforms; (g) are the costs associated with (f) included in the YouTube budget, or do they fall within the budget of the other platforms; (h) what are the digital media platforms used to promote or share the Prime Minister's YouTube content; (i) what is the monthly expenditure on the channel, broken down by month; and (j) what is the annual expenditure on the channel, broken down by year?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1508—Mr. Robert Kitchen:

With regard to the usage of the government's fleet of Challenger and Airbus aircraft during the 2017 calendar year: what are the details of each flight, including (i) date, (ii) origin, (iii) destination, (iv) time of takeoff, (v) time of landing, (vi) names and titles of passengers, excluding security staff, (vii) type of aircraft?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1509— Mr. Dane Lloyd:

With regard to expenditures on "bots", algorithms, or other technology related to controlling or spreading messages on social media, since November 4, 2015: what are the details of all related expenditures, including for each expenditure the (i) date, (ii) vendor, (iii) amount, (iv) details of social media accounts, including format and handle or username, (v) purpose or objective of the bot or algorithm?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1510—Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:

With regard to the acquisition of land by the government, since November 4, 2015: what are the details of each acquisition, including for each the (i) landowner or entity the land was acquired from, (ii) amount paid, (iii) size and description of the land, (iv) location, (v) date, (vi) reason for acquisition?

(Return tabled)

[English]

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

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we were not quite sure if we were going to get a Thursday question. We know today is seen as a Friday but it actually is Thursday. I am thankful for the opportunity.

While I am on my feet, I want to wish all my colleagues and everyone a good two-week constituency break and a happy and joyous Easter.

Government Orders

I would like to ask the government House leader if she could let us know what we will be doing when we return after the April break.

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this afternoon the House will continue second reading debate of Bill C-68 concerning the Fisheries Act. The House will then adjourn for the Easter break and allow members to return to work in their constituencies and also spend some time with family and friends.

Upon our return on April 16, we will commence second reading debate on Bill C-74, the budget implementation act, and continue that debate for the remainder of the week.

[Translation]

I want to take this opportunity to wish all my colleagues, their families, and everyone who works and helps us in this place a happy Easter and a pleasant break.

* * *

[English]

POINTS OF ORDER

INFORMATION PROVIDED TO THE HOUSE BY THE MINISTER OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITIES—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Deputy Speaker: The Chair is now prepared to rule on a point of order raised on March 21 by the hon. member for Carleton concerning information provided to the House by the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities. I would like to thank the member for Carleton for having raised this matter.

The member for Carleton explained that a report of the Parliamentary Budget Officer tabled in the House stated that no plan existed for the government's expenditure of \$186.7 billion on infrastructure but that, conversely, the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities stated during oral questions on March 21 that such a plan did exist. The member argued that if such a plan existed and the Parliamentary Budget Officer had been denied it, the government would be in contempt, but if the plan did not exist, then the minister had provided false information to the House.

In essence, the Chair is being asked to weigh in about the correctness or exactness of the answer provided by the minister to the House. Members are, of course, aware of the well-defined limits that are placed on the Chair in this respect. As such, the Chair cannot unilaterally assume a role in the interpretation of these facts or, more particularly, decide even if the plan alluded to by the minister is the same plan that is referred to in the Parliamentary Budget Officer's report "Budget 2018: Issues for Parliamentarians", which was tabled in the House on March 19.

●(1235)

[Translation]

Additionally, as the previous speaker reminded the House on April 30, 2014, at page 4753 of the Debates:

[I]t is not sufficient for members to simply make allegations based on their perceptions of what is or is not factually correct. Members must recognize and accept the existence of differences of fact and interpretation, which have always been a part of the normal cut and thrust of debate and question period.

Thus, any question concerning the existence of infrastructure plans is a matter better defined as debate.

[English]

However, the Chair notes that this matter also speaks to the unwavering need for accuracy and clarity in the information that members of Parliament receive, as well as the need for those providing that information to shoulder this responsibility in a serious and consistent way. The House would be well served by this being remembered in all exchanges of information.

I thank hon. members for their attention.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

FISHERIES ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-68, an act to amend the Fisheries Act and other acts in consequence, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Deputy Speaker: When the House last took up debate on the question, the hon. member for St. John's East was about to start a question and comment period of five minutes. We will start with that now.

Questions and comments, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to ask a question in relation to how important it is that we have this legislation. We often talk about the importance of issues that face our constituents. This is one of those issues which, if not directly, indirectly has an impact on all of us.

I wonder if my friend and colleague across the way could expand on why he believes it is important that this legislation pass.

Mr. Nick Whalen (St. John's East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that open-ended question which allows me to continue with my earlier remarks.

One of the main pillars of our election campaign was to revisit the nature in which environmental assessment and protection of our natural resources are undertaken in Canada. In that context, there was a review of transportation, natural resources, environment and climate change, and also the Fisheries Act. When I look at Bill C-68, I consider it in the context of changes that are also put forward with respect to CEAA. I look at it in the context of the broader national consultation that was undertaken with the NEB, the offshore petroleum boards, the CEAA process generally, and of course our international obligations and our commitment to protect 10% of offshore resources under our Aichi targets.

Government Orders

This is really a national undertaking. When people think of fisheries in Canada they think of the north, British Columbia, the Great Lakes, Quebec, the maritime provinces, and then of course Newfoundland and Labrador. It is really the sum of what makes Canadians Canadians in understanding that we have a place in the world, that we have a role in protecting our natural resources. There are changes in this legislation that would both allow us to protect our natural resources and also to develop them sustainably so we can enjoy the high standard of living that we have.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member is from Newfoundland. I visited Grand Bank the other day and I spoke with many of the families who are going to be impacted by the minister's decision to award a lucrative surf clam quota to the brother of one of his Liberal colleagues. That indeed is going to mean job losses and layoffs within the town of Grand Bank. The message we heard was that they do not want EI. They want to work. They want to know where their members of Parliament are.

We have heard from the Prime Minister. We have heard from the minister. We have heard from the parliamentary secretary. I am going to give the member of Parliament from St. John's, Newfoundland an opportunity to provide comments for those friends and family from Grand Bank who are listening, on the minister's decision to arbitrarily take away their livelihoods and award to the brother of one of their Liberal colleagues a lucrative surf clam quota worth hundreds of millions of dollars.

• (1240)

Mr. Nick Whalen: Mr. Speaker, normally the Newfoundland and Labrador caucus team works together, and we look to the member for Bonavista—Burin—Trinity to lead us on this topic. However, I am happy to provide comments. Nobody has been a stronger advocate for his area than that member. He has been there and worked hard on the issue during the campaign. He has been advocating hard with us since his election.

There are many species that can be processed in the plant in Grand Bank. I understand that, for this year, given the timing of the decision, there should be no change. The company that currently holds the quota for processing of surf clam does about half of its processing there and half of its processing in Nova Scotia. We are well apprised of that issue—

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I just want to remind the hon. members that when they are heckling across the floor, it is annoying. When they are heckling right next to the person who is speaking, I would venture to say that it might be unparliamentary. I will leave it to the individual members to kind of muzzle themselves and respect the others who are speaking.

Mr. Nick Whalen: Mr. Speaker, at least for this fishing season, my understanding from our meetings and our consultations with the department and with the minister is that there is unlikely to be any change.

I do want to reassure the people of Grand Bank, many of whom I know. I spend most of my summers travelling back and forth to the Burin Peninsula playing soccer. Many people from the Burin Peninsula have moved into St. John's to pursue their livelihoods. We are all a family in this.

We want to see other opportunities arise for exploitation of the fishery in that area. One of the pillars of this change is to examine the monopolies that exist in our fishery and to make sure that indigenous people have a fair opportunity to participate. That had not happened to date. These changes allow that. Although I perhaps would have preferred other proponents, as it turns out, I did not have access to all the information. The minister assures us that the most beneficial proposal to indigenous people was selected, and I trust the minister.

Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is a day that the citizens of West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country have been working toward and waiting for. Bill C-68 is an act to amend the Fisheries Act and other acts in consequence. The consultation effort itself has strengthened engagement with Canadians, enhanced transparency in fisheries activities, and improved the health of fish and fish habitat, and we are just getting started.

This new legislation and our debate will go a long way to help restore and strengthen the public trust so badly damaged by the previous government with regard to the Fisheries Act. In 2016, our government initiated a consultation process that engaged thousands of Canadians. Citizens expressed grave concern about lost protections. They spoke out about the importance of science and academic freedom. Indigenous peoples offered voices of experience, traditional knowledge, and ways of working together that we have been missing. Commercial fishers said they wanted to be included in decision-making.

The amendments we are debating today fundamentally recognize that decisions must be guided by the principles of sustainability, by the precautionary principle, and by an ecosystem management approach. This provides hope to many British Columbians for whom Roderick Haig-Brown, named in Campbell River this summer as a person of national significance to Canada, is a source of inspiration, a guide, and a mentor. He wrote:

The salmon runs are, in truth, the wealth of the Pacific Ocean brought readily back to the hand and use of man. For his part, man has used them and abused them, injured and restored them. He knows enough to multiply them even beyond their original abundance—and he is threatening them with total destruction.

Haig-Brown wrote this in 1959, almost 60 years ago. I take his words very seriously.

Fundamental to a robust Fisheries Act, important amendments include protection for all fish and fish habitats, at last, restoring the previous prohibition against harmful alteration, disruption, or destruction of fish habitat, known as HADD. These protections were taken as immutable, and yet they were stricken from the legislation in an act of callous disregard by the previous government. I am very grateful to the many who fought for this to be put back into the Fisheries Act.

Government Orders

Other important amendments include that indigenous traditional knowledge would inform decisions that impact habitat. The legislation would strengthen the role of indigenous peoples in project reviews, monitoring, and policy development, and will honour traditional knowledge. It would put short-term measures in place to respond to threats to fish that may suddenly arise. It would restore a prohibition against causing the death of fish by means other than fishing. It would provide full transparency for projects, including a public registry of projects.

The legislation promotes restoration of degraded habitat and the rebuilding of depleted fish stocks, and strengthens the long-term protection of marine refuges. The bill clarifies and updates enforcement powers to address emerging fisheries issues and to align current provisions in other legislation.

Bill C-68 demonstrates that our government is proactive in protecting wild salmon stocks and the diversity of fish and fish habitat in Canada. It is vital that we support and pass this legislation. We need every aspect of Bill C-68 badly. We also need to look ahead and be visionary by drafting a separate but related national aquaculture act. A national aquaculture act would facilitate a regional approach to aquaculture and should include how we can transition away from open net pens to closed containment salmon aquaculture on the west coast of Canada.

In collaboration with indigenous peoples, the Government of British Columbia, hundreds of stewardship groups, and industry, a national aquaculture act would provide a way to ensure an increasingly profitable and productive aquaculture industry.

On behalf of many on the west coast, I am here to represent the view that it is time to transition British Columbia's open net pen salmon aquaculture industry to closed containment. Momentum is gathering globally and close to home to develop a profitable, productive aquaculture system and sector through closed containment.

In Washington state, a bill has just passed through the state Senate to phase out open net salmon aquaculture by 2025. As licences expire, they are not being renewed. If an operation is in violation of the lease, it is shut down. Senator Kevin Ranker introduced the bill. I spoke with him, and he said he had never seen anything like the support that came together from all 29 treaty tribes in the state, commercial fishers, and recreational fishers. Senator Ranker's constituency is the same as many of ours in British Columbia because it encompasses, in Senator Ranker's words, the magical, majestic Salish Sea.

• (1245)

From a business perspective, the global open net pen salmon aquaculture industry is operating in an increasingly unpredictable environment. The biological costs to control sea lice and viruses are rising. The industry is not able to control stock losses or escapes. Licenses are very difficult if not impossible to secure. Public support for the status quo is attenuating and capital is being actively invested in closed containment facilities globally. Governments are paying attention.

From an environmental perspective, there is evidence that sea lice and viruses are transferred from farmed fish to wild salmon stocks.

Norway has put a moratorium on open net farms due to the sea lice problem. Add to that the recent complete net pen collapse in Washington state and it is obvious that we simply cannot stand by and allow these threats to wild salmon and wild salmon habitats to continue.

From a trade perspective, British Columbia and Canada should also not concede our strong role in the industry, our knowledge, and our brand to the first movers who know that the status quo will simply not allow for the growth of the sector and who are gaining market advantage over us to research, innovation, and investment.

Canada is a trusted global leader in high value, safe, secure, sustainable food and we have the potential to develop our agri-food sector, particularly in light of recent trade agreements and super-cluster announcements. Through technology and innovation in the sector, Canada can bring more high-quality farmed salmon to global markets, create jobs, and strengthen the economy.

Social innovation presents the potential for industry and first nations to be enterprise partners. Transitioning to closed containment is a way for nation-to-nation collaboration in pursuit of business opportunity, trade, and a healthy aquatic environment. In just two and a half years, our government has made it clear through our actions that we are committed to strengthening engagement and transparency and to rebuilding trust with Canadians.

Last year, the government invested \$1.4 billion in the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, in their base budgets, as a result of a program integrity review that revealed the magnitude and devastation of the Harper government cuts. This is in addition to our historic \$1.5 billion investment in the oceans protection plan to further protect the marine environment from coast to coast. As the minister has stated, to preserve, protect, and help restore our environment, we need a Fisheries Act that Canadians can trust. We must continue to build a relationship based on respect for the protection of our shared environment.

I would like to thank Canadian citizens for their ongoing commitment to volunteering, studying the science, advocating, and leading. The people of West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country have certainly played a major role in the proposed Fisheries Act legislation we are considering today and that will continue no doubt. I am very grateful for their wisdom, spirit, and tenacity in getting us to today.

Our government is taking great strides to protect fish and fish habitat and the environment. I ask my colleagues in the House to please join me in supporting these important amendments and in passing Bill C-68 and then let us take the next step toward a national aquaculture act.

•(1250)

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, less than seven hours of debate is being allowed on Bill C-68, a really important piece of legislation, limited by the Liberal government. I am sorry that closure has been invoked on the bill.

I want to ask my colleague about the Cohen commission recommendations. For her riding, as in mine, this was a hot election issue. Coastal people are passionate about wild salmon and were very encouraged in particular by the Liberal government's commitment to implement the Cohen commission recommendations, and specifically, by the mandate letter to the fisheries minister with specific instructions to implement the Cohen recommendations.

Recommendation three was to break the conflict of interest, which has been repeatedly observed of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, in that it is both the regulator of the salmon industry, protector of wild salmon, and the promoter of the farmed salmon industry. Those are in conflict. Certainly wild salmon and farmed salmon open net pen Atlantic salmon farming are in conflict.

I would like to know if my colleague shares my concern that the Liberal government has still failed to act on Cohen commission recommendation three.

Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones: Mr. Speaker, there is nothing that would make me happier than to talk about the Cohen commission. When the Conservative government did a study, then threw it out the window, we fought to have it in our campaign platform. I am very pleased to announce that of the 75 Cohen commission recommendations, I believe we have achieved 64, as well as a wild salmon policy, which is so important.

The hon. member raised the issue of open net fish farms versus wild salmon. That is why it is imperative we pass the Fisheries Act, and that we move to a national aquaculture act.

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague, my neighbour on the north shore, for her lifetime of advocacy when it comes to issues revolving around fish.

I was disappointed in previous debates this week as I saw Conservative member after Conservative member stand and say that they no longer believe in the precautionary principle. I guess actions speak louder than words though, because we have all lived through the effects of the enormous cuts that were made by the previous government.

She mentioned that we have invested \$1.5 billion in the oceans protection plan and \$1.4 billion in the core mandate of fisheries. Could she give us some details on how these investments are affecting her specific community?

Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for the role he plays as parliamentary secretary. Certainly, being from the west coast, he is deeply engaged in this issue.

First, in order that the fisheries department can do basic work, our government examined the horrendous cuts made by the Conservative government. That has been restored to the tune of \$1.4 billion, but that just puts it back to what we had before.

Government Orders

There is so much more to do and taking an ecosystem management approach and using the precautionary principle are fundamental to that. We have communities from coast to coast to coast that know what goes on in our rivers and creeks, our intertidal zones and estuaries. People volunteer for hundreds of thousands of hours to ensure we are always maintaining fish habitat to the benefit of all ocean life. With this funding, groups have been able to get back to the work that is their life, and it makes our communities what they are.

With regard to the oceans protection plan, we are putting in protections so we can balance the environment and the economy in the way that Canadians expect us to.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

•(1255)

[*English*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. There have been discussions among the parties, and I believe if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent for the following motion.

I move:

That the membership of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs be amended as follows: Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre) for Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby South).

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to move the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

FISHERIES ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-68, An Act to amend the Fisheries Act and other Acts in consequence, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise in my place today to talk about this important issue.

It is nice to see an injustice done to a fellow colleague undone, just before I speak on this particular issue.

Government Orders

I was elected to this chamber in 2006. At that time, I was the proud member of Parliament for a constituency then known as Wetaskiwin, a large rural area between Red Deer and Edmonton. One of the biggest concerns I heard about at that time, from all the municipal Reeves and councillors, was the onerous and very expensive, time-consuming process of doing something as simple as replacing a culvert under a gravel road out in one of the hinterlands of these counties. Some of these counties, such as Clearwater County, represent a massive tract of land. There are very few people in the eastern portion of that country.

There are massive numbers of roads, including forestry service roads, trunk roads, and all kinds of roads. There are constant little streams and so on in the foothills, and lots of small bridges and lots of culverts. The same thing could be said for Lacombe County, Ponoka County, Wetaskiwin County, Leduc County, or virtually any county or municipal district in Alberta. This would be the same for virtually any county or municipal district across the Prairies or anywhere else in the country, for that matter.

The Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties, the AAMD, SARM, in Saskatchewan, and various other organizations, all the way up to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, had the onerous and odious situation of dealing with the Fisheries Act. In particular, the habitat alteration damage and destruction clauses, and their implementation thereof, were simply causing numerous delays. Fisheries officers would show up at a construction site, and the term used was “showing up with guns drawn”, where a couple of county workers and a contractor might be trying to fix a culvert or unplug something. These are the situations that these folks faced on a daily basis in our vast rural areas.

This is moving back regressively, taking this legislation back. We just heard the parliamentary secretary talking about how they are going back to the way it was before. That is simply another attack and another assault, in a legacy of assaults that are happening right now, on our rural communities across this country, whether it is regressing in the firearms legislation, the carbon tax, all the environmental legislation, getting rid of the National Energy Board, imposing a tanker ban off the west coast, cancelling pipeline projects, like the northern gateway, and changing the goal post so many times on development projects that companies are pulling out of projects they have spent years developing and that had prior approval from very competent authorities set up under legislation. We just seem to be going backwards.

I have a degree in zoology, fisheries, and aquatic sciences from the University of Alberta. I do not want to date myself by saying when that happened, but it was a long time ago. I worked proudly for a number of years for Alberta Fish and Wildlife doing walleye minimum size limit experiments and working with DFO when I was a fishing guide in the Arctic. I know intimately some of the issues facing our country. I was an enforcement officer. I was a national park warden. As a conservation officer and a park ranger for the Province of Alberta, I enforced the Fisheries Act. I enforced the fisheries regulations therein, so I have a little knowledge about what I am talking about.

I am not saying, in any way, shape, or form, that the Conservative Party does not believe that we should be protecting our fisheries,

protecting the environment, and making sure that we have sustainable development going forward. That is simply not the case.

In Alberta, some of the most active conservationists are people who work in the energy sector, people who work in the oil patch, people who work in rural areas, and people who work in the forestry industry. They come out of our cities, come out of Edmonton and out of Calgary. The May long weekend is coming up. The entire west country in Alberta is going to fill right up. There are going to be 40,000 or 50,000 people in Clearwater County alone over the May long weekend. They are going to be fishing in the Ram River and all the little lakes we have out there, and they are going to be enjoying themselves.

These people go to work every day, and they understand that they can get the balance right. What they do not understand is legislation that keeps on coming from Liberal governments, past and present, that denies them the opportunity, the livelihood, that would allow them to actually go out and enjoy the environment by preventing energy projects from going forward and by preventing all kinds of development.

There is so much capital flight happening right now. The lack of foreign investment in Canada is striking. The government says that it has all this economic growth. It is propped up by deficits. If the Liberals actually believed anything they said over there, they would have no trouble balancing a budget in so-called economic good times. The people of Canada have everything to fear from a government that says everything is going well but cannot balance the books. That is a different debate for another day.

● (1300)

I want to talk about the Fisheries Act and the onerous provisions that would come back on our counties. Our counties and ratepayers in our municipal areas will have to pay three to five times as much to replace a culvert and to repair a bridge. They will face delays. They will face road closures as a result of these delays and the enhanced enforcement.

Do my Liberal colleagues want to lose all their rural seats in the Prairies? Oh, they do not have any and here is why. After years and years of not listening when fisheries officers showed up, guns drawn, for something as minuscule as somebody wanting to drain a ditch off their property, this caused people headaches. They do not want to deal with this anymore, but we are sadly going back in that direction. Therefore, it will be more red tape, more delays, more costs, less development, and capital flight will be leaving.

Government Orders

I was proud to be part of some of the changes we made. In fact, I was even the legislative chair of the subcommittee on finance that brought in Bill C-38, which made common-sense changes. I remember bizarre stories coming out of Manitoba. For example, a farmer, after the Assiniboine and Red river floods, was charged for draining his field because carp had escaped the river during the flood and were in the field. Because he was draining his field, thereby taking away the fish habitat in which the fish were living in his wheat field, he was charged for destroying a fish habitat. This is how bizarre the implementation of the legislation was before, and we are going back to that legislation. We can count on a whipped vote on the other side, ensuring the legislation goes through, and we will be able to count on bizarre stories like this one coming forward again.

We do not need to go back to legislation from the 1940s and 1950s in this modern era. Counties and municipal districts are far more knowledgeable and far more responsible. There is far more education out there and far more oversight. We have social media oversight. We have all kinds of mechanisms right now. Not a single county wants to end up on the front page of a paper or anything like that after doing something that harms fish habitat.

That is the problem with the legislation. The legislation is not just focused on fish habitat, but focused on the harm of even one fish. If it happens, it is unfortunate and I get that. However, if we are not looking at the big picture of what we are trying to do and if we are focusing on something as minuscule as one fish and stopping an entire project because all the approvals are not in place, it does not matter what the methodology is going to be. The methodology will be the same. There are only so many ways to replace a bridge and only so many ways to replace a culvert. These things are well known and people will do them. However, if they do not have all the paperwork in place, they will be criminals if they happen to kill a fish, notwithstanding the fact that the habitat was fine, all the process was followed, and all the offsets and restoration guidelines were followed. This is the problem with the legislation.

There was a great opportunity for the government to go in a positive direction, to send a positive message to the investment community. The Liberals tell us that they can get the balance between the environment and the economy right. They got it right from their perspective: no economy, all environment. That is the problem. They could have focused on natural fisheries sustainability. They talk about implementing the Cohen report. There are things in the Cohen report they will not do because they do not want to simply focus on natural fisheries and sustainability.

On fisheries enhancement, both in saltwater and in freshwater, my colleague from Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, I and several other members advocated in past budgets for fisheries programs where we would partner, through these organizations, to enhance freshwater fisheries. Why are we not asking organizations or companies like Shell to, instead of rebuilding lakes in northern Alberta where mining projects are, use the same offsets and enhance fisheries where the actual people would be, so people could enjoy those enhancements. Restore the disturbed area to what it was, but do the enhancements where the people are. Make the fishery opportunities better. There is a sad situation here, a missed opportunity in the bill to be progressive going forward in looking

after not only fisheries and fisheries habitats but looking after the people who sustain them.

• (1305)

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite obviously has a lot of experience in this area. However, in listening to the member's speech, I was somewhat confused, because a lot of the stories and problems he was talking about throughout his speech are actually things that are being addressed in this legislation. The reason I know that is that our government consulted broadly across the country with industry, fishers, and indigenous people to make sure that this legislation not only went forward to protect our environment but made sure that it had provisions so that we had better certainty for big projects, while including things like codes of practice for small projects.

I would like to ask the member opposite if he read the legislation, and if he did, what his thoughts are on the code of practice provisions.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Mr. Speaker, those codes of practice that are currently in place were put in place by the previous government, and there is no need to actually change them. The entire campaign that the member and all of his colleagues ran on was based on falsehoods and misinformation to the public about what the changes in the Fisheries Act of 2012 were all about. If the member does not believe me, if he wants to waltz around this issue, I will give him a waltz: one step forward two steps back. However, those are not my words. That is a statement by the Canadian Electricity Association on Bill C-68:

...one step forward but two steps back.

CEA is particularly concerned that the government has chosen to return to pre-2012 provisions of the Fisheries Act that address "activity other than fishing that results in the death of fish..."

Those were not my words, but the words of job creators and employers who are actually helping to pay down the debt that the hon. member keeps voting in favour of increasing.

Mr. Wayne Stetski (Kootenay—Columbia, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in 2015, one of the reasons my riding of Kootenay—Columbia changed hands from being Conservative for 21 years to NDP was the Conservatives' attack on the environment, including removing the habitat section from the Fisheries Act.

I was a regional manager with the Ministry of Environment for southeastern B.C. for a number of years and we worked very closely with the federal fisheries department. I can tell the member that literally hundreds and thousands of actions by the federal department across Canada helped to protect fish habitat and fish.

I know that my colleagues in the Conservative Party like to talk about a ditch in Abbotsford and the flood in Manitoba. Absolutely, I think the officers who acted in those particular circumstances were not using their best discretion. However, would the member not agree that thousands of actions that protect habitat really should be the primary focus rather than the handful of perhaps poor decisions made by individual officers?

Government Orders

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague asked me a very forthright question. However, if the member wants to talk about thousands of actions, where is the litany of all of the reasons that the legislation needs to be changed in the first place? The member does not have one.

Since the change in legislation in 2012, there has been no event where there has been a massive fish loss. There has been nobody dumping massive amounts of chemicals into our rivers or waterways. None of these things are actually happening. There is actually no substantiated case anywhere in Canada that anybody can point to that would convince me that any legislative change needs to happen.

This is all a campaign. These are changes that are made on a campaign of fear and misinformation about the responsible changes that our previous government made so that we could ensure that rural communities had hope for their futures, because this is where everything comes from. We can take a look around this room. Where did everything in this room come from? Where did the food come from that is outside on the table? Where did it all come from? It came from rural areas in our country, and the more that we put onerous legislation like this in place, the harder we make the lives of those people living there.

• (1310)

Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the environment committee right now is looking at the Liberals' proposed environmental assessment bill. We had a number of representatives from various industries. The Canadian Energy Pipeline Association called the regulatory state in Canada right now a toxic regulatory environment. This is why investment in the mining industry, for example, is down 60%.

The Fisheries Act is being layered on top of regulation after regulation, and process after process. Investment is fleeing this country and the changes that the government is making to the Fisheries Act are a big part of that. Could my friend for Red Deer—Lacombe comment on that?

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Mr. Speaker, my colleague for Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa is absolutely 100% correct. He has forgotten more about fisheries and the environment than the collective wisdom the House has probably ever known. We should be listening when this man speaks.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise in this House as a representative of rural communities on the coast of Vancouver Island in British Columbia. I can tell members with all honesty that my constituents in the rural communities of my riding are very happy with this bill. They are very happy to see these provisions reinstated.

In the short time that I have to speak to the bill, I want to concentrate on one aspect of the bill that I think needs an amendment at committee. It has to do with the need for legal protection for environmental flows, which is the amount and type of water needed for fish and aquatic systems to flourish.

I have presented many petitions in this House to deal with the weir at Lake Cowichan which controls the flow rates in the Cowichan River. It is a particularly important piece of infrastructure, especially during July and August when the flow rates are very low, endangering fish and fish habitat.

When I presented petitions, the government's response acknowledged that summer low flows in the Cowichan River are a threat to fish and fish habitat, and that raising the Cowichan weir could provide additional water storage in the lake to deal with the problem. The government acknowledges that low flows are a danger to fish habitat, but we do not see the explicit protection in this legislation that I think is needed to protect those flow rates.

It is not only in the Cowichan River. On the southwest coast of my riding, the Jordan River, a river which has been decimated by an old copper mine and by B.C. hydro dams, has seen its fish population absolutely wiped out. When the reservoir was opened up, the flow rates increased, and magically, the salmon returned. That is all it took. An increased flow rate was needed to dilute the copper that is in the water and to give the fish colder temperatures. They have a narrow bandwidth of temperatures in which they can survive.

Also, if we have protections for flow rates, it would oblige the government to live up to its obligations to put those funds in to make sure that we have the infrastructure to control flow rates. It would allow tributaries of these rivers to act as important breeding grounds for salmon.

I see my time is up. I am thankful for this small opportunity to comment on this bill, and I look forward on behalf of the great residents of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford to supporting it when the vote comes.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): It being 1:15 p.m., pursuant to order made Monday, March 26, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and to put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the second stage of the bill now before the House.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): In my opinion the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Pursuant to Standing Order 98, a recorded division stands deferred until Monday, April 16, at the ordinary hour of daily adjournment.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

• (1315)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I suspect if you were to canvass the House, you would find unanimous consent to call it 1:30 p.m., so that we can begin private members' hour.

Private Members' Business

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Do we have unanimous consent to see the clock at 1:30 p.m.?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*Translation*]

HISTORIC SITES AND MONUMENTS ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-374, An Act to amend the Historic Sites and Monuments Act (composition of the Board), as reported (with amendments) from the committee.

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

[*English*]

Mr. John Aldag (Cloverdale—Langley City, Lib.) moved that the bill be concurred in.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. members: Yea.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): In my opinion, the yeas have it.

And five or more members having risen:

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Pursuant to Standing Order 98, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, April 18, 2018, immediately before the time provided for private members' business.

Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until Monday, April 16, 2018, at 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Orders 28(2) and 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 1:18 p.m.)

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